

# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

*No.*

*Approved*

WHEREAS, The Rhode Island Board of Regents has instituted a new “high stakes testing” requirement for students graduating in 2014 to achieve certain levels of proficiency on standardized tests in order to be eligible to receive a high school diploma; and

WHEREAS, The primary requirement is for students to achieve at the “Basic” level (a score of two (2) on the test’s four (4) point range) in both English and mathematics on the 11<sup>th</sup> grade New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) tests; and

WHEREAS, In the test administered this past fall, approximately 1,000 Providence 11<sup>th</sup> grade students, or 65% of the eleventh grade, achieved a score of “Below Basic” (or one (1) on scale of four (4) on either the English or the mathematics portion of the NECAP test, or on both of them; and

WHEREAS, One alternative path to proficiency currently offered by the State requires dramatic improvement on the NECAP test score; and

WHEREAS, The people who designed the NECAP test intended it for use as a diagnostic test and not as a “high stakes” test for graduation; and

WHEREAS, The other states that use the NECAP use it as intended, and do not impose a “high stakes testing” program based on NECAP scores; and

WHEREAS, The alternative tests and qualifying scores to receive a diploma (such as a score of three (3) on the AP Calculus examination) are not likely to prove more accessible for children whose NECAP scores are “Below Basic”; and

WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island has not provided Providence with sufficient resources or time to develop effective systems to implement this mandate adequately; and

WHEREAS, The Providence School Department has committed itself to helping every child succeed on the tests and qualify for graduation, notwithstanding the extent of additional learning some children must master in a short period of time.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The Providence City Council fully supports the School Department's efforts to help every Providence child succeed under the new requirements;
2. The Providence City Council views the "high stakes testing" program that the State plans to impose on children next year to be unfair, because it does not allow some children a reasonable chance to succeed, and imposes devastating consequences on many children who, through no fault of their own, are not ready to achieve the required test scores,
3. The Providence City Council urges the Rhode Island Board of Education to reconsider the "high stakes testing" policy slated to go online next year, and to consider alternatives that would allow all children a reasonable chance to succeed; such as, for example, awarding a "Board of Education Diploma" for students who achieve a high NECAP score in addition to their school's diploma, similar to the "Regents Diploma" program in New York.
4. The City Clerk shall distribute copies of this Resolution to the Rhode Island Board of Education, the Providence School Board, the Providence School Department, and the members of the Providence legislative delegation.