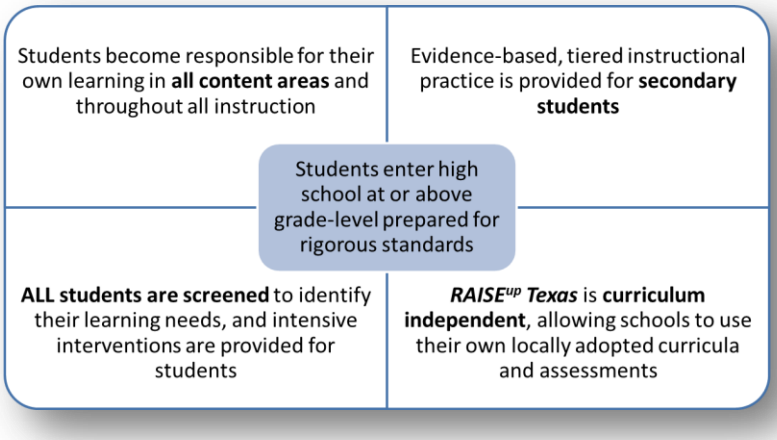
RAISE^{up} Texas : Transforming Middle School Teaching and Learning

***RAISE^{up} Texas*™ (Research-Validated Approach to Instruction for Secondary Excellence in Texas) is a compelling initiative to profoundly change how middle schools students learn and meet high standards for college-and career-readiness.**

Far too many middle school students are reading below grade level and failing to achieve academic success due to a lack of content literacy and critical thinking skills. The middle school years are a key stage when all students should build a conceptual learning framework and start to decide on their academic and career futures. To address this key area of need, E^3 Alliance, Education Service Center Region XIII, six Central Texas school districts, and their partners have created ***RAISE^{up} Texas***: a targeted, whole-school approach to improving student achievement in middle school.

RAISE^{up} Texas increases student achievement in middle schools using the research-validated Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) created by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning (KU-CRL). The initiative provides every teacher in every subject with instructional tools to communicate learning concepts and actively engage students in more rigorous learning. At the same time, ***RAISE^{up} Texas*** engages educators in identifying struggling students, providing targeted, evidence-based instructional interventions tiered to match the intensity of student need and monitor student responses to ensure ongoing data -driven decision-making.

THE EXCEPTIONAL QUALITIES OF *RAISE^{up} Texas*



Based on in-depth research and a whole-school reform framework, ***RAISE^{up} Texas*** implements SIM tools and strategies to strengthen the rigor of classroom instruction in all subject areas and provide tiered and targeted instruction for struggling students, and identify and provide specific reading instruction to struggling readers.

HISTORY

RAISE^{up} Texas began with a series of meetings among district and community leaders across the Central Texas region to identify solutions that help eliminate achievement gaps and meet new state standards for college and career readiness. These leaders determined that middle school was the crucial point in students' development, in particular their ability to take responsibility for their own learning and apply conceptual and critical thinking skills across all subjects. At the same time, data showed that passing rates dropped over the middle school years, disciplinary rates skyrocketed, and students started mentally and physically "dropping out." The concerted solution is an a whole-school implementation of learning strategies and tiered instructional supports to raise student achievement for all students in all subjects, serve specific needs of educationally at-risk students and bring struggling readers to meet or exceed grade-level expectations by high school.

In the highest needs *RAISE^{up} Texas* schools, 52% of students' reading levels were two or more grades behind.

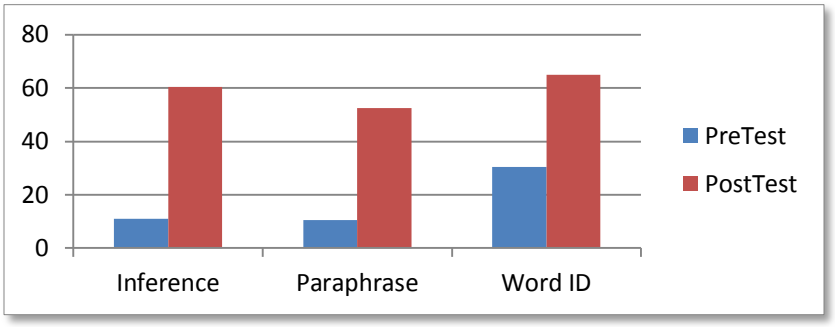
DEMONSTRATION PROJECT

A ***RAISE^{up} Texas*** Demonstration Project was launched in 2011, with whole-school implementation of SIM in demonstration schools in six school districts in Central Texas (Austin, Eanes, Hays, Leander, Round Rock and San Marcos). E3 Alliance chairs the Steering Committee and provides regional coordination, ESC Region XIII provides program and fiscal management including a robust Professional Development program and on-sit coaching, the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk is conducting an in-depth formative and summative evaluation of the program, and KU-CRL provides guidance and support around SIM theories and application.

DEMONSTRATING RESULTS

Significant results for whole-school reform projects are expected in year two and beyond. Nevertheless, in just one year of implementation, year over year results at demonstration schools were higher than those in matched comparison schools in *every* subject and *every* grade. In addition, pre- and post- testing for struggling learners showed substantial gains.

Learning Strategies at Work: Dobie MS ELL Student Growth 2011-12



Teachers and students at participating schools report significant improvements:

- ***"Last year and before I made 70s or below in all of my classes, but I am now making all A's & B's"***
  ~ 6th grade Student

- ***"I was reluctant at first – is this just another fad? But when I tried it I found my students were really improving quickly. Those students who didn't learn well from a book can learn this way – all of them do. As I've used more and more routines, the students have gotten better and better. Now I'm a total convert to SIM"***
  ~ *RAISE^{up} Texas* Math Teacher

- ***"This is the first thing I've learned that changed my teaching practices, and when I used SIM with my students, I saw my students' unit test scores go up at least 25%."***
  ~ *RAISE^{up} Texas* English Teacher

REPLICATION AND SCALABILITY

RAISEup Texas is cost effective, reaching up to 13,000 students in the demonstration project over three and a half years, for approximately $250 per student. The initiative is designed around a platform that can be scaled, replicated and sustained in the state and beyond.

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