



Legislation Text

File #: Res 1767-2013, **Version:** *

Preconsidered Res. No. 1767

Resolution calling on the New York State Department of Education to immediately stop all stand-alone field testing for students.

By the Speaker (Council Member Quinn) and Council Members Jackson, Arroyo, Barron, Chin, Mark-Viverito, Mealy, Mendez and Palma

Whereas, New York State's school children just completed mandatory standardized testing at the end of April; and

Whereas, These standardized tests are used to measure students in a variety of ways and are sometimes referred to as "high stakes" tests because, for example, they determine whether a student passes to the next grade and are used to determine admission to a particular school; and

Whereas, New York State recently adopted the federal government's more rigorous "Common Core" standards, which will be fully implemented in 2015; and

Whereas, To prepare for the implementation, this year's tests were tougher than any in the recent past and State education officials expect scores to drop as a result; and

Whereas, Many parents, educators and students have expressed heightened anxiety due to the use of more stringent standards and increased reliance on test scores to measure academic performance, including of students, schools and teachers; and

Whereas, As the State and its school districts work on how to administer these standards, it is proposing to administer "field tests", which help check the methodology, design and legitimacy of future tests; and

Whereas, Field testing can be implemented by embedding questions into regular exams or by staging "stand-alone" tests that are used exclusively to help formulate future tests; and

Whereas, The results of field test questions or stand-alone tests are not used to measure students or teachers in any manner; and

Whereas, The tests that were administered in April included field test questions that were embedded in the exam; and

Whereas, However, in New York State many districts, including New York City, are planning to administer stand-alone field tests for English and math in June, near the last days of the school year; and

Whereas, Many parents and advocates believe these tests would add further stress to students who just finished such demanding exams while taking away from in-class instruction time; and

Whereas, Furthermore, numerous parents, advocates and educators believe that test preparation already narrows the curriculum by forcing teachers to prepare students for the test and that in addition, these field tests would detract from responsibilities and opportunities for teachers to engage with their students and families in a meaningful way as they prepare to end the school year; and

Whereas, Stand-alone tests are neither mandated nor necessary and their validity is questionable because if students know the tests do not carry any consequences they may not be motivated to perform well; and

Whereas, If using the field questions that were embedded in the April exams is insufficient, the State should explore alternatives such as conducting field tests outside of school time while compensating the test takers, as is done for adults; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Department of Education to immediately stop all stand-alone field testing for students.

JP
LS
5/20/13