

OFFERED BY COUNCILORS TANIA FERNANDES ANDERSON, JULIA MEJIA,
BREADON, COLETTA ZAPATA, DURKAN, FITZGERALD, MURPHY, PEPÉN, SANTANA,
WEBER, AND LOUIJEUNE



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING ON STANDARDIZED TESTING AS A GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

WHEREAS, Access to a high-quality, publicly funded education is a guaranteed right written into the Massachusetts Constitution and the goal of public education is to teach students essential, foundational skills such as reading, writing and arithmetic, and to develop critical thinkers, engaged citizens and lifelong learners; *and*

WHEREAS, While the bedrock of the Commonwealth's world-class public education system is strong, statewide standards that are uniform throughout our public schools, the MCAS is significantly limited in its ability to accurately and effectively measure whether students are meeting the Commonwealth's standards and developing the skills they need to thrive after high school; *and*

WHEREAS, The most effective measures of whether students meet our strong, statewide standards and develop the skills they need to succeed in college, the workforce, and beyond are educator-led assessments such as projects, papers, tests, and group activities that are conducted throughout the school year; *and*

WHEREAS, The punitive use of standardized testing as a high school graduation requirement has restricted curriculum and shifted the focus of education in our public schools toward meeting a test score instead of fostering an environment of creativity, critical thinking and real teaching and learning that helps students realize their full potential; *and*

WHEREAS, Pediatricians, researchers and school counselors have warned of the severe impact of high-stakes testing graduation requirements on students' mental health and well being, and furthermore standardized test requirements notoriously stack the deck against students of color, EL students, and those with learning disabilities; *and*

WHEREAS, Using testing as a high school graduation requirement has prevented or delayed thousands of students from earning a diploma, thereby interrupting or derailing education or career plans, with especially harmful impacts on students of color,

low-income students, students with disabilities and students for whom English is their second language; ***NOW, THEREFORE BE IT***

ORDERED, That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to discuss the use of standardized testing as a requirement for graduation, and that representatives of the administration, including Boston Public Schools, in addition to advocates and members of the public be encouraged to attend.

Filed on: September 25, 2024