

Position Statement on the Common Core State Standards at Our Redeemer's Christian School

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are a reality that will affect U.S. schools. The standards have been adopted by most states including North Dakota and will ultimately have some effect on curriculum, instruction, textbooks, and assessments. Recently, this conversation has become highly politicized in areas of state and local control, federal funding, and assessment. A statement released by the Association of Christian Schools states, "This intense discussion of standards is an opportunity for Christian educators to express the distinctive value of a biblical worldview applied to an academically rigorous curriculum and to participate in a gracious, thoughtful, and rational response to this movement."

Our Redeemer's Christian School is working on many levels to find common ground between our present curriculum standards and the CCSS. Much of the criticism of CCSS centers on the idea that the standards reflect a "lowest common denominator" for various states. ¹With any standards, existing or new, it is our intention to "use the standards as a floor, not a ceiling" (Reeves 2011, 23).

In themselves, Common Core Standards are not a curriculum. They do not dictate our curriculum, instructional methodologies, sequence of topics, or materials used. However, the CCSS does provide clear goals and outcomes for what our students should know, understand, or be able to do at the end of a year or course of study. In areas where the CCSS emphasize best practices or increased rigor, we will need to adjust our curriculum in order to guide our students to academic success and college and career readiness. However, we do not intend to adopt the CCSS as a wholesale benchmark for the curricular quality of the school.

With the infusion of our Christian identity, we are in control of the learning process within our schools; it is the academic freedom that we enjoy as non-public schools. We will determine what to adapt from the Common Core standards according to what best fits our unique mission. We will never allow the faith and the education of our children to be compromised. Careful discernment and adherence to viewing all of education through the lens of the Gospel will always be our focus at Our Redeemer's Christian School. We will continue to be a place of learning where our primary focus is to ensure our children have authentic encounters with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Sincerely,



Charles Strand, Administrator
Our Redeemer's Christian School



Kris Neset, President
Our Redeemer's School Board

¹Reeves, Douglas B. 2011. Getting ready for common standards. American School Board Journal (March).