



Catholic Conference
of Illinois

65 E. Wacker Place
Suite 1620
Chicago, IL 60601
Ph. 312-368-1066
Fx. 312-368-1090

108 E. Cook St.
Springfield, IL 62704
Ph. 217-528-9200
Fx. 217-528-7214

www.ilcatholic.org
Diocese of Belleville
Archdiocese of Chicago
Diocese of Joliet
Diocese of Peoria
Diocese of Rockford
Diocese of Springfield-in-IL

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CONTACT: Mary Massingale
Director of Communications
312-368-1066

Catholic superintendents clarify Common Core as educational goals, standards

CHICAGO – The superintendents of Catholic schools in the six dioceses of Illinois have issued a statement regarding Common Core State Standards in an effort to clarify that the standards are a set of educational goals students should seek to attain – they are not a curriculum.

Forty-five states, including Illinois, have adopted the voluntary Common Core State Standards, which were developed to establish a clear set of educational expectations for students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Teachers, parents, school administrators and education experts worked with state education officials to develop the Common Core. The federal government was not involved in the development of the standards.

The state's six Catholic school superintendents support the work of the National Catholic Educational Association and the Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative (CCCII). The CCCII is a national, collaborative group of Catholic universities, corporations and sponsors focused on helping Catholic schools and dioceses implement Common Core standards into a school curriculum while maintaining a Catholic identity.

“Standards are not new to our instructional purpose,” the six superintendents wrote in the statement. “Curriculum in our schools previously focused on diocesan curricular standards and the Illinois Learning Standards, which we adopted and aligned to core academic areas. Similarly, the Common Core standards are an outcomes-based vehicle that seeks the best instructional methods for educating our children.”

The superintendents stress that hallmarks of a Catholic education – such as creativity, critical and analytical thinking, real-world application, academic rigor, and an authentic encounter with Jesus Christ – will not be compromised by Common Core standards.

“We will determine what to adapt from the Common Core standard according to what best fits our unique mission. We will never allow the faith and the education of our children to be compromised,” they wrote.

The statement is attached.

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The Catholic Conference of Illinois was created in 1969 to serve as the public policy voice of the Illinois bishops and the six dioceses of the state: Belleville, Chicago, Joliet, Peoria, Rockford and Springfield-in-Illinois.