

Revision of National Resolution on High Stakes Testing – suggestions for appropriate language for LSCs

WHEREAS, our nation's future well-being relies on a high-quality public education system that prepares all students for college, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning, and strengthens the nation's social and economic well-being; and

WHEREAS, our nation's school systems have been spending growing amounts of time, money and energy on high-stakes standardized testing, in which student performance on standardized tests is used to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators and schools; and

WHEREAS, the overreliance on high-stakes standardized testing in state, federal and local school district accountability systems like Chicago is undermining educational quality and equity in our schools by hindering educators' efforts to focus on the broad range of learning experiences that promote the innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society and economy; and

WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the over-emphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in too many schools, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing love of learning, pushing students out of school, driving excellent teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate; and

WHEREAS, imposing relentless test preparation and boring memorization of facts to enhance test performance is doing little more than stealing the love of learning from our students and assuring that we fall short of our goals; and

WHEREAS, high-stakes standardized testing has negative effects for students from all backgrounds, and especially for low-income students, English language learners, children of color, and those with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the culture and structure of the systems in which students learn must change in order to foster engaging school experiences that promote joy in learning, depth of thought and breadth of knowledge for students;

WHEREAS, we do not oppose accountability in public schools and we point with pride to the performance of our students, but believe that the system of the past will not prepare our students to lead in the future and neither will the standardized tests that so dominate their instructional time and block our ability to make progress toward a world-class education system of student-centered schools and future-ready students; therefore be it

RESOLVED that [your LSC name] is committed to taking whatever actions are appropriate to our role and authority to inform parents and our school community about concerns raised by high-stakes standardized testing, to encourage the use of multiple forms of assessment in our school including teacher-made classroom based assessments and student portfolios and performances, and to limit the time spent on testing and test preparation and practice, in order to provide more resources and time in our school day for subjects and programs that reflect the broad range of student learning needed to support students and improve schools; and

RESOLVED that [your LSC name] calls on the governor, the state legislature, the Illinois state board of education and the Chicago Public Schools and School Board to reexamine public school accountability systems in this state and district, and to develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment which does not require extensive standardized testing, more accurately reflects the broad range of student learning, and is used to support students and improve schools without unfairly labeling students or schools as failures; and

RESOLVED, that [your LSC name] calls on the U.S. Congress and Administration to overhaul the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as the "No Child Left Behind Act") to reduce the testing mandates, promote multiple forms of evidence of student learning and school accountability, and not mandate any fixed role for the use of student test scores in evaluating educators.

