

**Statement on the Common Core State Standards
June 4, 2013**

In the past few weeks, we have been contacted by a number of parents concerned about the integration of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) into the curriculum of Catholic schools. This concern has been echoed in the media and there seems to be a ground swell of political controversy about Common Core State Standards. Critics claim that the standards movement will evolve into a de facto “national curriculum” and Catholic schools will lose their distinctiveness if they integrate the standards into their existing curriculum.

The use of standards to inform curriculum and classroom instruction is not new for Catholic schools. The current Curriculum Framework posted on the [Archdiocesan school website](#) is largely based on the 1997 Illinois Learning Standards. At this point in our journey with the new CCSS standards, it is important to remember that the standards do not tell teachers how to teach or what texts they must teach. In fact, because Catholic schools do not have to meet state requirements (in fact, we exceed them!) for testing and student data collection, they are free to use only those elements of the standards that are in the best interest of their students.

We are confident that our schools will find that the integration of the Common Core State Standards will complement the existing expectations for academic excellence that have historically been at the core of Catholic education. We know that our schools are focused on preparing students for the challenges of college and careers in the 21st century. As Tony Wagner, author of [The Global Achievement Gap](#), states, “The rigor that matters most for the twenty-first century is demonstrated mastery of the core competencies for work, citizenship and life-long learning. In today’s world it’s not how much you know that matters; *it’s what you can do with what you know.*”

The goal of Catholic education is to develop our students’ God-given talents while preparing them for the challenges of the world. This preparation is not just focused on academics but on formation of students as persons who are able to critically consider and address an author’s perspective on a topic or find a solution to a complex problem in a thoughtful manner that does not compromise the values of our faith. It is our belief that the integration of the Common Core State Standards will give our schools an additional motivation to provide students with a rigorous education that is second to none.

We are open to your concerns and suggestions about our journey with the Common Core State Standards. The Office of Catholic Schools will continue to offer strong support to Archdiocesan schools to ensure that the integration of the CCSS will complement and enrich our academic programs.

For more information, visit our Resource Portal’s [CCSS Page](#).