Testimony of Mike Falick President – Board of Trustees Spring Branch Independent School District
Senate Committee on Education May 10, 2011

I. Introduction
A. Madam Chairwoman and Distinguished Members of the Committee
B. Mike Falick, President of the Board of Trustees, Spring Branch Independent School District
C. 32,500 students on 46 campuses, representing the diversity of the State of Texas
D. 57% low SES; 1/3rd ELL (51% pre-K – 2)
E. Spring Branch Goal: Premiere College Focused District in Texas
   1. Highest percentage of students taking SAT/ACT – 87% - of any District in Houston area
   2. Highest percentage of students rated “college ready” of any District in the Houston area

II. Accountability
A. Testified in both House and Senate in 2009 on HB3
B. As then, Spring Branch remains a strong believer in public school accountability.
C. HB3 provided a clearly defined goal of postsecondary success with the stated goal, asked for by many, many constituents, to simplify the system and to deemphasize high stakes testing

III. CSHB500
A. Transition Phase In
   1. Transition provision applies to next 2 classes of incoming 5th graders, and permits them to graduate either by taking and passing 4 TAKS tests or by satisfying prescribed EOC requirements
      a. Critical transition piece that would keep kids from getting hurt while teachers adapt to the new curriculum and new EOC
   2. Simplicity
      a. Driving force of HB3 was to make the accountability system simpler to understand
      b. The current implementation of HB3 is extremely confusing
B. Local Control
   1. Districts have authority to determine locally whether, and how much, EOC scores contribute to course grades
C. Retaking Tests
   1. Students may (rather than must) retake tests
   2. ARD committees determine assessment requirements for identified special education students
   3. Enormous cost savings

Thank you for your time and commitment to the children of the State of Texas.