

VALLEY INTERFAITH

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My name is Rita Salazar, VIF leader with Holy Spirit Church in McAllen. Throughout the past few months we have been having "Listening Sessions" throughout the Valley to listen to the stories, parents, students, teachers and administrators have about the TAKS test. We have also discussed alternative methods that can be used for accountability.

Valley Interfaith and other Texas IAF Organizations have fought to increase student achievement for over 25 years. We strongly believe in accountability for student achievement. We also believe our children must receive a balanced education which will prepare them for the workforce or for higher education. This cannot be achievement through the present system that consists of constantly drilling and testing our children.

We are here as advocates for our children and grandchildren--- For the higher achieving students who have no problems with the tests but are being bored with all the drill and retesting that takes place-----for those students that are so stressed out by the expectations of the test that they become ill(as an L.P.C. I can attest to this because I see these children with anxiety problems during the school year). We are also advocating for those students which have shown improvement throughout the year but still fall short on the test----and for those who have all their credits for graduation but keep failing one of the required tests and eventually get discouraged and leave high school without a diploma thus contributing to the drop-out rate.

We ask you to listen to our stories and our recommendations and make changes that will prepare our students to be successful in their future.