

RESOLUTION TO HOLD HARMLESS 2019 10<sup>th</sup> GRADE MCAS  
DUE TO RACIST QUESTION

WHEREAS the graduation requirement makes the tenth grade MCAS exam one of the highest stakes exams most Massachusetts students take; and

WHEREAS teachers, families, and schools all invest time and resources to give students the best possible chance at success on the exam; and

WHEREAS, the recent 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS English exam contained an essay that required students to write a journal entry from the perspective of an openly racist character; and

WHEREAS, DESE was unable to defend the question, quickly moving to not have it count, and

WHEREAS, we only discovered this because students had the courage to violate the rules about discussing specific MCAS questions, and

WHEREAS, research shows that exposure to negative stereotypes can have a negative impact on student performance, and

WHEREAS, the impact of the racist question on performance cannot be quantified;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it:

RESOLVED: That the Somerville School Committee calls on DESE to exempt students who took the test with the rejected question from the graduation exam requirement; AND FURTHER

RESOLVED: That the Somerville School Committee calls for DESE to immediately implement a policy of releasing old MCAS questions, so that there can be transparency to prevent such egregious errors in the future; AND

THAT: a copy of this resolution be delivered to DESE, the Governor and the Somerville state and local legislative delegations and otherwise widely distributed.

VOTED:

DATE:

BY THE: Somerville School Committee