



Cambridge Education Association

2464 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., STE. 230

CAMBRIDGE MA 02140-1649

Phone: (617)492-4709

E-Mail: [office@cambeducation.org](mailto:office@cambeducation.org)

June 11, 2015

Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz, Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
State House, Room 111  
Boston, MA 02133

Rep. Alice Hanlon Peisch, Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
State House, Room 473G  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Madame Chairpersons:

We are officers and members of the Cambridge Education Association. We represent five bargaining units of employees, who collectively share a commitment to joyful, hands-on learning that respects and supports the whole child throughout all grades. Our members are alarmed with the current climate of standardized testing and are convinced that it interferes with our ability to help children learn and grow in the ways they deserve.

In furtherance of our commitment to instill a love of learning in our students, we have taken the following actions:

1. Our Executive Board unanimously passed two resolutions: calling for a moratorium on high stakes standardized tests, and, thanking Representative Marjorie Decker for her courage and leadership in filing An Act Relative to a Moratorium on High Stakes Testing and PARCC.
2. Hundreds of our members signed a CEA petition asking the Cambridge Public School Administration and the Cambridge School Committee to conduct a serious review of the testing schedule of our students. We presented the petition to our School Committee on May 5, 2015.
3. Cambridge teachers prepared testimony to present to the Board of Education at the May 18<sup>th</sup> public hearing documenting their concern about over-testing and their specific alarm about the proposed replacement of MCAS with PARCC. Hundreds of our members signed on to their testimony in support of our students and against this assessment. Also on May 5, 2015, our teachers urged the Cambridge School Committee to join them.

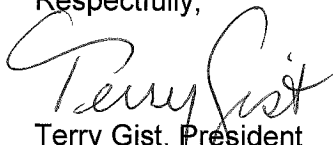
Sen. Sonia Chang-Diaz, Chair  
Rep. Alice Hanlon Peisch, Chair  
Joint Committee on Education  
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4. Cambridge parents prepared similar testimony in support of their children urging the Board of Education not to implement PARCC. They launched their own petition on May 9, 2015.
5. The Cambridge School Committee heard us and on May 19, 2015 voted unanimously to ask the Board of Education to review the standardized tests and delay the implementation of PARCC.
6. The Cambridge City Council passed a motion on June 1, 2015, endorsing H340-An Act Relative to a Moratorium on High Stakes Testing and PARCC.

*Now, we need your help.* All of us want to cultivate a love of learning in our children, in our students. It is a value that we share and it is in pursuit of maintaining that value that we respectfully request you support H340.

On behalf of the more than 1,000 members of the Cambridge Education Association, thank you very much.

Respectfully,



Terry Gist, President  
Cambridge Education Association

cc: Joint Committee on Education Members and Staff  
Sen. Patricia Jehlen, Vice Chair  
Rep. Danielle Gregoire, Vice Chair

### **Moratorium on High-Stakes Testing and PARCC-Summary**

*An Act Relative to a Moratorium on high stakes testing and PARCC* - Rep. Marjorie Decker (D-Cambridge)

- Three year moratorium on the use of PARCC.
- Three year moratorium on the use of standardized testing to determine:
  - High school graduation
  - Evaluation of teachers
  - Assessing performance of schools or districts
- Establishes a task force of stakeholders to meet during the first 18 months to measure the use of standardized tests as a high school graduation requirement, in evaluating educators, and in assessing schools and districts against the paramount goal laid out in the Education Reform Act of 1993. Six statewide hearings will be held with a report issued at the end of this period.

Motion, Tuesday, March 17, 2015

Whereas, Representative Marjorie Decker has filed “An Act Relative to a Moratorium on high states testing and PARCC”,

Whereas the Executive Board of the Cambridge Education Association (CEA) supports this legislation and commits to engage CEA members in lobbying for its passage, and,

Whereas the Executive Board has asked members to sign a petition asking the Cambridge School Committee to review any and all testing of CPS students;

The Executive Board expresses our collective gratitude to Representative Decker for your courage, vision and commitment to public school students and educators in Cambridge and throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

## **Resolution Calling for a Moratorium on High-Stakes Standardized Tests**

WHEREAS, our future well-being relies on a high-quality public education system that prepares all students for college, careers, citizenship and lifelong learning; and

WHEREAS, our school systems in Massachusetts and across the country have been spending increasing amounts of time, money and energy on high-stakes testing in which student performance on standardized tests is used to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators, schools and districts; and

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

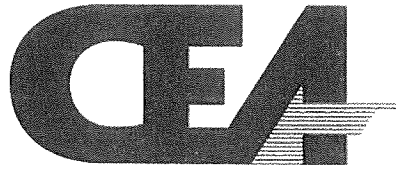
WHEREAS, it is widely recognized that standardized testing is an inadequate and often unreliable measure of both student learning and educator effectiveness; and

WHEREAS, the overemphasis on standardized testing has caused considerable collateral damage in too many schools, including narrowing the curriculum, teaching to the test, reducing a love of learning, 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 on students from all backgrounds, and especially for low-income students, English language learners, children of color, and those with disabilities;

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Cambridge Education Association supports locally developed, authentic assessments and more time for educators to teach and students to learn;

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that the Cambridge Education Association calls on state and federal education policymakers to adopt a moratorium on the high-stakes use of standardized tests so that educators, parents and other members of our communities can work together to develop assessment systems that support positive teaching practices and better prepare students for lifelong learning.



Cambridge Education Association

**TO: The Cambridge School Committee and the Cambridge Public School Administration**

We, the undersigned are members of the five bargaining units of the Cambridge Education Association. We collectively share a commitment to joyful, hands-on learning that respects and supports the whole child throughout all grades. The current climate of standardized testing, the intense focus on data collection (including district determined measures), and an overload of change initiatives have demoralized us and interfered with our ability to help children learn and grow in the ways they deserve. We call for a serious review of the testing schedule for students and the ongoing demands of new initiatives on educators that are taking us away from the real work of teaching and learning.

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**C15-139**

**CHAIR**  
MAYOR DAVID P. MAHER

**VICE CHAIR**  
ALFRED B. FANTINI

  
**SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY**  
TEL: 617-349-6620 • FAX: 617-349-6624  
jmartin@cpsd.us

**MEMBERS**  
FRAN A. CRONIN  
RICHARD HARDING, JR.  
KATHLEEN M. KELLY  
PATRICIA M. NOLAN  
MERVAN F. OSBORNE

--IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE--

May 19, 2015

ORDERED:

That the following be placed on file:

Whereas, the CEA, on behalf of the CPSD teaching staff, has made known their wish for the School Committee to support Rep. Marjorie Decker's House Bill 340, requesting the Massachusetts Department of Education to impose a 3-year moratorium on use of the PARCC standardized test and the use of high stakes testing to punitively evaluate educators, schools and school districts;

Whereas, the public has also made expressed wishes to halt the implementation of the PARCC test;

It is incumbent upon the School Committee to support the CEA's wish to impose a halt on the PARCC implementation and to proceed with a community-wide forum that allows all stakeholders – families, students, teachers and elected officials – to come to agreement on the role and implementation of state-mandated standardized testing.

A true copy:

Attest:

  
Judith T. Martin

Executive Secretary to the School Committee

c: Superintendent



# City of Cambridge

0-4  
Calendar item #12  
**IN CITY COUNCIL**  
May 18, 2015  
June 1, 2015

COUNCILLOR MCGOVERN  
COUNCILLOR KELLEY

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will be discussing whether to begin requiring that all public school students take the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers or PARCC; and

WHEREAS: The increase of high-stakes standardized tests are ravishing creativity, project based learning, and critical thinking skills in our public schools; and

WHEREAS: Far too often, these high-stakes standardized tests become the focus of education, even for children in kindergarten; and

WHEREAS: Far too often, these high-stakes standardized tests result in increased stress for teachers, children, and parents; and

WHEREAS: These high-stakes standardized tests take valuable time away from other developmentally appropriate learning in the arts, physical education, and foreign language; and

WHEREAS: These high-stakes standardized tests interfere with social-emotional learning; and

WHEREAS: Teachers in Cambridge - and across Massachusetts and the United States - are pleading to end these disruptive and unproven high-stakes standardized tests; and

WHEREAS: These high-stakes standardized tests have not proven to actually improve education; now therefore be it

RESOLVED: That this City Council go on record in support of House Bill 340 filed by former Cambridge City Councillor and current State Representative Marjorie Decker that calls on the Department of Education to not approve PARCC for Massachusetts public schools; calls on the state to not require high-stakes standardized tests be used as a requirement for high school graduation for at least the next three years; and that the state establish an Educational Review Task Force to examine the effectiveness and impact of these high-stakes standardized tests; and be it further

ORDERED: That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward suitably engrossed copies of this resolution to Mitchell D. Chester, Director of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Governor Charlie Baker, and all members of the Cambridge House Delegation on behalf of the entire City Council.



In City Council June 1, 2015  
Adopted by the affirmative vote of eight members.  
Attest:- Donna P. Lopez, City Clerk

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

*Donna P. Lopez*  
Donna P. Lopez, City Clerk

**COUNCILLOR TOOMEY RECORDED IN THE NEGATIVE**