

Dear Parents,

March 16, 2021

First, let me say thank you for attending our Parent Information Webinar last week. It was good to be with you. We had nearly 350 attendees and are thrilled with the positive reception we have received. When we first began this STADLP program in September 2020, we did it as a response to the pandemic. As the year has gone by, we realized that this is a wonderful opportunity to continue to do something new and innovative, as we respond to a need. We are truly grateful that you have sent your children to St. Thomas Aquinas Distance Learning Program and we are hopeful that you will continue with us in September. As St. Thomas Aquinas transitions to an Online Academy within the Diocese of Brooklyn, you will have the option for a premiere online learning environment for your child(ren) that is faith-filled and a unique learning experience.

For those of you who were not able to attend the Webinars last week, we would like to take this opportunity to re-iterate some of the points made during the Webinar. (the slides covered at the meeting are available [here](#).)

- First, we are establishing a new K-8 Catholic online school that will offer Religion, Math, ELA, Social Studies and Science, as well as Phys Ed and other special subjects through online education. There will be opportunities for student clubs and other activities, and we will look for student and parent input as we prepare. Parent engagement is very important, and we encourage participation in building our community as it unfolds. Our patron, Saint Thomas Aquinas is the patron saint of universities, students and schools. We pray for his guidance as we create this new school.
 - This is a change from current St Thomas Aquinas **Distance Learning Program**, in that this year's program was an online curriculum support to your local Academy or Parish School.
 - The new institution for the 2021-22 school year will be a separate entity from the local 'brick and mortar' schools. It will be its own independent academy within the Diocese of Brooklyn.
 - When you choose to enroll for 2021-22 at the new **St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Online Academy, STACOA** will become your home school.
The evolution to a full academy, was done to provide parents and students a permanent, online, enhanced Catholic education.
 - Allowing teachers to focus fully and only on online students is seen as best practice and provides a better experience for students and the teachers.

We are currently enrolling for the 2021-2022 academic year that will begin on Tuesday, 7 September 2021. Enrolling at St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Online Academy means that you remain with your home parish for sacraments and for any extracurricular sports or parish-based activities. The academics and educational content will be delivered through the online system at St Thomas Aquinas. We are collaborating with Catholic Virtual for our content which aligns with New York State standards.

- Second, if you would like to have your child (or children) enroll in the new school, called the St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Online Academy (STACOA), please begin the enrollment process with the registration reservation deposit at: <https://stthomasaquinasbq.org/admissions/>
- Finally, if you have not yet registered at your brick-and-mortar Home Academy or Parish School but want to send your child to STACOA or have questions about STACOA, we will provide you with the guidance you need. You may click on the [website](#) for more information, or contact the main office at stadlpoffice@stthomasaquinasbq.org or at 718 965-7357.

Again, thank you for entrusting your child(ren) to us. We are grateful for your partnership and look forward to seeing you in September. May St. Thomas Aquinas be our guide!

God bless you and your family, and Happy St. Patrick's Day,

Steve Haessler, STACOA Principal