

Statement on the Common Core State Standards Initiative

While educational reform is not a new concept in the United States, the later part of the 20th century into the early years of the new millennium saw a concerted effort to ensure that students were demonstrating competency and skills necessary to compete globally. Although there is no question that student achievement must be measured, there has been much debate over “how” student achievement is measured - the baseline of achievement and the tools to measure academic mastery.

What are the Common Core Standards (CCS)?

In the 1990s, many states began developing standards of learning as a way to determine what concepts students should master at specific grade levels. In 2009, the National Governors Association convened a select group of educational leaders, from across the country, to develop a “common core” of educational standards in mathematics and literacy. According to the CCS Mission Statement, “The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

What is Jubilee’s Approach to the Common Core Standards?

It is important to note that because Jubilee is a private school, we are not required to adopt the Common Core Standards throughout our curriculum. However, our school’s curriculum team (consisting of the Curriculum Committee, classroom teachers, and the school principal) has begun a thorough process of re-examining our grade-level curriculum maps, ensuring that benchmarks are clearly defined, assessed, and realigned as needed. Jubilee’s decision to not implement the Common Core Standards is based upon our integrated curriculum instructional approach. We agree with the CCS in that there must be clearly defined academic goals, so that parents, students, instructional leaders, and community stakeholders are able to work towards the continued success of our children. Where Jubilee differs from the CCS’s approach is in our belief that the authentic educational experience of our students is anything but “common.” Jubilee has set benchmarks, but the journey our students take towards achieving those goals are individual - tailored to their God-given learning style. Because our academic standards are truly “designed to be robust and relevant to the real world,” our students participate in monthly field experiences, collaborate with their peers, investigate the unknown, and make essential connections between the subject areas and in topics both in and outside of the classroom.

While our statement of curriculum aligns with and even, at times, exceeds the Pennsylvania Standards, our focus has been and will continue to be a Christ-centered, integrated approach that provides students the opportunity to prepare for their life’s calling.