

# RAISING the Bar



Highlights and Happenings- October 2017

Welcome to our bi-annual “*RAISING the BAR*” newsletter. This newsletter is intended to keep you up to date on the *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* expansion initiative. Based on the overwhelming success of the demonstration project and your generous support, *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* is currently utilized by 16 Central Texas schools, directly reaching 28,000 students and training over 1,100 teachers in skills to enhance teaching and learning. Enjoy reading!

## RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas at the KUCRL Learning Conference 2017



The RUP Team and Instructional Coaches from *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* schools pose with Jim Knight and Sue Woodruff, internationally renowned coaching experts, during the conference.

In July 2017, the Center for Research on Learning at the University of Kansas held its annual Learning Conference. The *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* team attended along with administrators and instructional coaches from five *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* schools including Lockhart Junior High—Lockhart ISD, Farley and Hutto Middle Schools—Hutto ISD, Dailey Middle School—Del Valle ISD and Deerpark Middle School—Round Rock ISD.

The KUCRL Learning Conference 2017 offered the *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* team and campus instructional coaches an opportunity to learn from leaders in the field, including John Hattie, Jim Knight, Yong Zhao, and Don Deshler. From these experts, and others, the *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* educators learned about the latest in helping schools successfully support teachers and students.

The *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* team presented multiple sessions during the conference to share the learning and best-practices coming out of our work with schools in Central Texas. *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* presentations included leadership topics, such as how to accomplish campus-wide transformation and topics specific to classroom instruction, such as improving reading instruction for struggling students in intervention classes. To close the conference, five instructional coaches from *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* led a discussion panel titled “Agents of Change” to share their work in supporting campus-wide transformation.

Central Texas *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* educators left Lawrence, Kansas with new ideas and momentum to transform teaching and learning on each of their campuses. We were proud to represent the project and are excited to bring this learning back and put it into practice here in Central Texas schools.

## The RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas Family is growing!

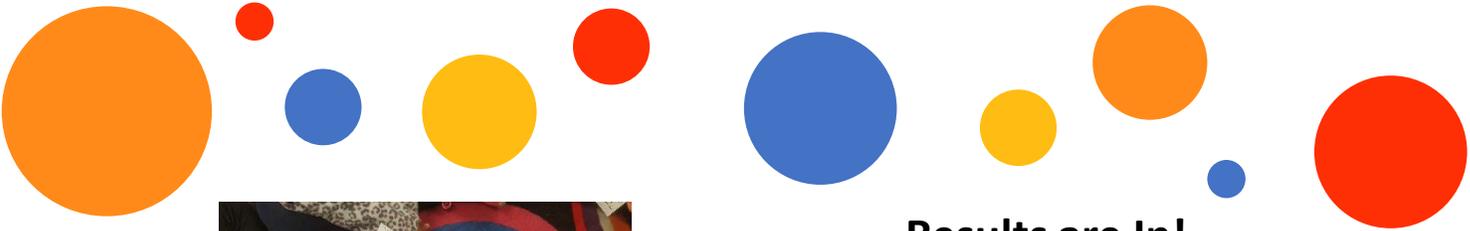
This year, three more schools (*Burnet MS- Austin ISD, Taylor MS- Taylor ISD, and Westview MS- Pflugerville ISD*) are joining *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas*, bringing the regional total to sixteen middle schools spread across 10 Central Texas districts. In addition to our Central Texas schools, *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* is expanding our impact to the Bexar County area through a partnership with Region 20 and TEA. Six schools will begin implementation of *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* starting in 2018. We also have three schools in Fort Bend ISD participating in the first year of the *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas Network* for schools who have finished the initial implementation and would like more support to sustain their success.



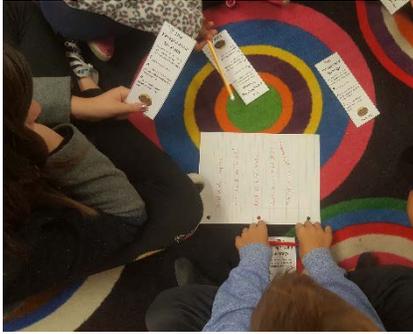
Burnet MS teachers (above) are learning about instructional tools within *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* while Taylor MS teachers (below) discuss different ways to use the Unit Organizer in their classrooms.



Administrators and Instructional Coaches help Westview MS teachers create their first Unit Organizer.



Struggling readers in small group instruction using a Learning Strategy to process while they read.



## Results are In!

After the second year of implementation, the **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** initiative saw a positive impact on student outcomes. Despite seeing a state-wide drop in overall STAAR passing rates across the state, 71% of **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** schools saw improvement in students achievement in reading and math and in closing performance gaps. 79% of **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** schools saw improvements in Post-Secondary readiness.

The schools in the **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** project earned a combined total of 11 state accountability Distinctions, including three campuses recognized for outstanding student progress. Struggling readers enrolled on each campus continued to show progress. Across the project, students identified as reading below grade level showed growth beyond nationally normed expectations after receiving specialized intervention, with many of these students passing state assessments for the first time!

## RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas continues to build Campus Sustainability

For the second summer in a row, **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** held an institute for future Professional Developers in June 2017. Select administrators, instructional coaches and classroom teachers from **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** campuses studied best practices in adult learning and how to advocate for and achieve transformation on their campus. Following the three day institute, future Professional Developers are currently completing an apprentice period that includes planning and leading professional learning experiences for their campus. In only one year, **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** doubled the number of future Professional Developers participants to 30, up from 15 participants in 2016. Through this program, **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** continues to build capacity for campuses to maintain consistent **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** practices after the initial three-year implementation period. In addition to creating outstanding future Professional Developers to continue the work on their campus, participants during the institute also benefited from networking with others engaged in the same work to share ideas and innovations that can immediately impact student success on their campus.



Future professional developers (above) are learning about the many ways to engage teachers in professional learning with **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** after experiencing team building activities during a lunch picnic (below).



The **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> 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://kucri.org/sim/>

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

