

Statement of the Pennsylvania Diocese concerning the Common Core

Common Core Standards have been implemented in varying degrees throughout diocesan schools in PA. Catholic schools are aligning themselves with Common Core to provide a clear set of shared goals and expectations for the knowledge and skills students need in English Language Arts and Mathematics to ultimately prepare them to graduate college and career ready. The standards establish what students need to learn; they do not dictate how teachers should teach or how administration can create the standards and curriculum. Teachers will continue to devise lesson plans and tailor instruction to the individual needs of the students in their classroom. In addition, Catholic school administration will remain in full control of all student record keeping. Records will remain confidential and do not enter any data base outside of Catholic school administration.

The Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative (CCCII) has been established through the Department of Administrators of Catholic Education (CACE). According to Lorraine A. Ozar, Ph. D., a member of the leadership team for the Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative, "Catholic schools need to pay attention to the fact that the Common Core Standards are here".

The CCCII is in the process of creating resources to assist Catholic educators around the country in Catholic schools. The PA Catholic school curriculum has always been aligned to the Pennsylvania State Standards as well as the National Math and English Standards. Control of the curriculum has always been at the diocesan level. This will not change. We have diocesan curriculum committees who will continue to review textbooks and curriculum annually. Diocesan Offices of Catholic Education will be responsible for releasing an approved textbook list and updating curriculum guidelines for our Catholic schools. Even though our curriculum is aligned to the PA standards, we do not administer the state assessments. Catholic schools use a variety of national achievement tests to measure their achievements, gaps, and goal's.

In addition, Diocesan Offices of Education work closely with the Intermediate Units in establishing our professional development programs for our teachers. We establish our goals and objectives and they in turn, support us with presenters and additional resources. The Intermediate Units are very supportive of our initiatives and respect our role as Catholic School educators.

Please be assured that our Catholic Identity and our mission will never be compromised. "An excellent Catholic School has a clearly articulated, rigorous curriculum aligned with relevant standards, 21st century skills, and Gospel value implemented through effective instruction" (CCCII). Our schools exist to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. As Diocesan Offices of Education, we envision education as a lifelong process that can actualize the full human and spiritual potential of all people, calling them to discover, internalize, proclaim, and live the Gospel message and to grow in faith.

Sincerely,
Sean P. McAleer, MGA
Director of Education
PA Catholic Conference