



ARCHDIOCESE OF
NEW ORLEANS

Office of Catholic Schools

August 27, 2013

Dear Catholic School Community:

I would like to provide you with information to support our decision to implement the tenets of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for Mathematics in the 2013-2014 school year and the CCSS for English Language Arts and Literacy in the 2014-2015 school year. The Office of Catholic Schools embraces the Common Core State Standards because they are research-based and were developed to address college and career readiness. These standards were created by the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association in an effort to create fewer, higher, and deeper standards that are common across the states. These standards are a set of statements that define what a student should know and be able to do at the end of a specific time period (i.e. at the end of first grade). These standards are not a curriculum. The standards simply define skills that students should master, at minimum, by the end of a specified school year. Schools will be encouraged, as in the past, to teach beyond the standards.

We, as the OCS, have to prepare our school administrators, teachers, support staff, and parents so that we can maintain the standard of excellence that we have come to expect in our schools. We are working with a sub-committee of the Superintendent's Administrative Advisory Council composed of school administrators who have and will continue to steer us in the right direction to plan our implementation of these new core standards. In preparation for this paradigm shift in curriculum, the Associate Superintendents charged with Curriculum have been providing informational sessions to help prepare schools to phase in the components of the CCSS. To support this effort, the OCS will be providing ongoing professional development, coaching, and mentoring to all schools as needed. We recognize that the CCSS and the related pedagogical and instructional shifts will be of benefit to all our students. Some of the big ideas embedded in the standards include: critical thinking, writing across the curriculum, the use of informational text throughout the curriculum, and authentic learning.

Since Catholic Identity is the common core of Catholic Schools, the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) has developed the Common Core Catholic Identity Initiative. The goals of this initiative include providing direction for designing lessons that implement CCSS "within the culture and context of a Catholic school curriculum," in addition to infusing the CCSS with "the faith/principles/values/social justice themes inherent in the mission and Catholic identity of the school." More information about this initiative and the Catholic school standards can be found at <http://catholicschoolstandards.org/common-core-catholic-identity-initiative>. The Associate Superintendents responsible for Catholic Identity will be offering workshops during the 2013-2014 school year to address these national standards. To learn more about these workshops, please see the enclosed information.

Yours in Christ,

Dr. Jan Daniel Lancaster

*If you have any questions, or need any additional information, please contact:
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