

I am Fr. Heberto M. Diaz, Pastor of St. Luke Catholic Church here in Brownsville and leader with Valley Interfaith. As a Pastor I am constantly concerned about the quality of life and faith of our community. In keeping with the call for transformation that comes from Sacred Scripture, I am a firm believer that change is always good if its purpose is to better the quality of life and faith of the person. As you have heard the stories and struggles in our testimonies, it is time for change to the public school accountability system. Valley Interfaith recommends the following;

- 1.) Make state mandated testing diagnostic instead of punitive. Move the state mandated test back to the beginning of the school year and develop and implement multiple measures for evaluating student performance. We also recommend growth models that measure student improvement.
- 2.) Make the accountability rating system fair, transparent and understandable to parents and the community.
- 3.) Invest in resources to improve student's capacity to learn including early childhood education, health care and raise teacher salaries to the national level.
- 4.) Provide incentives for experienced teachers to remain in the hardest to teach schools.
- 5.) Ensure that incentives are campus-based so that schools improve as a whole and school wide collaboration is reinforced.

Valley Interfaith looks forward to see the committee's recommendations and to work with you and the legislature to develop a more effective accountability system that truly encourages quality teaching and high achievement.