

St. Thomas More School plans for the next 50 years

By Laura Deavers
Editor

For the past five years, St. Thomas More School has focused on planning for its future.

Meetings of the St. Thomas More School Board, the St. Thomas More Parish Council, current and former school parents, parishioners, teachers and others who have a vested interest in the 50-year-old school have recommended the same areas that need to be addressed, said Dr. Judy Armstrong, STM principal. "Everyone spotlighted the same areas to complement the curriculum growth that we are seeing," Armstrong noted.

To accomplish this, St. Thomas More School has put together a master plan for constructing, remodeling and modernizing its educational facilities.

"The school board has taken the time to analyze campus needs for now and into the future," Armstrong said. The board is working with the diocese to follow diocesan procedures, protocol and regulations concerning the work that will begin this school year.

"We are looking at constructing state-of-the-art buildings to complement what we have in place," said Armstrong. "We want to give the students the greatest curriculum, facilities and environment for them to succeed."

Armstrong said the first priority is to renovate the fifth- and sixth-grade classroom building. Currently these classrooms open to the outside. A commons area, similar to the one that was constructed for the STM junior high building, will be built so the fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms will

be entered through that area. The fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms are some of the oldest on the STM campus, explained Armstrong.

To enhance the curriculum, a new science lab will be built for the junior high, creating two science labs on the campus. An additional computer lab will be part of the new library. "With the integration of technology within the curriculum, we want to allow teachers the opportunity to bring whole classes to the library to study geography, work on math programs and participate in science webcasts," Armstrong explained.

A new music/band room and a new administration/library/media center will be built. This new administration/media building will become the "front door" to the school.

Security on school campuses is always a concern. A fenced secure zone will be built around the perimeter of the campus, and gates will be placed at main pedestrian and student entrances to the campus.

Also planned is the expansion of the lobby, restrooms, and concession space in the gymnasium.

A new outdoor assembly area and playground for younger students will be built adjacent to the new administration/media center building. And a courtyard will be created between this new building and the two-story classroom building.

School parking and carpool lanes will be improved for easier traffic flow.

Armstrong said she is excited about working with the St. Thomas More leadership to provide the best learning environment for the 900 St. Thomas More students.