



Common Core FAQ's *Archdiocese of Cincinnati*

This document outlines frequently asked questions about the Common Core and the Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. If you have additional questions that have not been addressed, please contact the Catholic Schools Office (see the last page for contact information).

What is the Common Core? Where did it come from?

Historically, all states have been charged with developing instructional standards for the students within public schools in their state. These standards express what students should know and be able to do by the time they leave a particular grade. For example, a typical instructional standard for second grade Math is: “Students will measure the length of an object by selecting and using appropriate tools such as rulers, yardsticks, meter sticks, and measuring tapes.”

In the mid-2000’s, several states began to come together to develop a unified set of instructional standards around the subjects of Math and English/Language Arts. This eventually was entitled the Common Core Standards. These standards were based on an expansive body of research, and over 10,000 educators contributed to their formation. To date, the Common Core has been adopted by 45 states.

How are the Common Core Standards Different?

The Common Core was instigated, in part, by research stating that students graduating from high schools are not prepared for college. Similarly, numerous studies have detailed how other countries are surpassing the United States in the quality of education.

Previously, teachers were asked to teach an enormous number of standards to their students. The Common Core defines fewer standards that are directly linked to success in college and career. Some have called this teaching a “mile deep” instead of a “mile wide, inch deep”.

Who has endorsed the Common Core?

The Common Core has been endorsed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the College Board, the U.S. Army, and numerous other organizations (see www.corestandards.org/resources/statements-of-support).

Is the Common Core a “Curriculum”?

No. The Common Core is a set of instructional standards that express what students should know and be able to do. A curriculum is a full instructional program, which includes instructional materials (such as textbooks, technology, etc.) as well as the actual teaching of the class instructor.



Is the Common Core a “National Curriculum”?

No. The Common Core was developed through an effort between states. The presidential administration, the U.S. Department of Education, and Congress were not involved in the development of the Common Core.

Is the Common Core academically rigorous?

The Common Core represents a significant increase in rigor in the subjects of Math and English/Language Arts. For more information, view the standards at www.corestandards.org.

Is the Archdiocese of Cincinnati adopting the Common Core?

No. The Archdiocese publishes its own set of instructional standards, entitled Graded Courses of Study, for all subjects in preschool through eighth grade. For years, the Graded Courses of Study in all subjects (except Religion) have been based upon the Ohio State Standards. We essentially take the Ohio Standards, make them more rigorous, and infuse them with the Catholic faith.



Ohio has now integrated the Common Core into the subjects of Math and English/Language Arts. As such, the Archdiocesan Graded Courses of Study for these subjects are based upon the Ohio standards. However, since we make the standards our own by providing more rigor and the Catholic faith, we effectively “adapt” (vs. “adopt”) the standards. This is an important distinction. Adoption involves using the standards exactly as they are written. Adaptation is modifying the standards to meet our own needs and faith identity. By adapting the Common Core (via the state standards), we are following the exact same practice that we have for years.

The Graded Courses of Study for the Archdiocese can be found at <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/catholic-schools-office/school-resources/curriculum/>.

What subjects have been adapted from the Common Core in the Archdiocese?

The elementary Graded Courses of Study for Math and English/Language Arts have been adapted from the Ohio State Standards, and therefore the Common Core. The math Graded Course of Study was implemented in the 2012-2013 school year, and English/Language Arts for grades P-5 followed in 2013-2014. The revised Graded Course of Study for English/Language Arts for grades 6-8 will be implemented next school year (2014-2015). The Graded Courses of Study for the Archdiocese can be found at <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/catholic-schools-office/school-resources/curriculum/>.

Is the Common Core anti-Catholic?

No. As a set of instructional standards, the Common Core is neither pro nor anti-Catholic in nature.

Does the Common Core require Catholic schools to use certain books? What if these books contain messages that are not consistent with the Catholic faith?

The Common Core standards do include a list of suggested texts for English/Language Arts, entitled “Appendix B”. However, as Catholic schools, we are not required to use these books. All books and instructional materials are carefully screened by each school to ensure that they are appropriate, of good quality, and consistent with our Catholic identity.



Are standardized tests being based upon the Common Core? Will our students take these tests?

Most significant standardized testing programs already reflect the Common Core, or will reflect the Common Core in the next few years. These include the various state tests in Ohio (such as the Ohio Graduation Test), the Iowa Assessments, the ACT, the SAT, and others.

Is the government creating a database of student information related to the Common Core?

To our knowledge, no. While we submit test scores from state assessment programs to the Ohio Department of Education, we are not aware of any effort to collect additional data by the state or federal governments, or any other outside entity for students in our Catholic schools.

The subjects of Math and English/Language Arts have been written for the Common Core. What about other subjects? Will Catholic schools follow the other subjects?

The writing process is underway for the Common Core standards in Science and Social Studies. It is not yet certain when these subjects will be completed. If the state of Ohio adopts these standards, our schools will adapt them as well. If there are elements within these standards that contradict Church teachings or Catholic doctrine, we will absolutely not include them within our Graded Courses of Study.

What is the Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative?

The Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative (CCCII) is an effort to provide consistent guidelines to Catholic dioceses in adapting the Common Core. While the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has used the CCCII as a reference, our Graded Courses of Study were produced by us for our schools alone.

For more information about CCCII, see www.cccii-online.org.

Has the Archdiocese of Cincinnati received any money to adapt the Common Core?

No. We have received no funding from any individual, organization, or government entity for adapting the Common Core into our Graded Courses of Study.

Where can I find out more about the Common Core?

Here are a few good resources:

Common Core Standards: www.corestandards.org

Ohio Academic Content Standards: www.education.ohio.gov/Topics/Academic-Content-Standards

Archdiocesan Graded Courses of Study: <http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/ministries-offices/catholic-schools-office/school-resources/curriculum/>.

Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative: www.cccii-online.org

Myths and Facts about the Common Core: www.corestandards.org/resources/myths-vs-facts

Catholic Telegraph Letter by Dr. Jim Rigg, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, about the Common Core; www.thecatholictelegraph.com/superintendent-addresses-common-core-concerns/14336#more-14336

I have more questions. Where can I go?

If you have more questions, feel free to contact Dr. Carole Roberts, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, at (513) 421-3131, ext. 2723 or croberts@catholiccincinnati.org. You can also contact any principal of any Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

