

HOUSE No. 657

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Elizabeth A. Malia

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act clarifying parental rights in the administration of standardized tests.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Elizabeth A. Malia</i>	<i>11th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 657

By Ms. Malia of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 657) of Elizabeth A. Malia and James J. O'Day relative to student participation in standardized tests. Education.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 519 OF 2019-2020.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act clarifying parental rights in the administration of standardized tests.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 1I of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018
2 official edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the third paragraph the following
3 paragraph:-

4 Notwithstanding the preceding paragraph or any other general or special law to the
5 contrary, upon a written request of a parent or guardian of a student, the board or its designee
6 from the local educational agency, as defined in section 1B, shall excuse the student from
7 participating in any standardized test or assessment instrument used to fulfill the requirements
8 for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment administered under this section. A request made
9 pursuant to this paragraph shall specify which assessment test the student shall be exempted
10 from. The board or its local designee shall, within 20 days, grant a parent or guardian’s written

11 request for exemption in writing. An exemption granted pursuant to this section by the board or
12 its designee shall apply to the academic year in which the parent or guardian made the request
13 and successive academic years, unless the parent or guardian specifies otherwise. During the
14 period of time in which a school is administering any standardized assessment instrument, the
15 principal shall ensure that alternate educational activities are offered to students who are exempt
16 from such assessment tests.

17 SECTION 2. Section 1I of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
18 inserting after the fifth paragraph the following paragraph:-

19 When any school does not have a ninety-five percent participation rate in the state testing
20 program, the local school district shall hold a public meeting at the school or at a location
21 convenient to the school. The district shall invite parents and students enrolled to explain their
22 reasons for not participating. Parents and students shall also be given time to propose changes in
23 the testing system.

24 The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may send a representative to
25 the meeting who shall report student and parent concerns to the Board of Elementary and
26 Secondary Education. DESE may work with the district to increase test participation, but shall
27 not lower a school's ranking or level, or impose any other penalty.

28 SECTION 3. Said section 1I of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby amended by
29 striking out, in line 235, the word "and".

30 SECTION 4. Said section 1I of said chapter 69, as so appearing is hereby further
31 amended by inserting after the word "learners", in line 241, the following words:- and

32 (i) the number of students exempted from participating in comprehensive diagnostic
33 assessment or taking any other standardized assessment instrument administered under this
34 section.

35 SECTION 5. Said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after
36 section 1Q, the following section:-

37 Section 1R. For purposes of this section “district diagnostic assessment” shall mean a
38 comprehensive diagnostic assessment or any other standardized assessment test required of all
39 students of a certain grade level within a specific school district and administered by that school
40 district independent of any statewide comprehensive diagnostic assessment or other assessment
41 test required pursuant to section 6I. A “district diagnostic assessment” may be a standardized
42 assessment used by a school district as preparation or practice for statewide comprehensive
43 diagnostic assessment or other assessment test required pursuant to said section.

44 Notwithstanding any other general or special law to the contrary, upon a written request
45 of a parent or guardian of a student, a school district shall excuse the student from participating
46 in any district diagnostic assessment. A request made pursuant to this section shall specify which
47 assessment test the student shall be exempted from. The school district shall, within 20 days,
48 grant a parent or guardian’s written request for exemption in writing. An exemption granted
49 pursuant to this section by the school district shall apply to the academic year in which the parent
50 or guardian made the request and successive academic years, unless the parent or guardian
51 specifies otherwise. During the period of time in which a school is administering a district
52 diagnostic assessment, the principal shall ensure that alternate educational activities are offered
53 to students who are exempt from such assessment.