



Common Core State Standards

A Statement by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)

Catholic schools have a long-standing commitment to academic excellence that is rooted in the faith-based mission of Catholic education. The Common Core State Standards in no way compromise the Catholic identity or educational program of a Catholic school.

The Common Core State Standards initiative, begun in 2007, is a state-led, bipartisan effort that is not a requirement for participation in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) or any other federally-funded program, and there are no mandates for any Catholic school to follow any federal rules if they adopt the Common Core. Adoption of the Common Core is voluntary; individual states, Catholic dioceses and other private schools make their own decisions about whether to adopt the standards.

The Common Core State Standards are a set of high-quality academic expectations that all students should master by the end of each grade level. The standards establish consistent learning goals for all students that focus on preparing them to succeed in college and careers in a globally competitive workplace. The standards define and clearly communicate grade-specific goals and inform parents about learning outcomes, making it easier for parents to collaborate with teachers in helping their children achieve success.

The Common Core State Standards are not a curriculum. A curriculum includes what is taught, when it is taught, how it is taught and what materials to use. None of these items are included in the Common Core State Standards. For Catholic schools, all of these elements will continue to be determined by diocesan superintendents, principals and teachers working to meet the needs of their students.

The Common Core represents a fundamental shift in the teaching and learning process. The Common Core establishes clear, measurable goals for students that assist teachers in making instructional decisions. The standards place emphasis on creativity, critical and analytical thinking and application to curriculum content. The Common Core is not a national curriculum. It guides the way that instruction takes place in each classroom, allowing the Catholic school to develop its own curriculum content.

An excellent Catholic school provides a rigorous academic curriculum that integrates faith and knowledge. As trained professionals, Catholic school administrators and teachers continually seek the best instructional methods for educating students. In the past, dioceses and schools have developed their own standards or adapted state standards for use with their own curriculum. Some will continue to do this.

To assist those incorporating the new standards, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) and partners in Catholic education established the Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative (CCCII). CCCII provides resources to design and direct the implementation of Common Core within the culture and context of a Catholic school curriculum. Thus Catholic schools can infuse the standards with the faith, principles, values and social justice themes inherent in the mission of a Catholic school.

NCEA, the largest private professional education organization in the world, provides leadership, direction and service to its members through a variety of professional development activities that support whatever teaching and learning activities the individual school chooses implement.