

Pittsburgh Catholics Against Common Core

PRESS RELEASE

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National Catholic Educational Association promoting controversial Common Core Standards across the country

Pittsburgh, PA – The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA), the largest private professional education organization in the world (according to their website), had its first national conference on June 30, 2013 in Nashville, TN in support of the very controversial Common Core State Standards. It has hosted a total of three conferences in major cities this summer, called “The Cure for the Common Core Conference” in addition to a convention this past spring that presented everything Common Core and “21st Century” education models.

Common Core is being hotly debated right now. Citizens and legislators in cities and states nationwide have sounded the alarm about Common Core and have decried its content and inferior standards. And yet – the NCEA is forging ahead in building and promoting a vast network of resources for Catholic schools centered on Common Core instruction and content. Sadly, over 100 Diocese across the country have succumbed to the secular influence of the Common Core proponents.

The NCEA is *actively* promoting and marketing these nationalized one-size fits all standards by providing teaching materials to Catholic Educators all over the country. They have helped create a Catholic version of Common Core, called the ***Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative (CCCII)*** that is stated to 1) empower Catholic schools and dioceses to **design and direct the implementation of the Common Core standards** within the culture and context of a Catholic school curriculum and 2) infuse the Common Core standards with the faith/principles/values/social justice themes inherent in the mission and Catholic identity of the school.

We are hearing from some Dioceses that they are using the Common Core Standards as a “minimum” benchmark for students, because Catholic standards are already so high. One wonders why they are needed if Catholic schools already have such a strong tradition and history of success with their existing standards. It is confounding to think that a minimum is even required when student performance can be, and always has been, measured against the higher standard. The Common Core proponents tell us that the Common Core standards are more rigorous and require higher order thinking skills. With this, why would they be considered “minimum” standards by Catholic school leaders? This makes no sense.

We are also hearing from our sources in several cities that parents simply cannot get

answers from their Diocesan school leaders about how it will be implemented. What parts of Common Core have been approved? What tests will be used? How will technology be used? Is the Diocese using CCCII? Parents are being left in the dark about these major shifts in how their children will be taught and how they will be expected to learn. This has led us to believe that Diocesan leaders are either very uninformed on this significant shift in Catholic education and are merely reiterating what they were sold, or they are purposefully being elusive.

Under the direction of Dr. Lorraine Ozar, from Loyola University Chicago, and Sr. Dale McDonald, Director of Public Policy for the NCEA, the CCCII has created a massive amount of materials and detailed teaching guidelines, even showing the controversial behavioral psychology methods and philosophies that it is based on (Bloom's taxonomy, Understanding by Design, Backward Design, Outcome Based Education, digital learning), weeks of unit content by grade and theme - including book lists for 1st grade that contain books referencing same-sex marriage, website links and books promoting social activism, questioning of parental authority and secular ideas such as building a Facebook page to make friends.

The NCEA has declared in a statement on their website that it does not "endorse" the Common Core State Standards. Yet it has fully embraced them; they were a "Launch supporter" of CCCII, according to the CCCII website. Its conferences allowed them to aggressively market this "Catholic" version of Common Core.

According to Dr. Lorraine Ozar in a July 2012 presentation, "Catholic schools need to pay attention to the fact that the common core standards are here and it is important to get on board". And Sr. Dale McDonald said in an April 2012 video, "even though these are called '**secular**' standards, there are ways in which we can make them personal to the Catholic School".

Why do Catholic schools "need to get on board"? Are they worried about accreditation? Will they lose funding from the government in some way? Are they fearful of losing their alliances with Public-private organizations and partnerships? Why are they embracing such an insidious agenda that is so diametrically opposed to the Catholic faith?

Dioceses are being pushed and swooned in this direction and then guided by the NCEA, when really they should be seizing this opportunity to proclaim the accolades of a traditional Catholic classical education. We could see a true renaissance in Catholic education if school leaders chose to lead and purposefully distinguish themselves from public schools. But if Common Core is implemented in Catholic Schools, will it be worth the sacrifice that families are making to send their children to them? There are so many questions that have gone unanswered. And we keep asking - why?

Catholic schools surely do not "need to get on board". There is always a choice. And as this moves forward, many more Catholic parents will be asking the same questions and wanting to take their Catholic schools back.

Pittsburgh Catholics Against Common Core is a group of Catholic parents who are dedicated to

educating citizens on the dangers of Common Core in Catholic schools and reversing the adoption of these standards in Catholic schools across the country.