St Thomas More College

School report 2010 - School Renewal Action Plan

The following report portrays a very positive year for St Thomas More College and it reflects the efforts of an extremely productive and dynamic learning community. The report is based on the College’s Internal School Review process which has been validated by our College Pastoral Board and Brisbane Catholic Education. The considerations and future directions listed as part of this report will be used to guide our goal setting for 2011. The College goals for 2011 will be published early in 2011.

Priority 1 Religious and Evangelising Mission

Goals Identified at the Start of 2010

- Increase parent and wider community awareness of and participation in College prayer, ritual and formation activities.
- Extend prayer and reflection activities in Pastoral Care through an emphasis on the importance of prayer life and the development of a College prayer.
- Extend prayer and reflection activities for staff and students through the use of the charisms of each Junnebei.
- Evaluate the spiritual elements of the College camp and retreat programs in the context of the College Pastoral Care Programs.
- To extend the development of social justice awareness and initiatives in the whole college approach to faith life and Pastoral Care
- **Examine “Religious Identity and Culture” for internal review (1.1) Final rating of 4 out of a possible 7**

The College has continued to grow as a faith community. Central to this growth has been our focus in 2010 on prayer life. College staff were provided with professional development on prayer and were encouraged to ensure that prayer was central to the morning Pastoral Care Class. To assist in the promotion of better class prayers, the College timetable was altered to provide additional time at the start of the day to enable more time for prayer. Staff also encouraged students to be part of the prayer focus through the development of a prayer space in each Pastoral Care Room. The development of a College prayer book was also an achievement in 2010.

The College continued to support social justice initiatives and in particular Caritas (through Project Compassion), the St Vincent de Paul Winter Appeal and Christmas Hampers and Catholic Mission. A new initiative in 2010 was ‘Cupcake Day’. This was led by the student
St Vincent de Paul group. This activity received media recognition through the Catholic Leader.

In 2010 we welcomed our new Campus Minister Megan Stannard. Megan has quickly settled into College life and has developed an excellent rapport with staff and students. Her strong connection with the Our Lady of Lourdes parish and primary school further strengthens our already strong community connections. Staff have continued to build linkages and relationships with local parishes. The College is fortunate that the parish priests of Sunnybank and Salisbury provide a monthly morning mass for the students and staff at St Thomas More and it is pleasing to see more students attending our morning masses each month.

The new MPC building has allowed us to develop a greater sense of occasion at our formal gatherings and the extension of prayer and ritual has played an important part of these occasions. The assemblies have used our College symbols – the bowl, jug and towel, candle, and crucifix to remind students of the charisms of each of our Junnebeis.

The College continued to further develop and refine our retreat program and there was some growth in integrating this program with the year level Life Skills programs. The generosity of staff in offering their time and energy in joining their Pastoral Care class as part of our overnight camp/retreat program supports the development of better staff and student relationships.

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**Proposed directions and Considerations for 2011**

- Need to further develop sacred spaces in the school and use of College symbols
- Need to further develop the charisms of the Junnebei and the development of a service culture within the student group.
- Need to publish the Junior School Religious Education program.
- Development of four specific Mission Weeks to focus mission week fundraising and promote the charisms of the Junnebeis.
- The development of a College grace to be said before lunch.
**Priority 2 Student Learning Outcomes**

Goals Identified at the Start of 2010

- Provide ongoing assistance with the continued implementation of Moodle to align planning, teaching, learning, assessment and evaluation.
- Utilisation of data to inform teaching and learning through the examination of current assessment practices
- Finalise and publish the College Learning Framework and the development of a whole school approach to teaching and learning
- The introduction of an all school literacy program.
- Development of dedicated programs to prepare students for external tests e.g. QCS, NAPLAN
- Examine “Learning and Teaching” for internal review (2.3) (Final Rating of 4 out of a possible 7)

The College has continued to provide an inclusive Catholic education to all students. This year we have reviewed our NAPLAN and Year 12 Outcomes data and spent considerable energy on curriculum review and development. This process was informed by consultation with staff and parent bodies as well as our historical Year 12 Outcomes and NAPLAN data. Staff professional development was aimed at improving the authenticity and connection of assessment tasks and on improving pedagogy through a focus on the teaching of thinking skills. The College had two teams of teachers involved in the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program. These groups looked at improving our College wide approach to planning through the development of a cross departmental unit planner and in the development of subjects in order to offer a discrete vocational pathway for our senior students.

Curriculum renewal has been one of the real success stories of 2010. New buildings such as the Practical Arts Building and the Multipurpose Centre have delivered state of the art facilities for many of our elective subjects. The development of the VET pathway in the senior school is exciting and will ultimately lead to better learning outcomes for our students at the end of Year 12. This program has been further strengthened by the provision of school provided transport for students undertaking a TAFE course as part of their senior pathway in 2011. This will provide our Year 11 and 12 students with access to a more inclusive and diversified educational pathway and ultimately lead to improved student engagement in curriculum. The bus has been fully sponsored by Bendigo Bank at Acacia Ridge and their support further strengthens our community partnerships.

The College has also reviewed the structure of the timetable in 2010. Following this review there will be the inclusion of whole school core learning programs for each year level in 2011. In 2011 the weekly program will include – Year 8 - Literacy Improvement Program, Year 9 - ICT skills to support the rollout of our 1 to 1 laptop program, Year 10 - Careers Education, Year 11- Study skills and Year 12- QCST preparation. These programs will allow for a more dedicated approach to whole year level needs and the opportunity to implement curriculum developments of 2010 such as the year 8 literacy program, career education and the QCST preparation program.
The year has also seen continued improvement in the use of our Moodle online learning management system. Staff have continued to develop teaching resources as the system moves from being an at home learning program to a fully inclusive classroom learning management system. The rollout of our one to one laptop program for Year 9 students was enhanced by the work done in previous years in regard to the development and refinement of Moodle.

This year has been one where there has been a heightened emphasis on the skills of teaching and a focus on the quality of work produced by students. Teachers have reviewed their practice and adapted to the renewed focus on the explicit teaching of skills. There has also been an onus on students to work harder and to produce the best work they are possible of producing. The introduction of longer library hours after school and in particular the formation of a Homework Club has provided students with better support in regard to developing a better academic work ethic.

Our NAPLAN results reflect quality teaching and our commitment to a holistic and inclusive educational experience. The results will be reviewed as we further develop the programs delivered in 2010 in preparation for the implementation of Core Skills lessons in 2011. These weekly lessons will provide the opportunity for a better coordinated and implemented whole school approach to fundamental literacy and numeracy skills in Years 8 and 9. The College has been fortunate in 2010 to have the services of a Literacy and Improvement Teacher. This year the role has focussed on working with staff in regard to the incorporation of literacy and numeracy skills as part of all classroom learning. There has also been considerable time spent preparing a school wide program in preparation for 2011.

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<th>NAPLAN Results Comparison of STMC to QLD</th>
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Staff have also undertaken work in preparation for the Australian Curriculum. In response, there have been adjustments to the Junior School Curriculum as the College prepares for the introduction of the Australian Curriculum in the Junior School in 2012. There has been a
slight adjustment to the mandatory core units in Years 8 to 10 to reflect the requirements of the Australian Curriculum and an increase in the elective options available to students.

Proposed directions and Considerations for 2011

- The introduction of the Unit Planner as a whole school approach to the development and planning of units of work.
- Further enhancing the use of Moodle in the classroom. The College will appoint a consultant for 2011 to support Moodle and the continued roll out of our student laptop program
- Continued review of senior pathways program with an evaluation of new subjects and an evaluation of the College’s transport assisted TAFE link.
- Work on the implementation of the Australian Curriculum and in particular a focus on the assessment and reporting requirements.
- Implementation of whole school Core Skills programs.

Priority 3 Student Support

Goals Identified at the Start of 2010

- Implementation of the new EAP processes to enhance learning outcomes for supported students.
- For the Pastoral Care Core Team to work towards the establishment of a whole school approach to Pastoral Care.
- To incorporate the spirit and ethos of the College Junnebeis into the Pastoral Care programs.
- To refine the routines for students in relation to College assemblies and gatherings.
- The development of a process to inform teachers of the specific learning needs of students prior to the academic year or as students commence
- **Examine “Learning Support” for internal review (3.1) (Final Rating of 4 out of a possible 7)**

St Thomas More College is well regarded as a place where students are afforded a high level of pastoral support. In 2010 there has been continued growth in this aspect of College life
with an emphasis on the review of our whole school approach to Pastoral Care and how we support students in the classroom. Through the leadership of Kathleen Ashton (Support Teacher Inclusive Education) there was a more coordinated approach to the dissemination of information to teaching staff in regard to the individual learning needs of each student. The review of our Learning Support program found evidence to support continued growth in the development of staff capacity to make the necessary educational adjustments in order to cater for the diverse learning needs of students. The move of the Learning Support Room to J Block has also created a flexible learning space to cater for the specific needs of students.

The year saw the return to a comprehensive Life skills program for all year levels. This program has spiralling themes which support the age appropriate social, emotional and faith requirements of our students. It has been enhanced in 2010 by the move to longer Pastoral Care periods in the morning. Pastoral Coordinators are now in the process of reviewing and evaluating their Life Skills programs in preparation for 2011. The year also saw the introduction of pastoral intervention programs with dedicated 8 week programs led by outside facilitators for boys and girls addressing relevant and specific life skill needs.

The spirit and ethos of the Junnebei system continues to grow and underpins an impressive co-curricular program. This spirit was undoubtedly enhanced by the introduction of the College’s first Sports Awards Dinner. The night was an outstanding success and when put alongside our Performing Arts Gala evening, the two events showcase the impressive array of opportunities for students to participate in College life. Our co-curricular program works to support our pastoral care of students and I am impressed by the commitment of staff and parents who work extra hours to support the many co-curricular offerings. Special mention must be made of the Excellence in the Arts Program. The program continues to grow both in student participation and reputation under the leadership and dedication of Jessica Galatola. The production of Grease was a standout in a year packed with many high quality performing arts performances.

Staff also completed mandatory training in student protection as part of their professional development program.

Proposed directions and Considerations for 2011

- The recommendations from the Shaddock Review of schools will be the focus for our Learning Support Department in 2011. The College will look at implementing dedicated early intervention programs to address literacy and numeracy skills for students with learning difficulties in Years 8 and 9.
- Review of College’s Student Behaviour Support Plan supported by ongoing development of RTC processes and the professional development of staff.

Priority 4 Staff Support

Goals Identified at the Start of 2010
- To see greater alignment of staff development to whole school goals through better evaluation of requested PD.
- To provide opportunities for staff to become involved in the religious life of the College.
- To provide relevant ICT professional development for staff to assist with the implementation of technology in the classroom.
- To support the Pastoral Care of staff through the introduction of a staff well-being program.
- To further develop the existing new staff induction and formation program.
- Examine “Professional Learning community” for internal review (4.1)

This year has seen a continuation of the work done in 2009 in regard to enhancing the professional learning culture. Professionally, there has been a focus on building pedagogical practice in regard to the explicit teaching of thinking skills. Staff professional development looked at assessment design, the explicit teaching of thinking skills and an introduction to a whole school curriculum framework through the Dimensions of Learning. These professional development sessions were supported by the after school ‘Coffee and Computers’ workshops which had a focus on IT skills and Moodle support. These workshops were combined with dedicated Moodle inservice days to support teachers with the introduction of the College’s laptop program.

Additionally there has been a number of staff involved in the Australian Government Quality Teacher Program. Staff have undertaken active learning projects in regard to unit design and the development of VET pathways in the senior school. These projects have had direct benefits for our learning community with some significant outcomes in regard to curriculum initiatives in 2011. The QLD College of Teachers’ requirement in regard to the recording of professional learning has also been addressed as part of the professional learning program in 2010.

There is a strong sense of pastoral care and positive relationships within the staff community. Staff have demonstrated a willingness to support the College’s School Renewal Program and this is reflected by staff commitment to be part of professional learning committees, such as the ICT Committee and the Literacy Improvement Committee.

The staff induction program and staff well-being programs have been enhanced in 2010 with positive feedback received from staff.

In 2010 the College amended the format of some of the parent evenings in order to better inform students and parents about curriculum matters. The Junior School Information night (A first time event), the Laptop Program nights and the Year 10 into Year 11 subject selection nights were all well received by parents and students. The nights were well prepared by our academic staff and reflected a professional approach to curriculum at the College.

**Proposed directions and Considerations for 2011**

- Staff have worked hard in 2010 in order to review pedagogy and to provide a more comprehensive curriculum in the senior school. A discrete dual pathway of academic and vocational senior school options will be introduced in 2011 and there will be a need to prepare work programs and units of work associated with the introduction of new subjects – Mathematics C, the SAS in Social Science and Creative Arts. There will be a need to provide professionally learning opportunities for staff in these areas.
There will be a need for continued staff support in the area of ICLT skills. In this regard the College has appointed a consultant to work with staff each week in order to support classroom pedagogy and planning.

**Priority 5 Partnerships and Relationships**

Goals Identified at the Start of 2010

- Development of induction and formation processes for new students and families.
- To examine current (and develop new approaches) for engagement with local primary schools.
- The development of a volunteer register and the promotion of an end of year College function to thank volunteers.
- Exploration of possibilities to increase the level of community involvement through targeted sponsorship programs.

A key feature of St Thomas More College is the strong sense of community. This was my first impression upon arrival and over the year I have continued to be impressed by the strength of the relationships which exist within the College community.

The College’s strong performing arts program has been supported by a hard working parent support group. Many hours went in to supporting students in the production of Grease as well as the many other events throughout the year. The support of parents in co-curricular life has also extended to the sporting fields with parents volunteering to assist with sports teams and in particular the Confraternity and QISSN carnivals. Parents provided great support to the College’s inaugural sports award dinner with over 300 guests attending.

The College Pastoral Board, Finance Committee and the Parents and Friends have been dynamic and I thank them for their support in 2010. Marie Hillcoat and the volunteers in the uniform shop have not only provided a great service to the families of the College but have also acted to support and welcome new families into the St Thomas More community. There is clearly a positive and supportive culture in the College parent community and this was reflected in the 2009 who’s coming to school? survey, with one hundred per cent of respondents agreeing that the College is a welcoming and caring community.

The College made significant progress in 2010 in regard to developing further connections with our local primary schools. The introduction of the STMC Primary School Sport Cluster in term 2 was an outstanding success. Students from Our Lady of Lourdes, St Stephens, St Sebastian’s, Pallara State School and Our Lady of Fatima competed in Soccer, League Tag and Netball competitions at our College run by our students. This was an outstanding promotion for the College and the feedback from primary schools was very positive.
The College has also appointed a Business Liaison Officer in partnership with St Bernadine’s, Our Lady of Lourdes, St Stephen’s and Our Lady of Fatima. Desley Armitage works to promote our College and also to source sponsorship and grants. Significantly, in 2010 we have formed a partnership with Bendigo Bank Acacia Ridge to support our VET Pathways Program. As part of this partnership Bendigo Bank are sponsoring a new 14 seater bus in order that we can provide better access for our students to outside school opportunities such as TAFE. In addition we have sourced sponsorship for 2011 to support the Homework Club through the Sunnybank Community Sports Club as well as smaller but no less significant sponsorship and donations from other members of our parent and local business community. This new initiative provides our students with better resources as well strengthening our profile in the local community.

In March of this year the College formed a partnership with Nudgee International College in the promotion of St Thomas More College to international students. This direction was aimed at supporting the introduction of additional academic subjects in the senior school and possibly the future introduction of Chinese as a subject. With a forty per cent drop in international student numbers in Australia for 2011 this has impacted on the expected intake for 2011. We currently have 5 students enrolled under this program for next year but expect this to build in coming years.

The College also worked closely with primary schools to create better links. The signing of a fee relief agreement (for families who have children enrolled in both schools) with St Stephen’s and Our Lady of Fatima will provide better links between the College and these schools. These links are improving and are reflected in strong enrolment enquiries and strong interest at the College Visitors’ days. The most recent day attracted close to 200 visitors.

**Proposed directions and Considerations for 2011**

- Primary school sport program to run again with opportunity for STMC students who are completing the newly introduced Certificate II in community recreation to gain valuable industry experience.
- The Business Liaison Officer will continue to explore opportunities which enhance our connections and access to funding.
Priority 6 Information, Communication and Learning Technologies

Goals Identified at the Start of 2010

- To examine the use of ICT in teaching units prior to the roll out of a student laptop program.
- To develop a program of IT workshops for staff run by staff.
- To further develop Moodle interactivity
- Review web-based access for staff through STMC Website.
- Examine “Learning and Teaching” for internal review (6.1)

This year has been an extremely busy and significant year in regard to ICLT. At the start of the year the College undertook a review of our entire computer network in collaboration with Brisbane Catholic Education- IT Services. The result was an IT Transition Plan which will provide the strategic direction of IT services at the College. This year the College decommissioned a number of local servers and migrated to web based services provided by Brisbane Catholic Education. This will save the College expenditure on services that can be better and more efficiently delivered by Brisbane Catholic Education. The major changes here for staff and students was the introduction of web based email accounts. These accounts provide home access to email communication for staff and students. The other significant change was the development of a College Portal where staff could have access to a platform of services including file storage, school policies and procedures, student and staff notices and other BCE services.

The College also transitioned from the MAZE based information management system to the BCE web based eMinerva and Dynamics AX systems. All schools in the BCE system will be transitioned in the coming year. The transition caused some interruption to services during July. Despite some early challenges staff have adapted relatively quickly to the new system. The online marking of class rolls and networked student notices are now a common part of the start of the school day. As part of this new system the College will be a pilot school for the new SMS attendance alert system in 2011.

A significant event this year in regard to ICLT was the roll out of our Laptop Program to all Year 9 students in July. The College conducted parent/student information evenings as part of this roll out and much energy was put in by the IT Committee in the lead up to the roll out. The IT Committee has done a wonderful job in preparing for the roll out. Our program as well as being sustainable and well-resourced provides our students with the latest technology to assist their classroom learning. The model adopted by the College is one that is now being viewed and adopted by other BCE schools and thanks must go to the energy and commitment demonstrated by staff in preparing for this program. The most recent fault report showed very few technical issues or breakages. The challenge lies ahead in regard to ensuring that the computer is not only well cared for but becomes integral to classroom learning at STMC.

The College also undertook an upgrade of the web page to provide a fresher image to align with new marketing brochures produced in collaboration with the marketing department at Brisbane Catholic Education. The web page is not yet complete and we will continue to build
the content in 2011 so that we can showcase to the wider world the many great things about this College. 2010 also saw some changes to the College newsletter. This year we changed the weekly newsletter to two distinct newsletters: each fortnight there is a detailed newsletter with reports from the leadership team and other areas of the College. The following week is a reminder newsletter with reminders and events of the coming week. The format has been well received and the fortnightly large edition is often in excess of eight pages of reports and happenings. In addition the College moved to email as the principle means of communicating the newsletter. The hardcopy version is still available to those families who have requested this version but the overwhelming response has been positive to this initiative.

On top of this the College has continued to invest in Moodle our online learning management system. The earlier work done here has greatly supported the introduction of our laptop program.

The College has made significant progress in regards to ICLT in 2010. This has been achieved within budget and at a price which has not put a burden on the College’s future finances. This success can be attributed to a hard working ICLT team who have acted with discernment and vision. This team will continue to plan and review our ICLT as we continue to stay at the forefront of new technologies.

Proposed directions and Considerations for 2011

- The continued roll out of our laptop program and the planning of onsite computer services to service those students outside this program. There is clearly a need to provide specialised computer labs as well as general laboratories as part of the transition to laptops.
- The ongoing development of the College’s website with more up to date information in regard to events at the College.

Priority 7 Resourcing Catholic Schools

This year the College opened new facilities built under the State and Federally funded Block Grants Authority (BGA). The new Multipurpose Centre (Including Home Economics, Music and Drama rooms) and the refurbished Practical Arts Building (Industrial technology, Visual Arts and Multi Media Rooms) totalled in excess of four million dollars. These buildings have provided our students and staff with excellent learning environments. In addition to these buildings the College also spent in excess of two hundred thousand dollars under the Federal Governments Building Education Revolution (BER) to upgrade classrooms in A and J Blocks. New stairs to A block were also provided as part of the Practical Arts BGA. The J Block staffroom was refurbished as part of the BER.

The College also undertook other landscaping projects. The area between the new MPC and PA Building has been landscaped and a new concrete amphitheatre built to accommodate outside performing arts shows. This area is now an attractive place for students to gather at
breaks and there is a clear landscape link between the two new developments. There has been a renewed effort to ensure that the college presents well and this has been reflected in student behaviour and care for the grounds.

The demountable building has been relocated from the centre of the school and placed near the MPC and tennis courts. This building is now being equipped as a weight training and cardio facility for the HPE staff and students. In addition a new Board Room and staff meeting rooms have been created in the administration building.

Directions and considerations for 2011

- The College is currently undertaking a review of the building master plan. This is in readiness for a BGA application to refurbish the general classrooms in A Block and Science Block Laboratories.
- The College will also investigate options in regard to a Trade Training Centre application and seek to partner with other schools in this application. The TTC will provide more Industry offerings for our students who are undertaking a VET Pathway in Senior.

Summary

2010 has been a year of significant growth at St Thomas More College. The new buildings provide physical evidences that change has taken place at the College. However it would be wrong to see the change as only one of physical structures. The more significant changes of 2010 can be seen in the work undertaken by staff in regard to curriculum renewal, the building of community relations and ICLT developments. The College has reviewed our curriculum offerings and we have responded to the data in regard to NAPLAN and year 12 outcomes. There is considerable work still to do but we are always guided by our mission statement and our Catholic intention to provide a truly inclusive school community. We must provide an educational pathway that values the student who is on a VET Pathway as equally as those students who are on Academic Pathway. We must also continue to support our staff and students in the provision of our extensive co-curricular program. I look forward to the opportunity in 2011 to build on our efforts and achievements of this year.

Peter Elmore
Principal
27-10-2010