



December 5, 2013

Re: Common Core State Standards and Diocese of Gaylord Catholic Schools

Dear Parents, Guardians, and other Stakeholders in Catholic Schools:

Much discussion and debate is currently taking place across the country, as well as here in Michigan, with regards to the Common Core State Standards Initiative. As a result, many are concerned about how this initiative might impact, for better or for worse, the Catholic schools here in our Diocese. The Common Core initiative asserts that it will increase the rigor and accountability within the public school system. However, while none would argue with the goal of improving K-12 public education in this country, it is necessary to point out that Catholic schools have been successfully preparing students to enter both the workforce and higher education with high rates of success for well over a hundred years.

Catholic education continues to be synonymous with values, academic rigor, order and discipline. In the Diocese of Gaylord employers consistently compliment the work ethic of our students and colleges and universities recognize that students admitted to their institution will not just attend for a time, they will graduate. With nearly 99% of our students going on to higher education, our Catholic schools have been delivering a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to college readiness for many years. All of the things that the Common Core initiative is presently proposing to address in the public sector have been the traditional focus of Catholic schools in our diocese and across the country for many years.

Additionally, our Catholic identity and formation remains at the heart of who we are and what we do; in essence teaching our students to recognize and pursue that which is good, holy, true and beautiful. Unfortunately, there has been a past tendency for Faith based institutions to embrace popular secular constructs and then attempt to “shoehorn” in religion. Regrettably, the fruits of this temptation have been the dilution of Catholic culture and loss of identity that has been so lamented for nearly half a century. Taking all of this into account, it would seem unwise to relinquish control and abandon what has served us well and proven to be effective.

While the Common Core may afford potential for gain there is most certainly potential for loss as well. It would be irresponsible for our diocese to embrace that which has not been tested or proven superior to what we currently use. Nonetheless, our work of evaluating and examining the Common Core is ongoing. I assure you that when making curricular decisions, we always take into account the possible academic and spiritual gains and then make prudent decisions in the best interest of our students. For additional information *(including frequently asked questions as well as links to curriculum and assessment resources)* please visit our website at <http://www.dioceseofgaylord.org/inside/curriculuminstruction-768/>.

In Christ,

Charles H. Taylor  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Diocese of Gaylord