

RAISING the Bar

Highlights and Happenings- April 2016



Welcome to first installment of our bi-annual **"RAISING the BAR"** newsletter. This newsletter is intended to keep you and important stakeholders abreast of the latest highlights and happenings for the **RAISE^{up} Texas** expansion initiative. Based on the overwhelming success of the demonstration project and your generous support, in the Spring of 2015, **RAISE^{up} Texas** was able to transition to the expansion initiative with the intent to scale to 16 new Central Texas schools, directly reaching 28,000 students and train over 1,100 teachers in skills to enhance teaching and learning. Enjoy reading!

Local Credit Unions Support Public Education!!!

In August of 2015, A+ Federal Credit Union and University Federal Credit Union joined the ranks of major investors in the **RAISE^{up} Texas** expansion program by pledging a combined \$500,000 over the next four years, which will help us serve thousands of students in our middle schools in Central Texas. Kerry Parker, CEO of A+FCU personally gives her time and expertise to the site team leading this project. A+FCU has combined their strong presence in K-12 schools with UFCUs commitment to college education to build the next generation of college students by support **RAISE^{up} Texas**. This month, Kerry Parker, along with Susan Dawson from E3 Alliance, will facilitate UFCU's leadership development event honoring the **RAISE^{up} Texas** project to inspire UFCU leaders to continue supporting this partnership to build a pipeline of student achievement in Central Texas.



Kerry Parker
CEO of A+FCU

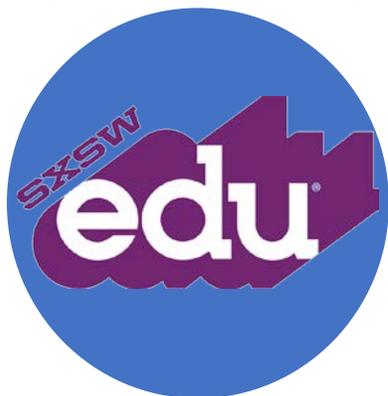


New TEA Commissioner Visits **RAISE^{up} Texas** School

Mike Morath, Commissioner of TEA, visited Simon Middle School in Hays CISD to see **RAISE^{up} Texas** in action. During the visit, teachers and students used **RAISE^{up} Texas** tools to engage in meaningful and memorable classroom experiences. Mr. Morath and other visitors observed students who were excited to learn and demonstrating a variety of ways that these tools can be utilized. Students from choir, science, math, and social studies showed off the power of common tools and strategies to unite learning across a **RAISE^{up} Texas** campus.

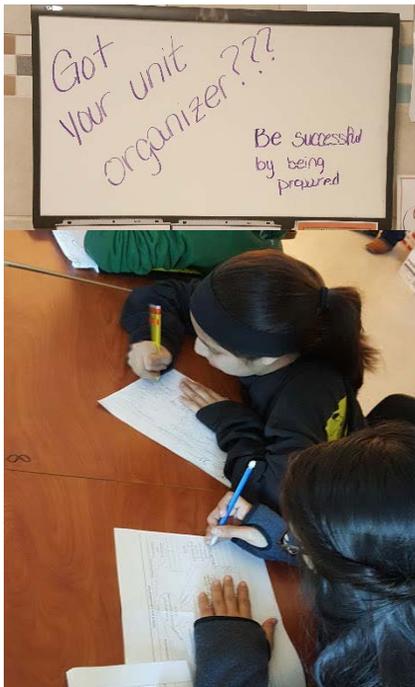


RAISE^{up} Texas practioners generously shared their time and experiences with audiences at SXSWedu on March 8. Educators and educational leaders listened to **RAISE^{up}** experts describe their experiences and the changes they have seen in students' success and whole school transformation. To continue to spread the message that real school change is possible and within the reach of all school leaders, **RAISE^{up} Texas** staff will be sharing their work at the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) national conference in October 2016. All students deserve the opportunity to learn the **RAISE^{up} Texas** way!

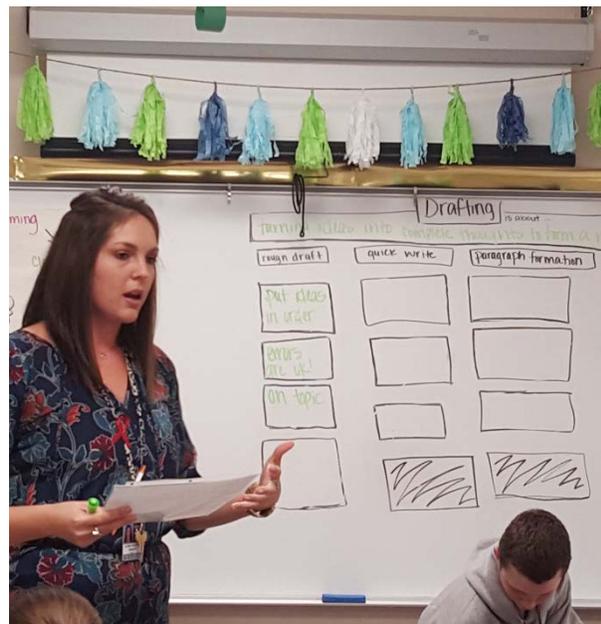


Early Signs at Schools Show Great Progress

During the first semester of implementation, students have already noticed a difference in how they are learning. As one student phrased it, “When we write the things down using tools we never used to have, we learn it in our brains.” All teachers across **RAISE^{up} Texas** campuses are using the Unit Organizer Routine to lead the learning in their classrooms. This means that students now have access to the big picture of what they are learning and are more empowered to create their own success. The Unit Organizer provides students with a clear plan of how the major content they are learning connects to what they already know and will learn in the future. One student reported, “I like the Unit Organizer because it tells me about what I am learning on a subject. It helps me understand what I have learned and what we will be learning, and helps me organize my work.”



In the middle of an extremely busy academic year, each **RAISE^{up} Texas** school allocated valuable professional development time for all staff to learn a new teaching tool called FRAME. The FRAME helps students organize information into main ideas and details while allowing teachers to structure meaningful collaboration among students. Teachers took this new tool and immediately incorporated it into classrooms, some even began using it the day after their training. Students and teachers are using the FRAME on a regular basis to enhance analysis and retention of content from across the school. This semester, FRAMES have been observed every where from theater arts to science to dual-language social studies classes. This tool is one teachers have embraced for its versatility while students explain to campus visitors that it helps them remember and study the information they are learning.



The **RAISE^{up} Texas** program 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://kucrl.org/sim/>

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

