

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO.30

Senators Polehanki, McCann, Bayer, Wojno, McMorrow, Chang, Geiss, Moss, Irwin, Santana, Brinks, Hertel, Ananich, Alexander and McBroom 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

1 online in grades 3-7 to measure their knowledge of state standards
2 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The Michigan
3 Department of Education also administers the PSAT 8/9 which
4 replaced the M-STEP ELA and mathematics assessment for grade 8. The
5 M-STEP and the PSAT 8/9 aim to provide valuable information to
6 parents and teachers on student academic performance that help
7 schools and districts evaluate curriculum and programming
8 effectiveness; and

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

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

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

28 Whereas, School districts will continue to face enormous
29 burdens and challenges as they scramble to prepare for education

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

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

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