

COMMUNITY DISTRICT EDUCATION COUNCIL 26 RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S PLAN TO HAVE STUDENTS TAKE ADDITIONAL TESTS AS PART OF TEACHER EVALUATION

WHEREAS, New York City Public Schools Students in grades three and higher take yearly standardized tests in English and Math, and every few years take standardized tests in Science and Social Studies. These students also take many assessment tests in these areas. These tests and assessments have been utilized to determine promotions and the quality of schools. For many years, CDEC 26 has voiced concerns that there has been an excessive use of standardized tests, these tests are inappropriately utilized and this has resulted in students spending an inordinate amount of time doing test preparation, curriculums have been altered to better enable students to score well on the tests and students and schools are inaccurately evaluated. These concerns reflected the consensus of the vast majority of parents, students, and teachers in our education community.

WHEREAS, The New York City Department of Education ("DOE") has steadfastly refused to address these concerns and instead insists upon expanding the uses and reliance on these tests.

WHEREAS, New York State has recently won \$700 million in a federal grant competition, known as Race to the Top, and each New York State school district must find a way to evaluate teachers on a scale from "ineffective" to "highly effective," with teachers facing potential firing if they are rated ineffective for two years in a row.

WHEREAS, under a law passed last year that helped the state win the grant, 40 percent of a teacher's grade will be based on standardized tests or other "rigorous, comparable" measures of student performance. Half of that should be based on state tests, and half on measures selected by local districts. The remaining 60 percent is to be based on more subjective measures, including principal observation

WHEREAS, New York State law allows local school districts to set academic goals for teachers, instead of creating standardized tests. Consequently, most New York State School districts will not create their own standardized tests, due to the expense and difficulty in preparing effective evaluation tests.

WHEREAS, The DOE plans on creating as many as 16 new standardized tests in the 3rd through 12th grades to evaluate teachers. This will require students take at least one or two additional standardized tests each year. These tests will cost almost \$65 million dollars, which represents almost one-quarter of the money it is receiving from the federal grant.

WHEREAS, these tests will be used to evaluate teachers, there is a high probability that ensuring high test results will become a primary concern of teachers. Such can only result in students spending additional time preparing for these tests, instead of being exposed to activities and instruction that are designed to enrich their learning experience.

WHEREAS, The test preparation will consist of learning particular skills likely to be on the test, students' understanding of a subject will be limited and unlikely to help them develop into truly educated people capable of succeeding in society, economically, socially, and emotionally. Moreover, the preparation results in test scores that do not reflect a students' ability. This concern was expressed by the New York State Department of Education, last year, and resulted in the DOE having to change many aspects of its testing policies.

WHEREAS, standardized tests are designed to differentiate levels of understanding between students, they are incapable of accurately measuring a teacher's effectiveness.

WHEREAS, all students are continuously evaluated in their math, science, English, and social studies course work by means of weekly and quarterly quizzes and tests designed by their teachers.

WHEREAS, reviewing results on and the content of these weekly and quarterly tests would be a strong indicator of a student's understanding of course work and the teacher's ability to teach.

Be it Resolved, CDEC26 condemns the creation of additional standardized tests to evaluate teachers as an unnecessary use of learning time and money. To administer more standardized tests to students is in our children's worst interest. Rather, the DOE should set academic goals for teachers that better measure their abilities to be effective educators by utilizing existing testing procedures.

Dated: MAY 26, 2011