

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.5

Senator Polehanki offered the following concurrent resolution:

1 A concurrent resolution to urge the United States Department
2 of Education to grant waivers for Michigan state assessment
3 requirements under the Every Student Succeeds Act.

4 Whereas, State and federal laws require schools to assess
5 student learning every year in specific grade levels and subjects.
6 Under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), states must
7 administer annual statewide assessments. If states do not meet
8 certain requirements, the U.S. Department of Education may withhold
9 federal funding; and

10 Whereas, Michigan meets this federal requirement in part by
11 requiring schools to administer standardized tests. The Michigan
12 Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP) is given to students
13 online in grades 3-7 to measure their knowledge of state standards
14 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The Michigan

1 Department of Education also administers the PSAT 8/9 which
2 replaced the M-STEP ELA and mathematics assessment for grade 8. The
3 M-STEP and the PSAT 8/9 aim to provide valuable information to
4 parents and teachers on student academic performance that help
5 schools and districts evaluate curriculum and programming
6 effectiveness; and

7 Whereas, While the PSAT 8/9 is paper-based and the M-STEP is
8 administered online, students normally take both assessments under
9 the supervision of an administrator who can ensure test security.
10 Maintaining uniform procedures for test administration helps ensure
11 that results are accurate and meaningful and that no student has an
12 unfair advantage in their assessment performance; and

13 Whereas, In light of the uncertainty of in-person school
14 attendance for the rest of the 2020-21 school year due to the
15 COVID-19 Pandemic, it will be difficult to prepare uniform
16 procedures for administration of state assessments. This may result
17 in decreased test security and overall confusion regarding the
18 process, which may detract from the reliability of the assessment
19 results; and

20 Whereas, The U.S. Department of Education announced that they
21 will grant a waiver to any state that is unable to assess its
22 students due to the ongoing national emergency brought on by the
23 COVID-19 Pandemic for the current 2019-2020 school year. The
24 decision was made in order to allow students to focus on learning
25 and staying healthy while allowing teachers time to adapt to remote
26 learning; and

27 Whereas, School districts will continue to face enormous
28 burdens and challenges as they scramble to prepare for education
29 under new and uncertain circumstances in the upcoming school year.

1 It is essential that we allow them flexibility to ease some of
2 those burdens. While state assessments provide valuable
3 information, we should allow schools to focus their limited
4 resources and energy on other initiatives; now, therefore, be it

5 Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives
6 concurring), That we urge the United States Department of Education
7 to grant waivers for Michigan state assessment requirements under
8 the Every Student Succeeds Act for the 2020-2021 school year; and
9 be it further

10 Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the
11 United States Secretary of Education.