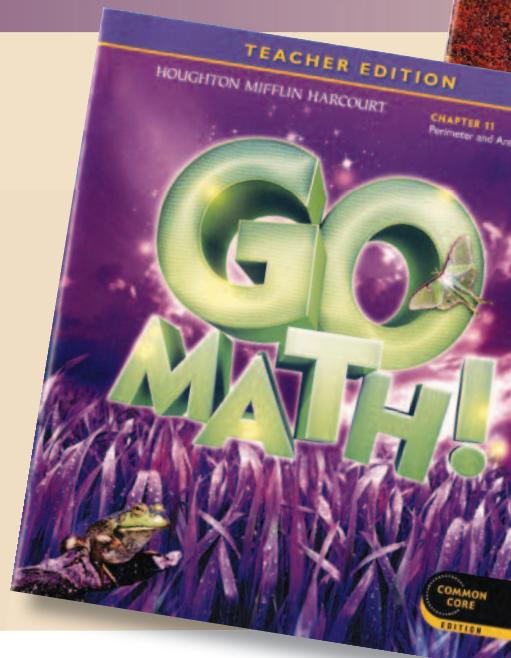


STANDARDS

for Student Learning in North American Division Seventh-day Adventist Elementary and Secondary Schools



Standards in education are statements of what students should know (content knowledge) and be able to do (applicable skills) upon completing a course of study. Standards state in clear, concise terms what students are expected to learn. Although they identify the students' learning destination, much more is required to complete the educational journey. As goals for student learning, standards inform the development of curriculum, the implementation of instruction, and assessment for learning.

Just as standards for learning do not describe in full a student's learning journey, they are also not the sole source of meaning in a young person's education. The big ideas and essential questions of life are developed from many sources. Beyond the classroom, family and significant others influence a student's personal beliefs and values. Young people form a personal worldview when they integrate the knowledge acquired at school and from other sources into a coherent understanding

of their world. This worldview can also provide learners with a vision for how to use the skills acquired to participate in their community and to improve themselves. Ultimately, a meaningful, productive life depends on students' core beliefs and values from an emerging worldview adequately equipping them to assess the authenticity and relevance of their learning, and to intelligently apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired.

In Adventist schools across the North American Division (NAD), standards for student learning have been developed and adopted that reflect the Adventist worldview across the subjects, PreK-12. The Adventist worldview accepts the Bible as the standard by which everything else is measured. Four key concepts emerge from a biblical worldview. These can be used as a lens for curriculum development, as well as informing the essential questions and big ideas of any content area. The four components of a biblical worldview are:

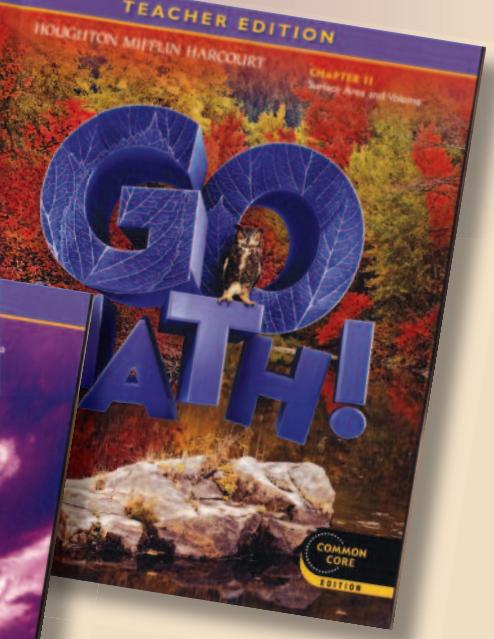
- Creation—What is God's intention?

- Fall—How has God's purpose been distorted?
- Redemption—How does God help us to respond?
- Re-creation—How can we be restored in the image of God?

In addition, as Adventist education standards are developed, educational research, professional subject area organizations, state standards, and United States Common Core State Standards are referenced. The resulting standards reassure students, parents, teachers, administrators, board members, and constituents that Adventist education meets or exceeds expectations for student learning, PreK-12.

Adventist education, though, has always been about "something better"—a commitment to achieve more than baseline expectations for student learning. Adventist standards for student learning facilitate the integral nature of the faith and learning relationship, and address the big ideas and essential questions of life from a biblical perspective. Adventist education continu-

BY DENNIS L. PLUBELL and CAROL CAMPBELL



(Left) North American Division Mathematics Curriculum Teacher Edition, Grade 3, Chapter 11

(Above) North American Division Mathematics Curriculum Teacher Edition, Grade 6, Chapter 11

ally adds elements of eternal value to the curriculum, to instruction, and to assessment that impacts student learning. The Adventist worldview will always serve as the lens through which teaching and learning transpire in the denomination's classrooms.

Some people have asked about the relationship between the NAD curriculum and the U.S. Common Core State Standards. Teachers can use the information below to inform themselves and respond to inquiries from parents and constituents.

Q & A Regarding the Common Core State Standards

Q: What are the Common Core State Standards?

A: The U.S. Common Core State Standards (CCSS) have been developed to provide a consistent, clear understanding of what American students are expected to learn in the content areas of Mathematics and English Language Arts. These statements of students' learning goals were designed to be relevant to the real world in the 21st century, reflecting the core knowledge and skills that young people need to succeed in college and careers. While building on the standards that had

been developed over the years in many states, the CCSS differ from past standards in their focus on rigor, depth of learning, and common expectations for all students.

Q: Who created the Common Core State Standards, and when were they developed?

A: The development of the CCSS was a state-led collaboration sponsored in 2009 by the National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The goal was to establish "common" educational standards, K-12, for Mathematics and English Language Arts. The work was accomplished by teams of teachers, educational leaders from various levels, researchers, and professors of education.

Q: Where have the Common Core State Standards been adopted?

A: The collaboration among states was voluntary, with 44 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia participating in the development of the CCSS. Adopting the CCSS in each state was also intended to be voluntary. Participation greatly increased when the U.S. Department of Education under a newly elected administration made the adoption of CCSS a prerequisite to additional federal funding (stimulus money) during tough economic times in 2009 and beyond. To date, 43 states, the District of Columbia, and four territories have adopted the standards.

Q: Why have concerns been raised about the Common Core State Standards?

A: Many of the questions raised about the Common Core State Standards can be summarized as concern about who influences and/or controls the development of the standards for student learning. There has been intense scrutiny of what is deemed "common" or "core" for student learning across the United States. As a result, many states that have adopted the CCSS are revising them to some degree to meet the needs of their students. Ap-

prehension has also been expressed regarding the ways that the CCSS will affect school curricula and classroom instruction. In the wake of this concern, curriculum experts have emphasized the relationship between standards and curriculum by noting that standards are the outcomes, not the curriculum (resources, materials, content, or processes used in an educational program to meet the standards). The standards serve to focus student learning, but the curriculum adds meaning and context to instruction and acquisition of information.

Q: How has NAD Adventist education responded to the Common Core State Standards?

A: While revising NAD's Mathematics and English Language Arts Standards, the division's curriculum committees have carefully examined the CCSS, along with other resources, to see if there are any conflicts with Adventist beliefs and values as well as determine whether the standards meet the needs of Adventist students. The resulting Adventist standards are then used to inform the development or identification of meaningful curriculum for denominational classrooms. The Adventist worldview will always serve as the lens through which teaching and learning inspire our students to grow in wisdom and stature in the Adventist classroom. ☩



Dennis L. Plubell is the Vice President for Education of the North Pacific Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Ridgefield, Washington.



Carol Campbell is the Director of Elementary Education for the North American Division Office of Education in Silver Spring, Maryland.