

Why Common Core Standards Matter for Your Kids

Rev. **Samuel Rodriguez** and his organization, the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC), a leading voice for the 16-million-strong Hispanic American evangelical Christian community, has joined several Christians and conservatives in supporting Common Core state standards.

The NHCLC, called “America’s Largest Hispanic Christian Organization” by *Time* magazine, calls the issue a “matter of biblical justice and equity.” The organization is launching a national education initiative to educate members about what it sees as the benefits of Common Core state standards for Hispanics and low-income students and to garner support from church leaders.

The Common Core state standards, adopted by 45 states, are described as a list of skills a student must master in each grade level to achieve college preparedness. But the initiative is nothing if not controversial. One recent viral video cites an example of a math curriculum requiring fourth-graders to divide 90 by 18 by drawing “18 circles with 90 hash marks, solving this problem in exactly 108 steps”—and students who use the traditional long division method are reportedly marked wrong.

Rodriguez, president of the NHCLC, sees great benefits for Hispanics in poverty but ultimately sees it as a Scriptural issue.

“Offering high educational standards to all students is an issue of biblical justice,” he says, “because all children are made in the image of God, as described in Genesis 1:27. Common Core offers schools the opportunity to positively impact the future of Hispanic children and all children who live in

poverty.”

The education statistics on Hispanics are unsettling. Hispanic high school students are graduating at a rate more than 10 percent lower than their white peers. Fifty-eight percent of Hispanics who make it to college do not graduate, and 72 percent of Hispanics are placed in remedial classes at community colleges.

“Hispanic adults are less educated than any other ethnic group, and the numbers of jobs that need a college degree are only increasing,” Rodriguez says. “Without question, our children, especially minority and immigrant students, must participate in an educational system that equips them with the necessary acumen and skills to compete. In order to honor the image of God shared by all children, we are committed to empowering all students with the foundational tools for success by holding all children to high educational standards.”

Numerous conservative and Christian leaders welcome the support of the NHCLC as they work together to achieve educational equality for all American students, including former Florida Governor Jeb Bush.

“I applaud Rev. Rodriguez and the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference for their leadership in championing the state-driven Common Core initiative and their commitment to achieving a high quality education for all students,” Bush says.

Mike Huckabee also joined the discussion, calling for consistency while warning against federal control.

“The Common Core state standards were initiated as governors and state leaders were talking about what we could do together to raise standards—not a Washington solution, but a voluntary effort on the part of the leaders of the states,” Huckabee says. “The original intent was to empower states and [the]

local school board to make all decisions as to curriculum. Many states are now taking back ownership of the standards. No one wants federal control, federal curriculum content or data collection of individual students, but having consistent standards is not something to be afraid of; indeed, it is something to embrace.”

Meanwhile, opposition to Common Core is growing, with Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham planning to introduce a resolution tomorrow countering the initiative.

Where do you think Christians should stand?