

RAISING the Bar



Highlights and Happenings- March 2018

Welcome to our bi-annual "RAISING the BAR" newsletter. This newsletter is intended to keep you up to date on the RAISE^{UP} Texas expansion initiative. Based on the overwhelming success of the demonstration project and your generous support, RAISE^{UP} Texas is currently utilized by 18 Central Texas schools, directly reaching over 28,000 students and training over 1,100 teachers in skills to enhance teaching and learning. Enjoy reading!

RAISE^{UP} Texas Principal Profile:

Jesse De La Huerta: Dobie College Prep Academy (Austin ISD)

Growing up as an English Language Learner in Brownsville, TX, Jesse often found himself teaching his peers when the adult teachers were struggling to reach their students. Not seeing himself as an educator, Jesse headed to UT Austin to study engineering and Spanish before deciding to pursue mathematics with teacher certification. In his final year, Jesse was asked to complete his student teaching at AISD's International High School as no other college interns wanted to be placed there. Jesse accepted the challenge. As a former English Language Learner, he felt he could relate the needs of these newly immigrated students. Once in the building, he decided teaching was his future and accepted a position at the campus. Encouraged by his mentor principal, Jesse returned to UT to study educational leadership, eventually serving as an administrator for Reagan High.

In November of 2016, Jesse accepted the leadership of Dobie College Prep Academy in AISD. Dobie was just months into the initial implementation of the

RAISE^{UP} Texas project and facing many challenges. Combining his passion for helping students with his previous administrative experience, Jesse immediately began working with his new leadership team to transform teaching and learning for Dobie students. Now over a year into his

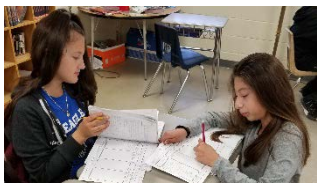
leadership of Dobie Jesse credits RAISE^{UP} Texas with providing a campus-wide instructional model that has helped experienced teachers better serve their student and new teachers successfully deliver effective instruction right away. Jesse sees students using the RAISE^{UP} Texas tools to understand what they are learning and therefore holding their teachers accountable for what is being taught! Under the leadership of Jesse De La Huerta, Dobie College Prep Academy is a school to watch!



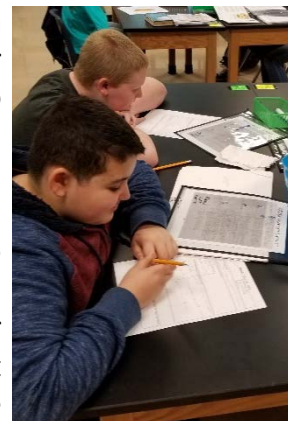
Principal De La Huerta prepares breakfast for Dobie parents at a recent morning community event.

What's Happening in the RAISE^{UP} Texas Learning Community?

This year, each school in the RAISE^{UP} Texas community created an instructional playbook designed to meet the specific needs of their population. This instructional playbook provides a focused approach to ensuring consistent high quality instruction in every classroom and a cohesive understanding among all staff of what good teaching looks like. As a result of this sustained year-long focus on a core set of instructional strategies, more students across the region are collaborating to independently learn and process complex questions and concepts. Teachers continue to be a source of constant innovation, combining their campus instructional strategies with RAISE^{UP} Texas tools in ways that make classrooms engaging, relevant, and effective for the diverse students of our region with a wide range of academic abilities and needs.



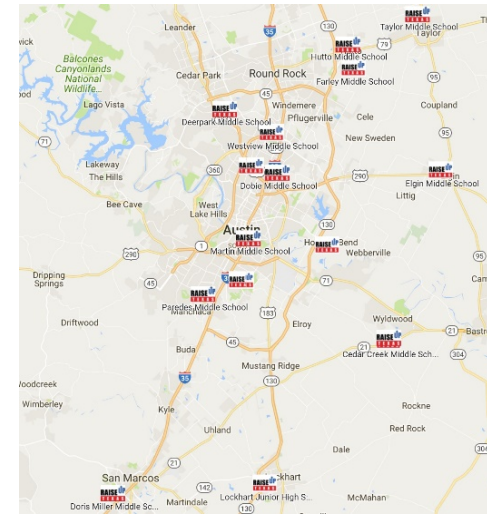
Students work together to analyze text at Cedar Creek Intermediate and Westview Middle School.



Students collaborating to independently complete The Question Exploration Routine.

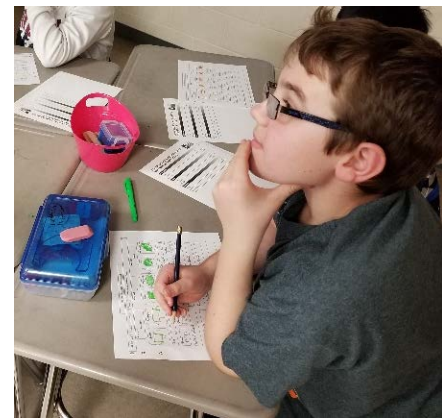
RAISE^{up} Texas Network Begins!

The **RAISE^{up} Texas** initiative is designed to offer intensive support to campuses for the first 3.5 years of implementation. In June 2018, eight Central Texas schools will finish their initial implementation and move into the next phase: self-sustaining improvement lead by campus leadership. To support schools in this new journey, **RAISE^{up} Texas** is launching a Central Texas Network. As part of their commitment to continued school improvement, schools may choose to join the **RAISE^{up} Texas** Network. Membership in the **RAISE^{up} Texas** Network allows campus leaders, instructional coaches, and teachers access to campus transformation experts, resources, and the learning community of participating schools across the region. Each year, **RAISE^{up} Texas** Network campuses will receive site visits to provide targeted coaching and feedback, an invitation to all **RAISE^{up} Texas** events, and continued data evaluation to support student growth.



RAISE^{up} Texas Students Speak Out

Each semester, students communicate how the **RAISE^{up} Texas** tools and strategies impact their learning and achievement. In December 2017, teachers from each campus interviewed a diverse sample of their students to learn how **RAISE^{up} Texas** tools help students be more successful. Dalia, a 7th grader at Burnet Middle School, explained that the Unit Organizer helps her “understand what we are doing. When I didn’t have it, class was confusing and I didn’t know what we were learning.” Another student confessed to having a similar experience, “everything was wacky and you did not know what was going to happen when. It (class) was not as organized and we just learned things randomly.” Many other students across **RAISE^{up} Texas** report the same feelings. Christian, an 8th grader at Taylor Middle School, reported that “everything feels more organized this year” now that teachers are using the Unit Organizer and other **RAISE^{up} Texas** tools everyday. Students also shared how **RAISE^{up} Texas** tools have helped them improve their study habits. “In elementary school we did something similar, but this (Unit Organizer) is more helpful with labeling. When we took notes in elementary school, it would get all mixed together.” Alexis, an 8th grader at Paredes Middle School, added to that idea, “When we used to go over something, I was confused. This (Unit Organizer) lays everything out for you and helps you go back and remember things. Instead of your teacher just telling you, you have it with you to go back and look at it again and again.”



Students use **RAISE^{up} Texas** tools to support their learning.



The **RAISE^{up} Texas** initiative is led by E3 Alliance, an education collaborative that works to support schools across Central Texas. It uses the Strategic Instruction Model, which was developed by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. To learn more about the program, please visit the following websites:

<http://raiseuptexas.org/>

<http://kucl.org/sim/>

<http://e3alliance.org/category/topic/initiative-raiseup-texas/>

