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2 Councilmember Mary M. Cheh

Councilmember Charles Allen

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6 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George

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10 A PROPOSED RESOLUTION

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15 IN THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

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20 To declare the existence of an emergency with respect to the need to require the Office of the State
21 Superintendent for Education to submit a request for a waiver from certain federal
22 requirements, and to prohibit the Office of the State Superintendent, District of Columbia
23 Public Schools, the Public Charter School Board, and public charter schools from
24 considering the results of standardized assessments for certain purposes.

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26 RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, That this
27 resolution may be cited as the “State Education Assessment Waiver Emergency Declaration
28 Resolution of 2021”.

29 Sec. 2. (a) Federal law requires states to administer academic assessments to students in
30 specified grades, on specified subject matter, and to report data to the federal government. During
31 the 2019-2020 school year, due to the tremendous disruption in education caused by the COVID-
32 19 pandemic, the U.S. Department of Education granted to the District—along with all 50 states,
33 Puerto Rico, and the Bureau of Indian Education—waivers of federal requirements to administer
34 standardized assessment.

35 (b) Despite great progress in treating and preventing spread of the COVID-19 virus, the
36 2020-2021 school year has again been rife with disruption for students and school staff. District

37 public schools have only recently invited a small number of students into the building for in-person
38 instruction.

39 (c) Most experts believe that, once assessments can be done, there will be evidence of
40 significant learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic, making it important for schools and
41 teachers to assess their students' needs. Principals, teachers, and other school staff are quite
42 capable of choosing or creating targeted assessments that will most accurately measure their
43 students' particular needs, allowing schools to target instruction and interventions as needed.

44 (d) In a normal school year, administration of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness
45 for College and Careers ("PARCC") assessment dominates weeks of instruction time, and some
46 District of Columbia Public Schools staff have reported to Council offices plans to again devote
47 at least a week of instruction time to PARCC testing this year. When a significant percentage of
48 students are not attending school in person, the administrative burden on teachers and other school
49 staff will be much more intense than in another year.

50 (e) The Department of Education ("DOE") recently released guidance to states noting that
51 DOE is unlikely to grant full waivers of standardized assessments, but DOE noted that it would
52 consider requests for waivers of some federal requirements related to accountability for test scores
53 and identifying schools in need of targeted supports based on the school's test scores. DOE also
54 encouraged states to exercise flexibility around the timing of testing, including delaying testing for
55 the 2020-2021 school year until the fall of the 2021-2022 school year, when more students are
56 likely to be attending school in person.

57 (f) To reduce the pressure school staff and students feel, the Office of the State
58 Superintendent for Education ("OSSE") can request waivers allowing as much flexibility as
59 possible in testing, and OSSE should reduce the stakes of testing by ensuring that any testing that

60 does take place during the 2020-2021 school year is not used for important decisions like
61 promotion and retention, staff evaluations, and school ratings and rankings.

62 (g) Many advocates for schools and children believe that, if PARCC cannot be cancelled
63 outright again this school year, testing must be delayed and the stakes must be reduced so that
64 during this year of continued, significant disruptions on students' learning, all school staff can
65 focus their time and efforts on meeting their students' particular needs, not administering
66 standardized tests.

67 Sec. 3. The Council of the District of Columbia determines that the circumstances
68 enumerated in section 2 constitute emergency circumstances making it necessary that the State
69 Education Assessment Waiver Emergency Act of 2021 be adopted after a single reading.

70 Sec. 4. This resolution shall take effect immediately.