



November 1, 2013

Dear Catholic School Families,

Thank you for continuing to support our mission of preserving the faith by providing a learning community that fosters academic excellence and nurtures young people to become service-oriented individuals. We are committed to providing the best possible education for our children and believe successful communication between our school staff and the school community is essential. In an effort to do so, we would like to provide additional information regarding the role of learning standards in our schools:

**What are learning standards?**

Learning standards are expectations for what students should learn and be able to do.

**What is curriculum?**

Curriculum is unique to the school and the teacher as it integrates our faith and includes all teaching and learning experiences.

**How do we use learning standards in our schools?**

The standards do not represent our curriculum. Our teachers use a variety of resources to design lessons that provide high quality instruction that exceeds the minimum requirements of the learning standards.

**When did we start using learning standards in our schools?**

The Diocese of Rochester has always ensured the curriculum in our schools exceeds the minimum standards.

In 1996, the Board of Regents approved learning standards for all students in New York State.

In 2010, the New York State Education Department adopted the K-12 Common Core Learning Standards.

In 2011 the Board of Regents adopted the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards which encompasses the Common Core Learning Standards and includes additional standards that are unique to the State of New York. There is no required curriculum associated with the Common Core Learning Standards, but the New York State Education Department does provide optional resources for English language arts and mathematics that can be adapted for use by teachers as a part of their curriculum.



### **Why do we use learning standards?**

The eight Catholic dioceses in the State of New York have always ensured the curriculum offered in our schools remains true to the mission of Catholic schools while exceeding the minimum standards set forth by the State of New York.

According to the National Catholic Educational Association (May 2013):

- The learning standards are a set of high quality academic expectations that all students should master by the end of each grade level.
- The learning standards establish consistent learning goals for all students that focus on preparing them to succeed in college and careers in a globally competitive workplace.
- The learning standards define and clearly communicate grade-specific goals and inform parents about learning outcomes, making it easier for parents to collaborate with teachers in helping their children achieve success.
- Catholic Schools can infuse the learning standards with the faith, principles, values and social justice themes inherent in the mission of a Catholic School.

### **Who developed the learning standards?**

Governors and education commissioners led the development of the learning standards. Teachers, parents, school administrators and educational experts provided input into the development of the learning standards. The federal government was not involved in the development of the learning standards.

### **Where are the learning standards used?**

Forty six states have adopted the learning standards. All eight Catholic dioceses in New York have ensured our schools exceed the minimum learning standards.

We encourage all of our parents/guardians to feel comfortable approaching individual teachers about the curriculum in our classrooms.

Thank you and God bless.

Mr. Anthony S. Cook III  
Superintendent

Dr. Jeffrey M. Green  
Associate Superintendent