SCOTT COUNTY VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Inspiring Excellence and Empowering Potential"

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

James Kay Jessee
Jeffrey A. Kegley
Gail L. McConnell
William R. Quillen, Jr.
L. Stephen Sallee, Jr.
H. Kelly Spivey, Jr.

DIVISION SUPERINTENDENT

John I. Ferguson
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RESOLUTION CONCERNING HIGH STAKES, STANDARDIZED TESTING OF VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
COUNTY OF SCOTT

WHEREAS, the over reliance on standardized, high stakes testing as the only assessment of learning that really matters in the state and federal accountability systems, is strangling our public schools and undermining any chance that educators have to transform a traditional system of schooling into a broad range of learning experiences that better prepares our students to live successfully and be competitive on a global stage; and

WHEREAS, there is little research upon which to base the state's assumption that by taking and passing thirty-four criterion-referenced tests between grades three and eleven, Virginia's students will be better prepared to succeed in their careers and college; and

WHEREAS, we believe our state's future prosperity relies on a high-quality education system that prepares students for college and careers, and without such a system Virginia's economic competitiveness and ability to attract new business will falter; and

WHEREAS, there is little research verifying Virginia's method of applying criterion-referenced test results as valid and reliable measurements of authentic growth in student achievement; and

WHEREAS, there is little research verifying Virginia's method of measuring student growth as a valid and reliable indicator of teacher, principal and superintendent performance; and

WHEREAS, the system that Virginia employs for high-stakes education accountability at both the state and federal level is based on the state's method of configuring criterion-referenced standardized tests, growth measures, and performance indicators, all of which lack any solid research foundation; and

WHEREAS, the real work of designing more engaging student learning experiences requires changes in the culture and structure of the systems in which teachers and students work; and

WHEREAS, what occurs in our classrooms every day should be student-centered and result in students learning at a deep and meaningful level, as opposed to the superficial level of learning that results from the current over-emphasis on that which can be easily tested by standardized tests; and

WHEREAS, We believe that a balanced system of assessments that provide a more comprehensive analysis of student learning and growth is far better in defining achievement than using snapshots of student performance on criterion-referenced tests (see VASS Blueprint, October 2011); and

WHEREAS, our vision is for all students to be engaged in more meaningful learning activities that cultivate their unique individual talents, to provide options for students that are designed to respect how they learn best, and to embrace the concept that students can be both consumers and creators of knowledge; and

WHEREAS, only by developing new capacities and conditions in divisions and schools, and the communities in which they are embedded, will we ensure that all learning spaces foster and celebrate innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication and critical thinking; and

WHEREAS, these are the very skills that business leaders desire in a rising workforce and the very attitudes that are essential to the survival of our democracy; and

WHEREAS, imposing relentless test preparation and boring memorization of facts to enhance test performance is doing little more than stealing the love of learning from our students and assuring that we fall short of our goals; and

WHEREAS, we do not oppose accountability in public schools and point with pride to the stellar performance of our students, but believe that the system of the past will not prepare our students to lead in the future and neither will the standardized tests that so dominate their instructional time and block our ability to make progress toward a world-class education system of student-centered schools and future-ready students.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Scott County School Board calls on the Virginia General Assembly to re-examine Virginia public school assessments and the system of accountability for which they form the basis and to improve the current accountability system so that it encompasses balanced assessments, reflects greater validity, uses more cost efficient sampling techniques and other external evaluation arrangements, allows for expedited test retakes, and more accurately reflects what students know, appreciate and can do in terms of the rigorous standards essential to their success, enhances the role of teachers as designers, guides to instruction and leaders, and nurtures the sense of inquiry and love of learning in all students.

PASSED AND APPROVED on this 1st day of October, 2013.

James Kay Jessee, Chairman of the Board	Gail McConnell, School Board Member
Bill Quillen, Vice Chairman of the Board	Steve Sallee, School Board Member
Jeff Kegley, School Board Member	Kelly Spivey, School Board Member

From: Emily Webb [mailto:vsba@eboardsolutions.com]
Sent: Thursday, September 12, 2013 5:11 PM
To: John Ferguson
Subject: Support for Virginia High Stakes Testing Resolution

Good afternoon Board Chairs and Superintendents,

Last week, a number of statewide education associations met in Richmond, including VSBA and VASS, to continue the discussion of Virginia's accountability system and high stakes testing. While these discussions will continue over the next few weeks and months as we prepare for the General Assembly session, I wanted to make you aware of a resolution that has received the support of the VSBA Board of Directors as well as the VASS Board of Directors.

I have attached the sample resolution to this email that requests the Virginia General Assembly to reexamine Virginia's public school assessments and accountability system. We believe that there is room for improvement within our current system that will give us balanced assessments, a more complete picture of student learning, and allows for expedited retakes and local control of the testing windows among other items.

The VSBA Board of Directors is in agreement with the resolution and we ask for the support from your Board. Your Division Superintendent may already be in the process of presenting this resolution to the Board but we wanted to ensure you received a copy as well. Once your Board has considered this resolution, I ask that you alert me of the outcome.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at emily@vsba.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,
Emily

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Virginia School Boards Association, a voluntary, nonpartisan organization of Virginia school boards, promotes excellence in public education through advocacy, training and services.

RESOLUTION CONCERNING HIGH STAKES, STANDARDIZED TESTING

OF VIRGINIA PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

COUNTY /CITY OF _____

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- WHEREAS, there is little research upon which to base the state's assumption that by taking and passing thirty-four criterion-referenced tests between grades three and eleven, Virginia's students will be better prepared to succeed in their careers and college; and

- WHEREAS, we believe our state's future prosperity relies on a high-quality education system that prepares students for college and careers, and without such a system Virginia's economic competitiveness and ability to attract new business will falter; and

- WHEREAS, there is little research verifying Virginia's method of applying criterion-referenced test results as valid and reliable measurements of authentic growth in student achievement; and

- WHEREAS, there is little research verifying Virginia's method of measuring student growth as a valid and reliable indicator of teacher, principal and superintendent performance; and

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- WHEREAS, the real work of designing more engaging student learning experiences requires changes in the culture and structure of the systems in which

teachers and students work; and

- WHEREAS, what occurs in our classrooms every day should be student-centered and result in students learning at a deep and meaningful level, as opposed to the superficial level of learning that results from the current over-emphasis on that which can be easily tested by standardized tests; and
- WHEREAS, We believe that a balanced system of assessments that provide a more comprehensive analysis of student learning and growth is far better in defining achievement than using snapshots of student performance on criterion-referenced tests (see VASS Blueprint, October 2011); and
- WHEREAS, Our vision is for all students to be engaged in more meaningful learning activities that cultivate their unique individual talents, to provide options for students that are designed to respect how they learn best, and to embrace the concept that students can be both consumers and creators of knowledge; and
- WHEREAS, only by developing new capacities and conditions in divisions and schools, and the communities in which they are embedded, will we ensure that all learning spaces foster and celebrate innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication and critical thinking; and
- WHEREAS, these are the very skills that business leaders desire in a rising workforce and the very attitudes that are essential to the survival of our democracy; and
- WHEREAS, imposing relentless test preparation and boring memorization of facts to enhance test performance is doing little more than stealing the love of learning from our students and assuring that we fall short of our goals; and
- WHEREAS, we do not oppose accountability in public schools and point with pride to the stellar performance of our students, but believe that the system of the past will not prepare our students to lead in the future and neither will the standardized tests that so dominate their instructional time and block our ability to make progress toward a world-class education system of student-centered schools and future-ready students.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE

_____ School Board calls on the Virginia General Assembly to reexamine Virginia public school assessments and the system of accountability for which they form the basis and to improve the current accountability system so that it encompasses balanced assessments, reflects greater validity, uses more cost efficient sampling techniques and other external evaluation arrangements, allows for expedited test retakes, and more accurately reflects what students know, appreciate and can do in terms of the rigorous standards essential to their success, enhances the role of teachers as designers, guides to instruction and leaders, and nurtures the sense of inquiry and love of learning in all students.

PASSED AND APPROVED in this _____ day of _____, 201_.

By: _____ By: _____

Name: Name:

Title: Title:

By: _____ By: _____

Name: Name:

Title: Title:

By: _____ By: _____

Name: Name:

Title: Title:

By: _____ By: _____

Name: Name:

Title: Title: