

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

454 BROADWAY

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02138

CHAIRMAN

MAYOR MICHAEL A. SULLIVAN

VICE CHAIR

ALICE L. TURKEL

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Tel: 617-349-6620 • Fax: 617-349-6624

marilyn_bradshaw@cps.ci.cambridge.ma.us

--IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE--

MEMBERS

ALFRED B. FANTINI

JOSEPH G. GRASSI

RICHARD HARDING, JR.

ALAN C. PRICE

NANCY WALSER

April 23, 2002

ORDERED:

That the following Resolution be adopted:

- WHEREAS:** The 1993 Education Reform Act of the General Laws of Massachusetts states that the system for determining academic competencies, "...shall employ a variety of assessment instruments. As much as is practicable, especially in the case of students whose performance is difficult to assess using conventional methods, such instruments shall include consideration of work samples, projects, and shall facilitate authentic and direct gauges of student performance"; and
- WHEREAS:** The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Test (MCAS Test) does not support different styles of learning, communicating or demonstrating student performance; and
- WHEREAS:** The State Department of Education has put forth a policy that would deny high school diplomas to students who fail the MCAS Test, regardless of their other academic achievements and competencies as demonstrated by other assessment instruments; and
- WHEREAS:** There is no proven, educational rationale for basing high school graduation or any grade promotion on performance in a single, standardized test, regardless of how many times the test is administered; and
- WHEREAS:** The denial of high school diplomas is a discriminatory consequence that will fall disproportionately upon those families who are too poor to send their children to private or parochial schools; and
- WHEREAS:** The anticipated consequences of the MCAS Test will harm students by increasing high school dropout rates; and
- WHEREAS:** The MCAS Test is not adequately sensitive to the circumstances of special education students, students entering the public schools from households that speak a first language other than standard English, and students whose immediate aims focus on employment rather than higher education; and
- WHEREAS:** The standards of achievement set by the MCAS Test alone are on their face arbitrary as demonstrated by the fact that easier tests are administered to those who fail; and
- WHEREAS:** The Cambridge School Committee has the legal responsibility to award diplomas to students who have fulfilled local requirements for graduation in order to recognize their academic achievement and permit their further education and employment, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

--IN SCHOOL COMMITTEE--

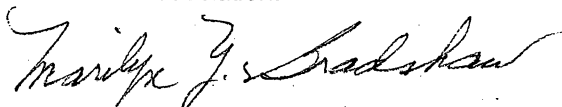
April 23, 2002

-page 2-

- RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee will continue to uphold the legal and educational standards established by the 1993 Education Reform Act; and BE IT FURTHER
- RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee continues to support testing when it is used as one of a variety of assessment instruments; and BE IT FURTHER
- RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee authorizes the Superintendent to grant high school diplomas to all students who meet the requirements for graduation regardless of her or his MCAS Test score; and BE IT FURTHER
- RESOLVED: That the Cambridge School Committee directs the Superintendent to develop a method of integrating the competency assessments from the MCAS Test, and not the score of the MCAS Test, into the portfolio of direct and authentic assessment, and that this method be presented to the Cambridge School Committee for discussion by February, 2004; and BE IT FURTHER
- RESOLVED: That this resolution shall be communicated to the Cambridge City Council, the members of our State House delegation, the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

A true copy:

Attest:


Marilyn Y. Bradshaw

Executive Secretary to the School Committee

cc: Superintendent
Mr. Price

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NANCY WALSER

April 29, 2002

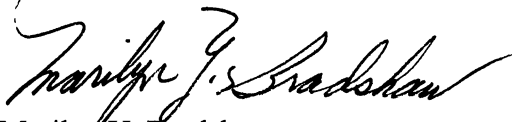
Ms. D. Margaret Drury
City Clerk
City Hall
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Ms. Drury:

At its Regular Meeting of April 23, 2002, the Cambridge School Committee voted to adopt a Resolution that authorizes the Superintendent to grant high school diplomas to all students who meet the requirements for graduation regardless of her or his MCAS Test score.

A copy of the Resolution is enclosed for your information.

Sincerely,



Marilyn Y. Bradshaw

Executive Secretary to the School Committee

MYB/pb
Enclosure

2002 MAY - 1 A 11:15
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

S-141

**Communications and Reports from
City Officers #1**

A communication was received from Marilyn Y. Bradshaw, Executive Secretary to the School Committee, transmitting a copy of a resolution that authorizes the Superintendent to grant high school diplomas to all students who meet the requirements for graduation regardless of their MCAS Test score.

In City Council May 6, 2002

PLACED ON FILE.