

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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Type of School: (Check all that apply)     Charter  Title I  Magnet  Choice

Name of Principal: Ms. Patricia Brady

Official School Name: St Thomas Aquinas School

School Mailing Address:  
1719 Post Road  
Fairfield, CT 06824-5715

County: Fairfield    State School Code Number\*: 2105108

Telephone: (203) 255-0556    Fax: (203) 255-0596

Web site/URL: www.stasonline.net    E-mail: patricia.brady@stasonline.net

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Margaret Dames

District Name: Diocese of Bridgeport Catholic Schools    Tel: (203) 416-1375

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. Patrick Toole

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals 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 and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2003.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. 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.
9. 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.
10. 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

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All data are the most recent year available.

**DISTRICT** (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

Does not apply to private schools

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
- Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
- Suburban
- Small city or town in a rural area
- Rural

4. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	18	16	34	6	19	13	32
K	19	19	38	7	24	14	38
1	22	24	46	8	14	13	27
2	17	23	40	9			0
3	26	24	50	10			0
4	25	25	50	11			0
5	22	21	43	12			0
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							398

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
2 % Asian  
1 % Black or African American  
1 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
94 % White  
2 % Two or more races  
100 % **Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting 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.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 2 %

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

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	3
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	3
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	6
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	398
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.015
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	1.508

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 0 %

Total number limited English proficient 0

Number of languages represented: 0

Specify languages:

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 0 %

Total number students who qualify: 0

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 2 %

Total Number of Students Served: 6

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>4</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</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

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>21</u>	<u>5</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>2</u>	
Paraprofessionals	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>
Support staff	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Total number	<u>30</u>	<u>8</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 17 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	97%	97%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	98%	95%	97%	95%	96%
Teacher turnover rate	9%	9%	23%	10%	7%
Student dropout rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Please provide all explanations below.

**Note on FTE calculation:** The FTE calculation used to determine the average school student - classroom teacher ratio includes the 21 full time teachers and 5 part time teachers. The 5 part time teachers were factored at a .5 equivalency factor. The part time teachers equate to an additional 2.5 FTE.

**Teacher turnover:** Teacher turnover exceeded 12% in AY 2006-2007. The teacher turnover rate in 2006-2007 was 23% due to those teachers who left Saint Thomas as a result of retirement, birth of children and to care for ill family members. Other than this one year, teacher retention has been between 7-10% for the past five years.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0 %
Enrolled in a community college	0 %
Enrolled in vocational training	0 %
Found employment	0 %
Military service	0 %
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	0 %
Unknown	0 %
<b>Total</b>	<b>0 %</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Saint Thomas Aquinas Catholic School, located in southern Connecticut in the center of the town of Fairfield, has been a solid foundation of faith and education within the community for 88 years. Guided by the mission to provide “*academic excellence in a faith-filled environment*”, teachers and parents work as partners to encourage and support students to become life-long learners, responsible citizens of a diverse global community, and dedicated disciples of Christ within the Catholic Church. This mission drives the vision that graduates from St. Thomas Aquinas School will have the desire, knowledge, and skills to be academically confident and competent, as well as compassionate and committed to the service of others.

Saint Thomas Aquinas is a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 8 diocesan elementary school and fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the State of Connecticut. The culture and climate is one where clergy, administrator, faculty, and parents work collaboratively to create a learning environment that is positive, tailored to the needs of the individual student, and spiritually enriching. It is the winning combination of education, faith, service, and enrichment that gives rise to the well-rounded, confident, and morally strong students who exemplify St. Thomas Aquinas School.

The school curriculum and enrichment programs at Saint Thomas Aquinas are designed to prepare all students for the personal and academic challenges of high school and beyond. The core curriculum includes religion, grade and advanced level mathematics, language arts, social studies, foreign language (Spanish and French), science, and technology and is complemented by specialized classes in physical and health education, music, art, and library skills.

Learning does not end with the final bell at Saint Thomas Aquinas! Students consistently engage in academic programs, enrichment opportunities, and competitions outside of the core curriculum. Examples include the Women in Science Program, Congressional Youth Leadership Council, Mill River Science Lab program, Connecticut Audubon Society, Fairfield Memorial Day Writing Contest, National Geography and Spelling Bee competitions, and various locally sponsored math, foreign language, poetry, and writing contests. Each year students consistently receive awards and recognitions in these programs.

Two outstanding and unique programs at Saint Thomas Aquinas highlight the school’s traditions and the commitment to student learning and formation. The “**Beyond the Bell**” program is an extra-curricular program whereby teachers, members of the local educational and cultural community, and parents work together to offer students in grades K-8 a quality program that continues to engage students in the learning process once the school day ends. Examples of programs offered are: chess, newspaper, WATT (Wednesday Afternoon Tutoring Time when Grade 7 and 8 students tutor younger students), science, sports, Student Council, Human Relations Committee, National Junior Honor Society, art, swimming, drama, yoga, dance, and choir.

A well-developed **service program** is conducted every first Friday of the month. Students physically move into the local community to provide help to those in need. Examples include collecting, sorting, and packing clothes, toys, and furniture for “Project Appalachia”, raking leaves for elderly parishioners, visiting local nursing homes, assisting in the Fairfield Beach Clean-up project, and collecting food for Operation Hope, a local Fairfield assistance facility.

The Home School Association (HSA) is deeply supportive to the school program through time, talent and treasure. The HSA raises funds each year that allow the school to improve an aging school building, and add additional programs that enhance instruction and student learning. In 2009 a new library-media center opened, fully funded by the HSA. As a result of this support, Saint Thomas Aquinas enjoys the status of being a model school in the Diocese of Bridgeport for technology integration within the curriculum.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. **Assessment Results:**

Saint Thomas Aquinas School assesses students annually using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The ITBS is a series of nationally normed, standardized tests administered to students in grades 3 through 7. The ITBS is utilized to measure students' achievement in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. All students are tested under standardized conditions in a self-contained classroom environment with no sub-groups tested separately. The faculty and administration working together in professional learning communities utilize these scores as part of the planning process for the improvement of student learning and the creation of a yearly SMART goal. The goal of the analysis of student scores is three-fold: (1) to determine each student's developmental level within a test area, (2) to identify a student's areas of relative strength and weakness in subject areas, and (3) to monitor year-to-year growth in basic skills and prepare an action plan for school and individual student improvement.

Analysis of the ITBS scores for students in grades 3 through 7 at St. Thomas Aquinas over the course of the past five years (2005-2009) show that they have consistently exceeded national averages and the NCLB-BRS program standards at every grade level tested with no average class score below 72% in math and reading. The ITBS test results for 2008-2009 demonstrate the continued and consistent commitment to excellence found at St. Thomas Aquinas. Students in all grades tested (3-7) again exceeded the student percentile equivalent for the 90th school percentile at the given grade level in math and reading.

In the subject area of reading, these results can be attributed to the school's consistent progress in the implementation of new teaching strategies that focus on the improvement of reading proficiency, providing leveled readers as well as, focusing on small group guided reading strategy instruction. Teachers in grades K-4 are allocated listening stations in their classrooms as well as, thematic books to improve classroom libraries. Students in grades 5-8 were introduced to a new vocabulary program in AY 2007 that has been very successful and assisted them with the use of new vocabulary words across curricular areas as well as produced results on the ITBS standardized tests that demonstrate an increase in scores in vocabulary.

Above average student scores in the area of math have resulted from a re-written school curriculum (2006) that focuses on improved math literacy, teacher methodology, and the implementation of differentiated instructional methods. In particular, math computation scores have increased as the result of the implementation of the following strategies: (1) criterion-referenced math benchmark test in addition to the normed standardized testing, (2) assessments for learning that inform math instruction, and (3) deliberate and organized school-wide focus on improving students' knowledge of math facts. Teachers at every grade level and in every subject area have identified specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and timely (SMART) strategies to support the improvement of math computation for students.

St. Thomas Aquinas is committed to the continued improvement of student achievement and believes that by implementing a well-organized, dynamic, and student centered approach to assessment, each child's abilities will be identified and supported.

### 2. **Using Assessment Results:**

The ITBS assessment is used to measure students diagnostically during the spring of each academic year. St. Thomas Aquinas administers the ITBS to students in grades 3 through 7 with the goals of: (1) address each student's developmental level, (2) monitor each student's year-to-year growth in the basic mastery skills, (3) identify areas of school strength as well as areas in need of growth.

To accomplish these goals, the principal and faculty meet monthly to review, interpret, and discuss the data results as a means to identify individual and group strengths and weaknesses.

Teachers first review their own student's individual achievement and develop their own class and student level goals. Integral to this is the identification of support and professional development that the teacher needs to achieve their goals. This partnership is developed between the principal and teacher at the initial goal setting session.

Once this information is gathered and reviewed, the principal and faculty create an action plan. This action plan includes the creation of a school SMART Goal, the update of school curriculum maps, identification of methods to inform and differentiate instruction, the development of interim, formative assessments as well as, individual student academic plans.

Teachers then meet in professional learning communities once each week to continue to monitor progress as well as discuss alternative strategies to be used and common assessments that will be effective in measuring progress.

In addition, each student's individual progress in grades K-8 is assessed through end-of-selection testing, end-of-theme testing, mid-year and end-of-year program assessments. Individual progress is also assessed through teacher observation, unit testing, oral and written assessments, writing portfolio assessment, and daily classroom activities. In conjunction with the data provided by the standardized testing, this assessment information informs the action plan for student achievement.

### 3. **Communicating Assessment Results:**

St. Thomas Aquinas School communicates assessment results in a variety of ways.

**Parents:** St. Thomas Aquinas communicates student performance and assessment results often and effectively to the parents of its students. The principal communicates monthly via the "Parent Link" newsletter. This publication provides information and strategies that will assist children with self-discipline, time management, study habits, academic improvement, and age-appropriate skills to be successful, life-long learners. Teachers send home weekly assessment reports and communicate frequently with parents by email, individual parent-teacher conferences, and phone calls to discuss student progress. Parent-Teacher conferences take place twice each year. By late spring, the ITBS parent reports are sent home with a cover letter from the principal explaining how to interpret the data and to encourage parents to visit the Riverside Publishing website for further information and interpretation. During the Parent-Teacher conferences each spring, teachers include an additional explanation to parents of their child's individual results on the ITBS. Parents receive both mid-quarter progress reports and quarterly report cards for each of their children.

**Students:** Students in grades four through eight attend the Parent-Teacher Conference in both the fall and spring of each year. Each student is an active participant in monitoring his or her academic progress and has input into the creation of goals and improved performance. Students frequently meet with their teachers to discuss progress and areas of success as well as, areas in need of improvement.

**Community:** Members of the School Advisory Board receive a report from the principal on the results of the ITBS each year. The school's action plan is shared along with the annual SMART goals. The school has a strong relationship with local newspapers by which student achievements are brought to the larger Fairfield community and publishes monthly student achievements within these publications.

#### 4. **Sharing Success:**

Saint Thomas Aquinas School shares its success at every opportunity. The administration and faculty strongly believe that the burden of communication is on the person with the message. St. Thomas Aquinas School has a very exciting message to bring to the community. The principal and faculty are responsible for communicating the success of students and consistently seek new ways to proclaim this message of excellence.

Saint Thomas Aquinas is a part of the Diocese of Bridgeport, a community of 39 schools in Fairfield County, Connecticut. As such, the school is part of a larger learning community. Teachers and administrators gather frequently for professional development sessions. This creates a forum for conversations about best practices, professional learning communities, curriculum mapping, and vertical articulation all with the goal of improving student learning. Teachers and administrators are encouraged by each other and benefit from the mutual sharing of successful ideas and methodology.

Success is also shared in the Fairfield community. By utilizing the local media, town and public school district websites that include a link to the St. Thomas Aquinas school website, school tours, Open House events and the St. Thomas Aquinas School website, the school is very successful in communicating the achievement of students and the excellence of the school program.

If awarded a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence Award, St. Thomas Aquinas will utilize this honor for the benefit of other schools in the Diocese of Bridgeport and Public School District of Fairfield. The vision is that the principal and teachers will share a list of “Blue Ribbon Best Practices” with other educators to form a partnership of excellence.

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

St. Thomas Aquinas is fully accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). Within an atmosphere where natural curiosity is encouraged and intellectual inquiry fostered, a variety of enriching learning activities and cultural experiences are offered to students. Programs in all core disciplines fulfill or exceed the scope and sequence to promote a high level of intrinsic learning, critical thinking, and problem solving. The school's curriculum maps are framed with rigorous and relevant content and aligned with national and state standards.

**Religion:** Students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 8 are provided with a solid foundation in the teachings and practice of the Catholic faith, doctrine, scripture, prayer, liturgy, social justice, morality, and the sacraments. Students participate monthly at Mass as lectors, gift bearers, choir members and altar servers.

**Language Arts:** Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten, the program is directed toward achieving fluency in reading, phonemic awareness, phonics, syntax, grammar, literature, writing, vocabulary, and spelling. In grades six through eight students develop skills in critical thinking and analytical writing. Effective oral and written communication skills that demonstrate clarity and presence are further refined through participation in national and regional programs and projects including a day-long writing workshop at Fairfield University.

**Math:** The program focus is on both the process and the product of mathematical thinking. The curriculum challenges students to explore math concepts from a multi-sensory approach – numerical, geometrical, and analytical. Students learn that there are many ways to solve problems. More than one-third of graduating 8<sup>th</sup> graders are placed in advanced level high school math courses.

**Science:** Students explore the study of life, and the physical and earth sciences through an inquiry-based approach, beginning with the youngest grades. Children are taught to think like scientists using a variety of scientific methods including hands-on learning in a fully equipped science lab.

**Social Studies/History:** Beginning as early as Pre-Kindergarten, students are taught to become contributing members of society, act responsibly toward others, and respect differences. Students gather historical data from multiple sources, identify the way different cultures record their histories, and compare past and present situations to gain an understanding of world cultures. Due to its convenient location to many historically significant sites and a plethora of cultural and historical museums, the students of St. Thomas Aquinas enjoy a high level of exposure to these out of the classroom learning experiences.

**Foreign Language:** Students in grades Kindergarten through 8 participate in a well-developed Foreign Language program that includes both French and Spanish. Students in grades K-4 are exposed to both languages with classes being held two times per week. At the end of grade 4 students choose the language they would like to study further for grades 5-8. Students in grades 5-8 take either Spanish or French class five days a week. The Foreign Language program at St. Thomas meets the requirements of the NCLB-BRS program.

**Music and Art:** The Music/Art program provides students with an opportunity to gain knowledge in art and music history, application of art and music techniques and, appreciation of the fine arts. An annual Fine Arts Night, school choir, student concerts, band program, and school musical production complement weekly classroom instruction.

**Physical Education/Health:** Beginning in Pre-Kindergarten, students learn basic gross motor skills that help their physical development. Topics of nutrition, good hygiene, and exercise are emphasized in the curriculum. The goal of the program is to teach a positive approach to social interaction on and off the playing field as well as to encourage a healthy lifestyle. The school also sponsors league basketball and cross-country teams for both boys and girls.

**2a. (Elementary Schools) Reading:**

(This question is for elementary schools only)

The reading program at Saint Thomas Aquinas School begins in Pre-Kindergarten where pre-reading skills and phonemic awareness are taught. Word walls, centers and guided reading are applications used to encourage early reading skills.

Reading is thematically introduced in grades Kindergarten through five with specific focus on reading comprehension, reading strategies and critical thinking to integrate the mastery of age-appropriate skills across the curriculum. Integrated, cross-curricular reading is encouraged in all subject areas. Each student is tested utilizing the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), three times per year, leveled at his/her reading ability, then, placed in a group of four or five students for the Guided Reading Program. The Guided Reading Program was chosen because of its focus on and assistance to students in mastering reading level appropriate literature. Comprehension is assessed by student responses to questions and their ability to make predictions and compare information from several sources. In addition to the guided reading activities, students read aloud and engage in partner and silent reading.

Students in grades six through eight are exposed to a diversified literature program that focuses on critical thinking and further supports the development of above average leveled reading, sophisticated critical thinking skills, and well-developed independent reading strategies. Students read a variety of complete and unabridged genres: biography, fiction, essays, diary, drama, poetry, short stories, mythology and fables. The students engage in activities that address the major strands in reading of vocabulary development, reading comprehension, literature, writing strategies and applications, listening and speaking.

All students visit the new library-media center (2009) once each week where they are encouraged to develop a love for and enjoyment of reading. Research skills using the “Big Six” model (task definition, information seeking strategies, location/access, use of information, synthesis, and evaluation) are introduced in Kindergarten and reinforced in all grades thereafter.

**3. Additional Curriculum Area:  
Technology**

Technology is integrated in all subject areas and at all grade levels guided by the philosophy that it is not an isolated subject area, but is instead a tool to be used by teachers and students alike to enrich, enhance, and extend the goals of the school’s curriculum. Technology does not drive the curriculum. The curriculum drives the use of technology. Technology allows teachers and students to interact with the core curriculum and tap into their inherent love of learning.

The school employs a full-time technology coordinator, full-time library-media specialist, and a part-time technology coach for teachers; all of whom work within the learning community to ensure that technology integration is seamless. Weekly professional learning sessions are provided to teachers to assist them in identifying effective and meaningful methods of the use of technology within their lessons.

Every classroom at St. Thomas Aquinas is a digital classroom. Through the use of SMART Boards, Mimeo, classroom computers, lap top mini labs, a 30 station computer lab, software, and use of educational websites, students at every grade level use with these tools to build their informational literacy skills in an age and grade appropriate manner. Students are motivated by the use of technology, thus increasing academic engagement

time. The result is that when students investigate a content area through the use of technology, they are able to move beyond knowledge and comprehension to application and analysis of information.

The mission of St. Thomas Aquinas is to assist our students in becoming “life-long learners”. Through the integration of technology throughout the curriculum, students at St. Thomas Aquinas develop the knowledge and skills to use technology to continue the learning process for a lifetime.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Differentiated instruction is everywhere at St. Thomas Aquinas! Teachers at all grade levels understand and consistently work to implement specific differentiated instructional methods that will assist their students to be successful learners. Teachers proactively assess student needs, modify curriculum, adjust teaching methods, seek alternative resources, and implement various learning activities within the classroom that address the individual needs of their students and groups and maximize their learning opportunities.

Teachers view differentiation as applicable to all learners: those who struggle and those who need enrichment. In professional learning communities that meet weekly, teachers engage in discussions about instruction, plan teacher to teacher observations, engage in professional reading, use the tuning protocol method for the review of student work, share successful examples of differentiation, and create plans for individual students and groups.

While planning instruction, teachers take into account Bloom’s Taxonomy, vertical and horizontal articulation in the curriculum mapping process, multiple intelligences, and the developmental stages of students within the same classroom. Instruction is modified based on this understanding and is evidenced through the implementation of a variety of strategies that include flexible pacing, block scheduling in grades six through eight, student contracts, learning centers, cross-curricular projects, scaffolding, and activities that address the auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learner.

A specific example of differentiated learning that is found at St. Thomas Aquinas is the use of alternative assessments in grades 6-8. Through the use of journals, rubrics, portfolios, checklists, and individual and group projects, teachers are provided with valuable information about the degree to which a student has achieved a defined learning outcome based on specific criteria. This information becomes valuable to the teacher and the student in planning for future instruction and learning and is utilized to inform and adjust learning activities and assessments.

#### **5. Professional Development:**

Professional development is job-embedded at St. Thomas Aquinas School. Teachers model the school’s mission of “life long learning” by participating in frequent, meaningful learning opportunities within and outside of the school setting. All professional development learning opportunities are planned with the specific goal of improving student achievement and instruction.

All teachers are provided with professional learning opportunities at the school level, diocesan/district level and within the greater educational community.

**School level:** Teachers meet as professional learning communities on a weekly basis. An on-site technology coach works with teachers once per week to assist with the integration of technology into instruction.

Diocesan and community educational resource personnel meet with the teachers at school throughout the year to present current topics in education that will assist them in their roles as teacher.

**Diocesan level:** The Diocese of Bridgeport supports teachers by offering professional learning related to curriculum mapping, formative/summative assessment, vertical/horizontal articulation, D3M, literacy, and safe environment education.

**Greater Educational Community:** Teachers are given the opportunity to apply to graduate programs at Fairfield University or Sacred Heart University, with financial assistance given to those who qualify. Teachers

are given continuous information about professional development opportunities offered in the area of their specialization. The school has memberships with NCEA, NMSA, and ASCD. Teachers are given personal days to attend conferences by these and other professional learning organizations. Teachers are encouraged to visit the classrooms of other educators in the district, and to form professional learning communities with teachers outside of our St. Thomas Aquinas.

High priority is given to the funding of professional development when creating the school budget. The professional development activities that teachers engage in are supported by the principal and reviewed to ensure that they are supportive of student achievement and aligned with curriculum goals and standards.

#### **6. School Leadership:**

St. Thomas Aquinas School has designed a leadership structure that is collaborative and effective. This structure includes faculty teams, level coordinators, school committees, special education consultants, the principal, an administrative assistant and School Advisory Board.

Full-time teachers are assigned to faculty teams based on grade levels and grouped as Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2, Grades 3 through 5, and Grades 6 through 8. One teacher at each level serves as the coordinator. Level coordinators meet monthly with the principal to identify and discuss the needs at each level. Minutes of these meetings are posted into a server-based folder for all faculty members to read and then are further discussed at a monthly full faculty meeting led by the principal. Weekly level and administrator meetings are conducted to collaborate on school goals and objectives, review calendars, and clarify schedule changes made to accommodate cultural or professional development programs.

Committees with assigned teacher chairpersons are established to focus on specific areas with regard to school operations, professional development, and programs. Committees meet monthly, report to the principal and, when appropriate, share information with the full faculty. St. Thomas Aquinas School attributes the increased improvement in student achievement and teacher effectiveness to its ongoing committee and administrative communication as well as its ongoing review of student Individual Educational (IEP) and 504 plans, textbooks and materials, policies and procedures, technology, teacher mentoring, and safety.

The principal reports proposed school initiatives and program needs to the Diocese of Bridgeport Office for Education and the School Advisory Board to obtain further guidance with the goal of improving programs and student progress.

## PART VI - PRIVATE SCHOOL ADDENDUM

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1. Private school association: Catholic
2. Does the school have nonprofit, tax exempt (501(c)(3)) status? Yes  No
3. What are the 2009-2010 tuition rates, by grade? (Do not include room, board, or fees.)

<u>\$5254</u> K	<u>\$5254</u> 1st	<u>\$5254</u> 2nd	<u>\$5254</u> 3rd	<u>\$5254</u> 4th	<u>\$5254</u> 5th
<u>\$5254</u> 6th	<u>\$5254</u> 7th	<u>\$5254</u> 8th	<u>\$0</u> 9th	<u>\$0</u> 10th	<u>\$0</u> 11th
<u>\$0</u> 12th	<u>\$0</u> Other				

4. What is the educational cost per student? \$ 5274 (School budget divided by enrollment)
5. What is the average financial aid per student? \$ 1000
6. What percentage of the annual budget is devoted to scholarship assistance and/or tuition reduction?  
10 %
7. What percentage of the student body receives scholarship assistance, including tuition reduction?  
41 %

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## ASSESSMENTS REFERENCED AGAINST NATIONAL NORMS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 3 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	79	80	80	81	84
Number of students tested	48	45	45	46	40
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 3 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	80	81	81	81	83
Number of students tested	48	45	45	46	40
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 4 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	74	76	79	80	80
Number of students tested	42	44	49	38	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 4 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	79	84	82	88	85
Number of students tested	42	44	49	38	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	81	78	78	79	80
Number of students tested	39	47	39	37	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	86	84	72	86	90
Number of students tested	39	47	39	37	47
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	84	78	78	89	76
Number of students tested	45	37	35	42	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	82	84	78	88	84
Number of students tested	42	37	35	42	37
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Feb
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	79	80	84	85	78
Number of students tested	29	36	42	35	43
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes:

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: Iowa Test of Basic Skills

Edition/Publication Year: Form A/Spring, 2001 Publisher: Riverside Publishing

Scores are reported here as: Percentiles

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Average Score	85	79	87	85	83
Number of students tested	29	36	42	35	43
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Average Score					
Number of students tested					

If the reports use scaled scores, provide the national mean score and standard deviation for the test.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
<b>NATIONAL MEAN SCORE</b>					
<b>NATIONAL STANDARD DEVIATION</b>					

Notes: