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HISTORIC VOTE BY CITY COUNCIL ON HIGH-STAKES TESTING PASSES UNANIMOUSLY

On December 10, 2013, the New York City Council unanimously passed Resolution 1394. This historic vote represents the first time a legislative body has sent a clear directive to the DOE, NYSED and Governor that high stakes standardized tests must be replaced by multiple measures. As heard in testimony endorsing the Resolution, "Learning is complex, assessment should be too. A one-size fits all approach to learning and testing fails children, teachers and families." The vote is in response to the 12 year Bloomberg/Klein "testing reform" fiasco which resulted in many negative unintended consequences and which failed to deliver quality education.

Resolution 1394 was modeled on a national piece of legislation endorsed by many Boards of Education across the country, and more than 500 organizations. In Texas alone more than 80% of the school boards endorsed a similar position. "The New York City resolution is an important step in the growing, grassroots-powered national movement seeking to replace testing overkill with better, educationally sound forms of assessment. Across the U.S. parents, students, teachers, community leaders and, increasingly, local elected officials, are saying 'Enough is enough!' to politically mandated standardized exam misuse and overuse, said Robert Schaeffer, Public Education Director of the National Center for Fair and Open Testing (FairTest)

"Our New York City electeds have taken the lead by passing Resolution 1394," said Evelyn Cruz of Time Out From Testing. "The City Council is sending a loud and clear message that we have had enough of this testing mania which drives curriculum. When these tests have such high stakes attached to them —graduation, promotion, school grade, teacher evaluations, school closings and even principal bonuses—there is no question that teachers will teach to the test. This is not a 21st Century education. We want more for our children."

Robert Jackson, Chair of the Council's Education Committee, commented: "This over-reliance on high-stakes testing undermines school climate. It's time that our education department

reevaluate its ill-conceived education policy that is focused on how to select the best answer but has nothing to do with teaching and hands-on learning.”

“All of us think our children should be challenged by difficult tasks in school and that the performance of teachers in the classroom should be judged by the highest standards, but there is no scientific validity whatsoever to the use of high stakes tests as the primary instrument for evaluating children and teachers. We cannot kid ourselves that just because high-stakes testing has become predominant in our schools, it is moral or even rational,” said Jeff Nichols of Change the Stakes.

"This action by the City Council is of central importance to all those who care about public education. Since NYC has been seen as the leader of the so called “reform” movement, the fact that our City Council took action will be regarded nationally as a critical moment—turning around a 12 year failed experiment, “ said Dani Gonzalez, Co-chair of Time Out From Testing.

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