

Diocese of Jackson



Q & A: Common Core State Standards & Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment in our Catholic Schools

Q - Have the Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Jackson adopted the Common Core State Standards?

A - No, the Catholic Schools in the Diocese have not 'adopted' the CCSS as written. But, yes, the Diocese is using the CCSS as a source document as we design a Diocesan Curriculum.

Q - What does it mean that CCSS is a 'source' document?

A - We are using a framework developed by the University of Notre Dame - Alliance for Catholic Education to enhance curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The framework utilizes the expertise of teachers and administrators across the diocese to consider source documents (standards and benchmarks of learning) and make decisions about what should be taught as well as a scope and sequence for teaching. Student learning outcomes for each subject at each

grade level are determined along with assessments to measure learning. Once the decisions have been made about "what" is to be learned and "how to assess" the learning, units of study are developed using on best practices of instruction. Last summer, 2012, teachers and administrators from each of the 14 elementary schools and four high schools began the multi-year, ongoing process of designing a Diocesan Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Plan.

Q - Will our students part of the national CCSS testing system?

A - No. We are developing our own assessments of student learning. Traditional tests and performance assessments. However, the companies that produce national norm-reference tests such as the Terra Nova, Iowa Test of Basic Skills, Stanford Achievement Test, ACT, etc. are redesigning their products to include

test items that assess student learning as prescribed in the CCSS. So, ultimately our students will be assessed by 'national' tests that include CCSS. This is one reason the Diocese has chosen to use the CCSS as a 'source document' as we design curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Q - Will the Diocese use the reading lists that are included in the CCSS?

A - Reading lists are generally decided on a school-by-school basis rather than at the diocesan level. There will likely be texts required by our schools that may be found on the CCSS list, but no, we are not adopting the CCSS reading lists.

Q - What about cursive handwriting? The CCSS does not include it.

A - Our teachers and administrators have determined that cursive handwriting is essential and will continue to be taught in our schools.

Notre Dame Alliance for Catholic Education ~ Collaborative for Academic Excellence

The Notre Dame ACE Collaborative provides training and ongoing support to our teachers and administrators as we design and plan for continuous improvement in our Catholic schools ... specifically in the area of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Notre Dame

does not make any decisions about what or how we teach. Notre Dame ~ ACE Collaborative developed a structure and common language that is rooted in best practices. They train our teachers and administrators in the "process". All decisions about what is taught, how it

will be taught, and how learning will be assessed are made by the Diocese. The Diocese utilizes the expertise of our Catholic school teachers and administrators and research-based best practices to make final decisions regarding Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

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**Subject Area Focus:**  
June 2012 - Math, Science  
June 2013 - Language Arts,  
Religion

**Additional Sources:**  
United States Conference of  
Bishops  
[www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org)

**National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA)**  
[www.ncea.org](http://www.ncea.org)

**Catholic School Standards Project:**  
National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools (NSBECS) &  
Common Core Catholic Identity (CCCI) Initiative  
[catholicstandards.org](http://catholicstandards.org)

Notre Dame ACE  
<http://ace.nd.edu/collaborative/home>

**National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)**  
[www.nctm.org](http://www.nctm.org)

**National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)**  
[www.nsta.org](http://www.nsta.org)

**National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)**  
[www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)