

RESOLUTION ON HIGH-STAKES TESTING:

This resolution is modeled on the resolution passed by more than 360 Texas school boards as of April 23, 2012. It was written by Advancement Project; Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund; FairTest; Forum for Education and Democracy; MecklenburgACTS; Deborah Meier; NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc.; National Education Association; New York Performance Standards Consortium; Tracy Novick; Parents Across America; Parents United for Responsible Education-Chicago; Diane Ravitch; Race to Nowhere; Time Out From Testing; and United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries. Organizations have permission to modify it as needed for their local circumstances while also endorsing this national version.

<http://timeoutfromtesting.org/nationalresolution>

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 (1); 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 (2); and

WHEREAS, the over-reliance on high-stakes standardized testing in state and federal accountability systems is undermining educational quality and equity in U.S. public schools by hampering 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 (3); and

WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness (4); 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 (5); 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 different ethnicities, and those with disabilities (6); 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 (7); therefore be it

RESOLVED that the governor, state legislature and state education boards and administrators should reexamine public school accountability systems in our state, and should 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; and

RESOLVED, that we urge the U.S. Congress and Administration to overhaul the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (currently known as the "No Child Left Behind Act"), and the Race to the Top requirements, reduce the testing mandates, promote multiple forms of evidence of student learning and school quality in accountability, and not mandate any fixed role for the use of student test scores in evaluating educators.

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HIGH STAKES TESTING RESOLUTION Q & A from:

[http://www.txpta.org/public/upload/files/Legislative/2012/High Stakes Testing CAQs.pdf](http://www.txpta.org/public/upload/files/Legislative/2012/High_Stakes_Testing_CAQs.pdf)

Can my PTA adopt this when school is back in session?

Yes. If you would rather wait until fall, you should be able to meet the timeline if you choose to wait until August or September.

I received a testing resolution from my superintendent or other organization. Can our PTA adopt it? How is this resolution different?

Your PTA may adopt any resolution that is not in conflict with any current Texas PTA or National PTA positions. The PTA “high stakes testing resolution” is a family/PTA-centered version created by Texas PTA as a tool for Area, Council and Local PTAs to adopt if it meets the members’ philosophy regarding accountability and assessment. We encourage Local and Council PTAs to adopt the PTA version since it is consistent with PTA positions, but you may choose to adopt another version.

My Local PTA wants to adopt it. Do I have to have our general membership vote on it? Can the executive board adopt it instead?

If your executive board is the only voting body that adopts it, then it is only your executive board’s resolution. If you want to represent your Local PTA, then your general membership must vote to adopt it. The impact for school boards/legislators will be more powerful if the entire membership stands behind your resolution. You can call a special meeting for that vote, or wait until fall since the fall timeline will still work.

Can our Council adopt this instead of our local?

Councils can adopt the resolution. We hope that they do. It would be ideal for Councils to encourage Local PTAs to adopt it first, and then bring that support to the Council so that the voting body of the Council is in support of adoption. Once Councils adopt the resolution, that representation includes all Local PTAs, thus creating a Local PTA’s inability to disagree with the resolution. The impact for school boards/legislators will be more powerful if the entire membership stands behind your resolution. What a council could do is announce to local units their support for adoption of the resolution and set a date in the fall that your council will then vote to adopt it. If Local PTAs have already adopted it, then the Council will have the support to be one voice to present the resolution on behalf of all local memberships that have voted.

My district has not adopted the resolution but our PTA is very excited that Texas PTA is talking about this important issue.

Can our PTA adopt the resolution or does our district have to adopt it first?

Yes. Area, Council and Local PTAs are encouraged to participate in local advocacy projects. If your executive board and membership vote to adopt this resolution, it tells your school board that your PTA supports this issue. If a majority of local units in your district adopt the same resolution, it is a powerful “grassroots” tool for your district to understand the position of your PTAs and many parents in your district. Your PTA may adopt it even if your district chooses not to.

Are you saying that someone from our PTA needs to present this to our school board and legislators?

For maximum impact, it would be great for school boards and elected representatives to understand the number of parents and schools who are in favor of a balanced accountability system. You could work with your Council PTA on a combined effort to present all of the resolutions from your district or area to the appropriate officials. You could also bring it to PTA Day at the Capitol and present it to your state representatives in person on February 21, 2013.