

A Response to Concerns about the Common Core

August 1, 2014



Last year we had some conversations about the Common Core. At that time I told you that the Archdiocese of Omaha has not and does not plan to adopt the Common Core. As you know, we follow the standards that have been developed by the Archdiocese. I believe that I also indicated to some of you that the Archdiocese would put forth an "official" statement regarding the Common Core. Here is that statement...

Recognizing the public dialogue regarding the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), the Archdiocese of Omaha's Catholic School Office wishes to clarify our position on the CCSS. The Archdiocese of Omaha Catholic schools align curriculum standards with the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE). Nebraska is one of four states that has not adopted the Common Core standards, and the archdiocesan schools have not adopted them either. It is our belief that our archdiocesan standards already meet, and in most cases, exceed the standards and rigor outlined in the CCSS. In addition, we recognize our duty to ensure that any and all standards implemented within our Catholic schools honor our Catholic faith and preserve a strong Catholic identity. They are rooted in Catholic teaching and practice.

It is important to note that parents may see occasional classroom resources that are marked with the words "Common Core." Please know that a textbook or worksheet is not the total curriculum. They are resources used to support the curriculum which derives itself from our archdiocesan standards. The vast majority of book publishers, educational resources, and the like are aligning to Common Core and are marking their resources as such. Contrary to some media outlets, not all Common Core standards are questionable. A classroom teacher may find a suitable resource marked as Common Core to aid classroom instruction, but use of that resource does not imply that the school has adopted Common Core. A fair share of Common Core materials are well in line with our state standards, Archdiocesan standards, and are of no risk to our Catholic identity or values. A curriculum includes what is taught, when it is taught, how it is taught and what materials are used. None of these items are included in any academic 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. Building principals will continue to be diligent in their review of curriculum materials and resources to ensure that no inappropriate standards or materials will be utilized. We are committed to assure that Jesus Christ is at the center of every lesson taught in our schools.

If you have questions regarding materials used in your child's school, please direct your initial inquiry to your school's principal or head teacher.

Sincerely,

Patrick Slattery

Superintendent, Archdiocese of Omaha