



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SCHOOL

624 DUBUQUE STREET

WEBSTER CITY, IA 50595

Volume 7 December 2022

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Advent marks the period of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and, also the beginning of the new liturgical year in the Catholic Church. Happy Reading!
Jeanne Hill, STA School Board President



“Tidbits from Principal Theresa Schleisman” – Please take time to sign up for our volunteer opportunities throughout the school year on the internet (**Sign Up Genius**).

December 4 – K thru 6 Christmas Concert in the Church at 4:00 p.m.

December 6 – St. Nicholas Day!

December 7 – 2 hr. Early Dismissal for Staff Development / NO Student Mass

December 8 – 8:30 Student Mass (Holy Day – Immaculate Conception)

December 14 – 3 yr. old PS Christmas Concert at 11:00 in the Gym

December 14 – 2 hr. Early Dismissal for Staff Development / Student Mass at 12:15

December 16 – 4 yr. old PS Christmas Concert at 11:00 in the Gym

December 20 – School Board Meeting at 5:00 p.m. in the Parish Center

December 22 – 2 hr. Early Dismissal for Christmas Break

December 23 – January 2 – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!!!

January 3 – Classes resume



Mission Statement:

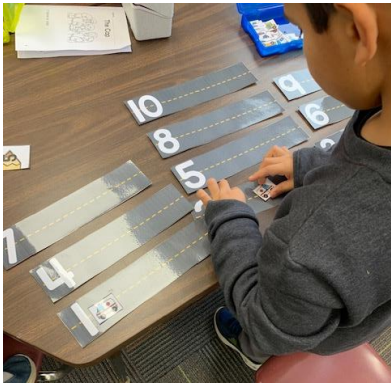
St. Thomas Aquinas School serves Webster City and surrounding communities by offering a Preschool - 6th grade education. Our school incorporates faith and values through daily learning in a safe and nurturing environment. With support from parents and families, St. Thomas develops the spiritual, academic, physical and emotional growth of students who will be future leaders in our ever-changing world.

Vision Statement:

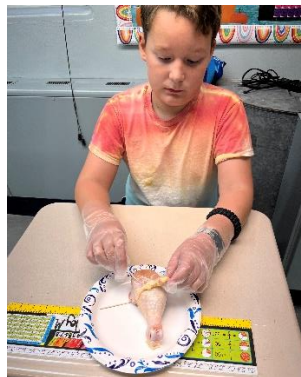
In a Christ-centered environment, St. Thomas empowers young people to build their personal foundation for lifelong learning, leadership and service to others.



“Kinder Updates from Teacher Katie Nyren” – Kindergarten is in full swing! We have officially started our journey to reading and strong mathematical skills! Of course, we make time for the fun things like recess, and our fun Christmas elves that arrived. We are working on blending CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) words. This is a huge step for kids to take towards reading and being able to put their alphabet letter sounds to good use. Small groups are going strong and allow me more one-on-one time with each student to explore their strengths and challenge them as they learn. I love that St. Thomas allows me to go above just teaching the core standards in reading and math. Our reading curriculum has much depth to it and teaches students the phonics and phonemic awareness they need to be able to decode words and sentences, to learn to read. In math I get to work with students to teach them subitizing, match quantity, and higher order thinking skills. I don't just want my students to meet a standard, I want them to learn how we got there, and develop critical thinking skills while we learn. Students are doing things like graphing, learning about money, and solving story problems in math. We make it fun for them with various hands-on activities in the room, like our teddy bear counters, pattern blocks, and hand-made center activities. We had six students in our class receive Saintly Student Awards, and they all loved it, and loved celebrating each other. They continue to make me so very proud every single day, and I thank God for placing me with them this year.



“Moments from Teacher McKenzi Glenn” – In science class we finally got to do our chicken dissection/experiment. We took a chicken drumstick and started peeling the layers to talk about the systems that we might see and how they are connected. We talked about how the muscular system was present as you will see in the images. We talked about how the tendons connect to the muscles. We also talked about the circulatory system and how they were able to see some veins and blood vessels. Science is fun!



Loving to learn and learning to love all happening at STA School!

Students practicing for their Christmas program – “The Light Before Christmas” with Teacher Melissa Hindt



“The Light Before Christmas”



More November Fun & Photos



Learning to appreciate police safety, community hunger, Veteran’s Day support, being thankful for their many blessings, special Science art and a new basketball hoop!!



Prayer Partner Celebration – huge success!!



Save the Date for the St. Thomas Aquinas School Ball – Saturday, April 29, 2023. We invite all parents to help with this annual fundraiser that supports the school. Planning is just underway. Join us anytime. Come and find out how you can volunteer in some way to make this year be a success! No theme or logo has been selected yet, but it is being narrowed down. Call Heidi Tesdahl at 515-832-1190 or use the **Sign Up Genius** to become involved! Here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/ym45v3m6>

Reading and Math Results - 2022 Fall Fast Bridge Assessments

	St. Thomas Aquinas School	Prairie Lakes AEA	Diocese of Dubuque	State of Iowa
Percentage of Students Proficient in Reading	66%	59% correct number	77%	64%
Goal is 80% and above				
Percentage of Students Proficient in Math	78%	69%	79%	70%
Goal is 80% and above				

** The chart above displays the percent of STA students who are proficient in Reading and Math as compared to area schools, archdiocese schools and schools in the state of Iowa. The ultimate goal is that all students "benchmark" or be 80% proficient in these core areas. This assessment is called FastBridge (Formative Assessment System for Teachers) and is given 3 times during the school year.

** As noted in the chart our Math is very close to the goal of 80% and well above other schools in comparison. While we continue to reach the 80% proficiency in Math, the bulk of our work will be in the area of Reading. This data will be what drives our professional development, our whole group instruction, our small group instruction and individual practice with teachers.

** **Prairie Lakes AEA** consists of schools in the area serving nearly 32,000 students in 38 public school districts and 11 nonpublic schools in a 14-county area (8,072 square miles) of north central Iowa (Calhoun, Clay, Buena Vista, Dickinson, Emmet, Greene, Hamilton, Humboldt, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Sac, Webster & Wright).

Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Student "A"
reads **20 minutes**
each day

3600 minutes in
a school year

1,800,000 words



90th percentile

Student "B"
reads **5 minutes**
each day

900 minutes in
a school year

282,000 words



50th percentile

Student "C"
reads **1 minute**
each day

180 minutes in
a school year

8,000 words



10th percentile

By the end of 6th grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)

Why Reading at a Young Age Matters

The evidence is overwhelming. Introducing a child to reading gives them one of the most important personal habits they'll need to have a successful career and a happy, productive life.

"First, it is difficult to overstate the importance of getting children off to an early successful start in reading."
—What Reading Does for the Mind

15 minutes / day
of independent reading can =
1 million+
words in a year.*

Children without basic literacy skills when they enter school are
3-4 times
more likely to drop out later.*

Reading to a child in an interactive style raises his or her IQ by over
6 points.*

Daily reading to children puts them almost
1 year
ahead of those who are not being read to.*



"For the majority of young people, enthusiastic and habitual reading is the single most predictive personal habit for the ability to achieve desirable life outcomes."
—After School Library Brief

The U.S. Dept. of Education maintains that avid reading promotes:

- ✓ Speech
 - ✓ Confidence
 - ✓ Memorization
- #1 better skills acquisition #2 superior grades #3 a desirable life as measured by income, profession, employment*

Good readers often have more financially rewarding jobs. They are **2.5x** more likely to earn \$850 or more a week.*

Children who read 3,000 words per day will be in the top 2% of standardized tests.

Children who read 20 words per day will be in the bottom 2% of standardized tests.*

Browse our books and resources at harpercollinschildrens.com

HarperCollinsChildren'sBooks

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Read / Read / Read!!
Your Students Will Benefit!!

