

Lisa Haver: City Council Testimony on Standardized Testing
December 11, 2014

Good Afternoon. My name is Lisa Haver; I am a retired Philadelphia teacher and co-founder of the Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools. I speak on behalf of the members of the Alliance in favor of the passage of Resolution 140997 which calls on the School District of Philadelphia to examine the financial, academic and emotional costs which standardized tests exact on our students and our schools.

High-stakes standardized tests have become a plague on education. These tests cost a great deal of money which should be spent to bring back librarians, nurses, counselors and teachers. They waste an inordinate amount of valuable instructional time.

Again, we extend our thanks Councilman Mark Squilla for sponsoring the November 17 hearings and to the Education Committee for their attention to this crucial issue. We thank Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez for introducing today's resolution.

Now, all of the students in every high school across the state are facing a new crisis: the requirement that they pass the Keystone exams in order to graduate. This is what we are telling our children: the only thing that really matters is what you do on one test on one day. You may be sick that day, or your grandmother may have died the night before, or you may have just arrived in the country and are not yet fluent in English—too bad. Your work in the classroom and the grades you have earned over those four years don't count. This is an unfair burden and sends the wrong message to our students.

Again, we urge the members of Council to pass Resolution 140997 so that our schools can return to being places of true learning and creativity.

Thank you.