



Diocese of Pittsburgh

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Office of the Bishop

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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In recent months some parents have asked whether our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh are using a set of educational standards known as the Common Core. The answer is no.

The Diocese of Pittsburgh has not adopted the Common Core, nor have we adopted a curriculum based on it. The Common Core was developed over the past decade under the direction of the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers. It is not a federal mandate, but states can choose whether or not to adopt it. The Pennsylvania State Board of Education has not adopted the Common Core and, even if it had, Catholic schools would not be bound.

The Common Core is a set of minimum standards, intended to help public schools with their effort to prepare students for higher education and the workforce. Schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh have always set higher standards, and we continue to challenge students to exceed those standards.

A number of parents have raised questions about Common Core-related resource materials that conflict with Catholic teaching and have expressed concern about Common Core requirements to collect and report student data in a way that might violate the privacy of students. Be assured that our Catholic identity is the core of our curriculum. Our Catholic faith guides the selection of all curricula, goals, textbooks and other resources. Furthermore, schools in the Diocese of Pittsburgh do not share data on individual students with any state or federal databases.

Some of the same parents also raised questions about our membership in the National Catholic Education Association, which is assisting Catholic schools in a number of other dioceses to adapt the Common Core standards for Catholic education. That project has no bearing on education in the Diocese of Pittsburgh. It is important to understand that the NCEA is not a governing body for Catholic schools. By Church law as your bishop, I am the highest authority on Catholic education in the diocese.

A hallmark of Catholic education is our conviction as the Church of Pittsburgh that parents are the first and most important educators of their children. We seek to support each and every parent in doing so, and we thank you for the loving concern that you have shown about the education of your children.

Grateful for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am

Your brother in Christ,

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh