



THE SCHOOL BOARD
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA
3340 FOREST HILL BOULEVARD, C-316
WEST PALM BEACH, FL 33406-5869

PH: 561-434-8000 FX: 561-434-7385

E. WAYNE GENT
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THE SCHOOL BOARD OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA **RESOLUTION on ACCOUNTABILITY**

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; and

WHEREAS, our nation's school systems have been spending growing amounts of time, money, and instructional time on high-stakes standardized testing for the purpose of using student performance on standardized tests to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators, and schools; and

WHEREAS, the over-reliance and lack of consistent data on high-stakes standardized testing in state and federal accountability systems is undermining educational quality and equity in U.S. public schools by limiting educators' ability to focus on the broad range of learning experiences that promote creativity, problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking, and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society and economy; and

WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate, limited, and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the increasing over-emphasis on standardized testing has resulted in numerous consequences in many schools, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing creative thinking, pushing students out of school, driving excellent teachers out of the profession, and undermining school climate; 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 color, and those with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Florida's high-stakes testing instruments are not correlated to any national or international assessment instruments to allow for a comparison of both student achievement and progress in Florida, with student achievement and progress with other states and countries; and

WHEREAS, under current Florida Department of Education plans, the Florida Standards Assessment was field-tested with non-Florida students in Utah, which does not mirror the demographics of Florida; and

WHEREAS, periodic revisions approved by Florida's State Board of Education to curriculum standards, cut scores, testing time frames, scoring criteria, and other elements of the high-stakes testing structure have made it difficult to track student learning gains or learning weaknesses from one year to the next, thus defeating the original purpose of such testing; and

WHEREAS, in the absence of state funding, school districts do not have the fiscal or human resources to meet the state requirement to develop end-of-course exams for the 800+ courses above and beyond the five courses—algebra, algebra II, geometry, biology and U.S. History—that the state has developed; and

WHEREAS, districts currently have to stop classroom instruction that requires use of technology during state testing days in order to accommodate on-line assessment without the funding for an adequate information technology infrastructure to conduct both assessment and classroom instruction at the same time; and

WHEREAS, the over-reliance on Florida’s high-stakes standardized testing is undermining Article IX, Section 1 of the Constitution of Florida which declares that it is “a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision . . . for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education” particularly with regard to adequate provision, uniformity, efficiency, and high quality; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED, that the School Board of Palm Beach County, Florida, calls on Governor Scott, the Florida Department of Education, and the state legislature to provide a three-year transition to July 1, 2017 for full implementation of Florida standards and accountability, with no impact on students, teachers, school administrators, and school district assessment and evaluation changes. Further, the Legislature should delay the use of Florida State Assessment results in determining student promotion, graduation or for teacher evaluation until July 1, 2017. Districts should be given flexibility in the interim to set their own criteria by which to determine student promotion and teacher evaluation. Further, use of state student assessment data in the interim should be used solely for diagnostic purposes in order to assure that the state’s system is valid, reliable, and fair and to create a baseline for FY18; that the State Board of Education should empower a truly representative panel of stakeholders—especially educators and parents—who represent all of Florida to validate that all segments of the accountability system are fair, reliable, accurate, and funded; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the School Board of Palm Beach County, Florida, calls on the United States Congress and Administration to overhaul the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, currently known as the “No Child Left Behind Act,” 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.

Done the **17th day of September, two thousand fourteen**, in West Palm Beach, Florida.

E. Wayne Gent, Superintendent

Chuck Shaw, School Board Chairman

Frank A. Barbieri, Jr., Esq., Vice Chairman

Marcia Andrews, Board Member

Karen Brill, Board Member

Jennifer Prior Brown, Esq., Board Member

Mike Murgio, Board Member

Debra Robinson, M.D., Board Member