

Hello, my name is Thelma de la Cruz, a parent of Harvard Elementary.

I am here today to say that the TAKS test has serious flaws that need to be addressed. I have talked to many parents in the community and we realized that our children are suffering the consequences of a testing system that does not work.

The first issue is that administrators and those outside of the classroom are dictating the content and administration of this test. We believe teachers should have a larger Role in assessing our children instead of relying on a single test.

Many teachers end up focusing only on the TAKS test due to the stress and pressure placed upon them. This distorts instruction and curriculum. I firmly believe that one test should never be the sole indicator of a student's ability or achievement!

When speaking to other parents there is one thing we agree on and that is the stress level of kids due to testing is at an all time high! When teachers start from day 1 placing emphasis on TAKS testing and that a fate of retention awaits them if they don't pass is not acceptable. Some students who frequently fail the test begin to develop a perception of themselves as failures and then they give up and develop low self esteem. Students bear

the weight of testing on their shoulders all school year. Is this fair? I certainly don't think so.

My son Daniel De La Cruz a 4th grade student is suffering from test anxiety about the writing, math, and reading TAKS test! He is in the hands of a psychiatrist due to his high level of his stress. He is currently in therapy to learn strategies to help him in preparing for the TAKS test which he had one after another.

A few weeks ago I attended a TMO Listening session at Davis High School. I finally had the opportunity to voice my concerns. They asked me to attend today to share my story on behalf of parents like myself. I want to share 3 words with you. Exhausted..... Pressured.....Embattled! These 3 words describe how my family feels about TAKS testing.

It is time that you place a larger value on the opinions of parents and work toward modifying this flawed system. I want an accountability system that encourages knowledge, creativity and a thirst for learning. I intend to work with TMO and other parents and bring about change – and we're beginning today.