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FROM: David Merrill, Chairman

RE: Education Task Force, Brownsville Chamber of Commerce

DATE: September 26, 2003

The Brownsville Chamber of Commerce has created an Education Reform Task Force. The mission is to provide business leader support for systemic and fundamental reform in local educational institutions. The Task Force has a three-year "sunset" provision that can be extended by the Board.

The intermediate measurement of success would include improved test scores on TAKS as well as annual progress towards accomplishment of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The long-term goal is No Child Left Behind. This means children who start school will graduate and be ready to go to college.

Brownsville is uniquely positioned to benefit from the NCLB legislation, but that is because the population here is uniquely threatened --- demographically, culturally economically and financially. Research and analysis shows clearly that the majority of infants, children and adolescents in Brownsville are already relegated to the backwaters of educational expectations. Continuation of these low expectations guarantees second-class citizenship for a large portion of Brownsville's population. Among other things, this will certainly be a significant drag on the economic prospects for the region and the future prosperity of our citizens.

The Chamber of Commerce has undertaken to change that destiny.