



## Common Core State Standards

A Statement by the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)

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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 Infusion 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.



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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.

*Diocese of Cleveland*  
OFFICE OF CATECHETICAL FORMATION AND EDUCATION

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### **What are the Common Core State Standards?\***

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Initiative is a state-led effort that established a single set of clear educational standards for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts and mathematics that states voluntarily adopt. The standards are designed to ensure that students graduating from high school are prepared to enter credit bearing entry courses in two or four-year college programs or enter the workforce. The standards are clear and concise to ensure that parents, teachers, and students have a clear understanding of the expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening, language and mathematics in school.

### **The Major Shift in Education**

The major shift in education required by the CCSS is that education will concentrate on depth of knowledge and skill development as opposed to the very wide scope of general knowledge acquired. Students will be better able to understand the intricacies of problems, and they will be better equipped to solve real world problems and design workable, efficient and globally conscious solutions.

### **Ohio and the Ohio Department of Education**

**Ohio** along with Forty-four other states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Education Activity have adopted the Common Core State Standards so far.

The Ohio Department of Education has created models for school districts to use in aligning curricula to the CCSS. The Ohio Department of Education is also revising social studies and science standards to reflect the literacy standards in the CCSS. The CCSS represents the minimum of what students need in order to be successful in college and careers. The Office of Catechetical Formation and Education of the Diocese of Cleveland has a curriculum that goes beyond the standards.

### **Religion Education and Literacy Skill Development**

Some Catholic institutions, such as the Center for Catholic School Effectiveness at Loyola University Chicago, have created guidelines to assist catechists and all teachers in using Common Core literacy skills in religion knowledge lessons and in the infusion of religion into the content areas. Students will apply the CCSS skills developed for reading comprehension, speaking and writing to religion education as well as Catholicity infusion into all content areas. This should promote a deeper understanding of Church teaching and greater skill in speaking and writing to evangelize the faith.

### **The Importance of the Common Core State Standards\***

High standards that are consistent across states provide teachers, parents, and students with a set of clear expectations that are aligned to the expectations in college and careers. The standards promote equity by ensuring all students, no matter where they live, are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad. Unlike previous state standards, which were unique to every state in the country, the Common Core State Standards enable collaboration between states on a range of tools and policies.

\*Information taken from Common Core State Standards Initiative website:

<http://www.corestandards.org>