

Adopted, as Amended, by the Board of Education at its Regular Meeting of January 14, 2003

Subject: Resolution No. 210-22A6

In Opposition to the California High School Exit Exam (HSEE)

- Commissioners Mark Sanchez, Eric Mar, Eddie Y. Chin, and Emilio B. Cruz

WHEREAS: Resolution No. 25-28A21, *In Support of Alternative Assessments and Multiple Measures of Student Learning*, puts the San Francisco Board of Education on record as unanimously opposed to the California High School Exit Exam (HSEE) due to the following facts:

It is a single measure, high stakes test which is used punitively to deprive students of a high school diploma

It is administered across unequal schools, with schools in low-income communities of color experiencing, for example, more shortages of educational materials, inadequate learning environments, and higher rates of teacher and administrative turnover, as noted in the ACLU's Williams case against the state of California, which includes as plaintiffs San Francisco public school children

It unfairly penalizes students who have not been provided with the academic tools to perform to their highest potential on this test

The High School Exit Exam is discriminatory because it is given only in English

It promotes a narrowing of the curriculum and "teaching to the test" in all schools

In 2000-2001, it resulted in unacceptably high failure rates of African-American and Latino students, who were failed at twice the rate of their white counterparts, and low-income students at twice the rate of middle-class students (Applied Research Center, Oakland), and the wealthiest 10% of schools in California have received more API rewards than schools in other income brackets (California Budget Project, Sacramento); and

WHEREAS: The results of the 2001-2002 HSEE are similar to those in 2000-2001, with:

approximately 80% of Latino and African American students failing the math portion of the exam

56% of Latino students and 54% of African American students failing the English Language Arts portion of the exam

82% of English Language Learners failing the math and 72% failing the English portions of the exam

78% of socio-economically disadvantaged students failing the math and 60% failing the English portions of the exam.

89% of special education students failing the math and 75% failing the English portions of the exam; and

WHEREAS: Local results of the HSEE roughly mirror the statewide results mentioned above; and

WHEREAS: Unless the California State Board of Education significantly alters its course, students in the class of 2004 must pass the HSEE to earn a diploma; and

WHEREAS: The San Francisco Board of Education is cognizant of the fact that in states across the country, unacceptably high numbers of African American and Latino students are being pushed out of school due to the use of exit exams, most notably because once students fail the test in the beginning years of high school many give up on school altogether by the 11th and 12th grades; and

WHEREAS: Once students drop out of school they are significantly more at risk of entering the juvenile justice system and are significantly less likely to be prepared to enter the job market; and

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WHEREAS: The San Francisco Board of Education is dedicated to ensuring to the best of its ability that all students remain in school until they are graduated with a diploma; and

WHEREAS: Closing the education opportunity gap cannot be accomplished by punishing students who are already the victims of the state of California's refusal to adequately fund public education; rather, the state of California can best adequately meet the needs of its most underserved students by drastically increasing school resources so that the state doesn't languish at 48th in the nation in per pupil funding in an economy which is the world's fifth largest; and

WHEREAS: Grassroots student, parent and teacher organizations such as Californians for Justice, the Coalition for Educational Justice, CAL CARE, School Voices and Teachers 4 Social Justice have taken a leading role in resisting the High School Exit Exam and other high stakes testing in California; and civil rights groups such as the NAACP and the Citizens Commission on Civil Rights as well as mainstream educational groups such as the California Teachers Association have also come out strongly against exit exams and high stakes testing; and

WHEREAS: From 1997 to 2000, San Francisco Unified School District set precedent by courageously defending its students from harmful state-mandated testing by refusing to force its English Language Learners to be assessed by an English-only test.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That, noting the deleterious outcomes and effects of the HSEE as described above, the San Francisco Board of Education will request that the Superintendent of Schools and her staff to examine the legal issues related to the HSEE and pursue creative legal strategies which may prevent the State of California from implementing the High School Exit Exam in the San Francisco Unified School District; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That, due to serious questions and concerns raised as to whether the current state high stakes testing policies are in the best interest of all students, the San Francisco Board of Education will formally request that the State Board of Education suspend the implementation of the High School Exit Exam; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the SFUSD and Board of Education encourage our students to apply themselves and do their best in the exam and will support District efforts to help students in passing the exit exam through strategies offered by the District

10/22/02

1/14/03

Please Note:

- Referred to the Budget and Business Services Committee and the Rules, Policy, and Legislation Committee by order of the Chair on 10/22/02.
- Heard in the Budget and Business Services Committee meeting on 11/20/02. Positive recommendation to the full Board from Committee with the understanding that any possible litigation brought about by this resolution will be forwarded to the Board of Education in Closed Session for full discussion and approval.
- Taken up by the Rules Committee on 11/26/02. Forwarded to the full Board and the Curriculum Committee with a positive recommendation.
- Taken up the Curriculum Committee on 12/17/02. Forwarded to the full Board with a positive recommendation as amended. New language in bold, italics, underscored. ~~Old language stricken out.~~
- Adopted, as amended, on 1/14/03.