My name is Bill Miller. I am a Lubbock businessman and am Chairman of the Education Council of the Lubbock Chamber of Commerce. We appreciate your interest and the interest of the state in a more functional accountability system. We believe that such a system should recognize the need to hold students and educators accountable for their performance in public schools as well recognize the variability in student populations as that relates to socio-economic issues and physical capability. By way of background, I am a 2 term school board trustee, 2 term school board president, was involved in the development of the first accountability system, was appointed to the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and enhanced the accountability system there, serve on the board of TIER (Texans In Educational Reform), have a certain empathy for Raise Your Hand, another school revisionist group and am involved in innovation projects in education here in Lubbock.

In business which is driven by accountability systems, multiple factors are considered based upon any number of variables to define "success" .While every child can learn, in education and the real world it is narcissistic to think that every child will learn at the same rate within the same grade and be motivated by the same things in the same way. The light just comes on for some kids at different times. Thus we are concerned about the new "4x4"·accountability standard. We think the career-technology component should be introduced at the middle school level and not just late in high school. There must be a realistic sequencing of what is relevant to the child, the education system and society as well as the workforce. One standard for each grade or a narrow definition not at least recognizing socio-economic factors as a third element of accountability is impractical to the market served and will be irrelevant. We believe that practical and relevant strata of math and science that encompasses career training or experience, technology, life skills and higher, critical thinking skills can create long term incentives for college ready children as well as allow those who want or need alternatives along the way to "cross walk" between the workforce, additional training and finally college or university training. We believe that community colleges play a key role in this evolution and should be integrated into public education and technical training. What does "college ready" or "post secondary readiness" really mean? They call for blended educational curricula which are relevant and driven by reality and accountability, as well as opportunity at all levels of academic offerings. The current accountability system is now too complex and in some cases actually creates disincentives when one small demographic group of students causes a school to be rated as low performing or unacceptable. We believe in the recognition of incremental gain. Current performance is a known benchmark or baseline. If campuses reflect incremental gain in student performance regardless of their overall ranking, you are recognizing real growth in the educational process in the most difficult areas. To turn your eyes away from the reality of distressed areas and neighborhoods, and you know what I mean, and say they should be

evaluated on the same basis as the Highland Parks of the world is unrealistic. If all you do is recognize the top performers and offer no incentive to come up from demographic or lower socio-economic groups, how will they come up?

Just as in business, greater challenges require greater resources and the intelligent use of those resources. To create a formula that only recognizes one level of teacher competence is worthless. If you evolve teacher compensation and pay for performance over time, the quality of teachers and education will improve. Above all, the new accountability system must be relevant, transparent, recognize more than just raw test scores and both provide and recognize incremental gains.