

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF QUESTION 2

WHEREAS, education is a fundamental right and the goal of our educational system is to prepare the whole child for holistic success in their future endeavors, whether that be in higher education, vocational training, or the workforce; and

Whereas Standardized tests often fail to account for diverse learning styles and may not accurately reflect a student's abilities, knowledge, or potential; and

WHEREAS, there is growing evidence that high stakes testing requirements can contribute to undue stress, anxiety, and a narrowing of the curriculum, potentially undermining the holistic development of students and limiting their opportunities for growth in areas such as critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have shown that standardized test scores are disproportionately correlated with socioeconomic status, access to resources, and test preparation; thereby disproportionately affecting students from marginalized and disadvantaged backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, every year this requirement costs 700 students statewide, and 24 Somerville High students since 2017, who have met Massachusetts' nation-leading curriculum standards their chance at a diploma, despite no evidence of a graduation exam making diplomas more valuable to colleges or employers; and

WHEREAS, the lack of supporting evidence has lead 19 states to repeal their graduation exam requirements since 2017; and

WHEREAS, Removing the MCAS requirement for Graduation would allow Massachusetts to adopt more comprehensive and equitable methods of assessing student learning and achievement, such as project-based assessments, portfolios, and teacher evaluations, which can offer a more nuanced and accurate picture of a student's abilities and progress;

WHEREAS, eliminating standardized test requirements for high school graduation would align with a growing movement towards educational equity and personalized learning, and would allow for a more diverse and inclusive approach to evaluating student success;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Somerville School Committee supports the ballot initiative to eliminate standardized test requirements for high school graduation, recognizing that this change would promote a more equitable and holistic approach to student assessment.

Be it further resolved that we encourage the adoption of alternative assessment methods that better reflect students' diverse talents and achievements, such as performance-based assessments, comprehensive projects, and teacher evaluations.

Be it further resolved that we advocate for the development and implementation of supportive measures and resources to help schools transition to alternative assessment models, ensuring that all students continue to receive a high-quality education.

Be it further resolved that we call upon policymakers, educational leaders, and stakeholders to collaborate in creating and promoting policies that foster an educational environment focused on growth, equity, and individual potential, free from the constraints of standardized testing.

Be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Somerville's legislative delegation, our Constitutional Officers, local media and that a copy of this resolution be placed on the Somerville Public Schools' website.

Voted: Unanimously

Date: September 9, 2024

By: Somerville School Committee