

**END HIGH STAKES STANDARDIZED TESTING**

**WHEREAS:** Thousands of school boards and other organizations across the country are taking a stand against the over use of testing to make high stakes decisions about education; and

**WHEREAS:** Most of these tests are provided by for-profit companies concerned primarily about their bottom line rather than the education of students; and

**WHEREAS:** Our nation's future well-being relies on a high quality public education system that prepares all students for post-secondary education, 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 increasing amounts of time, money, and energy on high stakes standardized testing, in which student performance on standardized tests is used to make major decisions affecting individual students, educators, and schools; and

**WHEREAS:** The overreliance on high stakes standardized testing in our states and federal accountability systems is undermining the educational quality and equity in public schools by preventing educators' efforts to focus on the broad range of learning experiences that promote innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and deep subject-matter knowledge that will allow students to thrive in a democracy and global economy; 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 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 on low-income students, English language learners, children of color, and those with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS:** The culture and structure of the systems in which students learn must change in order to foster engaging school experiences that promote joy in learning, depth of thought, and breadth of knowledge for students; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

**RESOLVED:** AFT Michigan calls on the governor, state legislature, state education board and administrators, and to develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment which does not require extensive standardized testing, but more accurately reflects the broad range of student learning, and is used to support students and improve schools; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan calls for the governor, state legislature, state education board and administrators to use testing as an assessment of student learning and not a basis to make high stakes and often punitive decisions; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER**

**RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan work with the Michigan Education Justice Coalition and other community partners to educate students, parents, and communities about the impact of high stakes testing; and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY**

**RESOLVED:** That AFT Michigan advocates for the responsible use of student assessments, where they do not limit curriculums and impede on instructional times, or are used as justification to push out students, fire educators or close schools.

Submitted by:

Resolutions & Legislative Committee (May 6, 2014)

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