

St. Michael Catholic School Statement on Common Core State Standards

St. Michael Catholic School is an independent Catholic school that has the freedom to design our own curriculum and select all of our own resources for teaching, learning and assessing. We are not participants in the “Common Core Movement”.

We take direction from our Catholic leadership such as the United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the National Catholic Education Association (NCEA), and our own Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota. (See position statements from each.)

Each group is committed to vigilance on the matter of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and will keep a close eye on any standards that are recommended to our schools to ensure alignment with the teachings and principles of the Catholic Church.

We have a responsibility to “take into consideration, the horizon of the local, state, and national education landscape and the influence and application of the CCSS. To ignore this would place our students at a significant disadvantage for their secondary and post-secondary education, which is not an acceptable option for our students or our families”. (USCCB FAQ on CCSS, p. 5).

The State of Minnesota has *not* fully adopted the Common Core State Standards. They have maintained their own standards in the area of mathematics because they are more rigorous than the CCSS. They have adopted the CCSS in the area of English and Language Arts as a basis and also identified additional knowledge and skills in order to better reflect research and evidence-based best practices thereby elevating the rigor of the expectations across the grades.

Academically, StMCS aims to maximize student potential and achievement in all content areas. Knowing that we are preparing our students to *exceed* expectations in local public high schools, we do pay attention to and utilize as a guide, the MN State Standards, a list of K-12 learning outcomes by subject and grade. We prioritize and adjust those outcomes according to both our mission and student needs. This means there is some overlap with the CCSS in English and Language Arts but on things that are very benign. For example, StMCS will expect students to be able to: “Ask and answer questions about key details in a text.” and “Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings or events in a story.” just as is expected in CCSS.

Archdiocesan teacher teams in both mathematics and reading have reviewed each and every MN State Standard and have worked to personalize those for students in our local Catholic schools by writing “I Can” statements. These statements guide our instruction and resource selection.

Textbook companies and vendors of other educational resources aim to align their materials with standards so that schools will buy them. Given that 46 states have fully adopted the CCSS, it is difficult to find any materials that do not in some way claim a tie to CCSS. Each time StMCS selects a new textbook or tool, we look for resources that best align with what we have decided students must know and be able to do. Our professional staff then takes great care to use those resources wisely, choosing what is good and abandoning what is not. This is one of our great strengths, that we control and direct our own curricula. That said, we may have resources that have a “CCSS stamp or endorsement” on them but we would never select books or materials that in any way compromise our Catholic world view.

What is core about St. Michael Catholic School is Christ.
What is common about us is our commitment to holiness and academic excellence.

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