

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

The Challenge:

The Middle school years set the stage for students to take ownership of their learning and academic futures. Yet, far too many middle school students are struggling and fail to catch up with their peers. And many more middle schoolers fail to develop the critical thinking skills needed to be high school, college and career ready. In addition, data shows that passing rates in middle school drop, disciplinary rates skyrocket and students start to mentally “drop out” of the academic process.

As part of a strategic planning process that sought to identify solutions that could help to eliminate achievement gaps, school district and community leaders from across Central Texas identified middle school as a crucial point in a student’s development, in particular their ability to take responsibility for their own learning and apply conceptual and critical thinking skills across all subjects. So, E3 Alliance set out to identify a solution to the “middle school slump”.

The level of academic achievement that students attain by 8th grade has a larger impact on college and career readiness than ANYTHING that happens academically in high school. - ACT

The Solution:

RAISE^{up} TexasTM (**Research-Validated Approach to Instruction for Secondary Excellence in Texas**) is a targeted, whole-school approach to improving student achievement in middle school. It is a whole school model where every teacher, in every subject is using research-validated tools and strategies to help ALL students “learn how to learn” and think critically to **meet high standards for college- and career-readiness**.

The ***RAISE^{up} Texas*** framework includes a “toolkit” of teaching and learning tools that break down every lesson to actively engage every student in a roadmap for conceptual learning. The basis for ***RAISE^{up} Texas*** is the research-validated and evidence-based Strategic Instruction Model (SIM) created by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning. Through intense, multi-year professional development and coaching for teachers, SIM provides a structured methodology for learning, allowing students to focus-in on content and problem-solving skills.

RAISE^{up} Texas:

- ✓ Builds deep conceptual learning skills
- ✓ Uses powerful instructional tools in every class, for every student
- ✓ Supports in-depth teacher planning to increase rigor
- ✓ Focuses on struggling learners to close achievement gaps

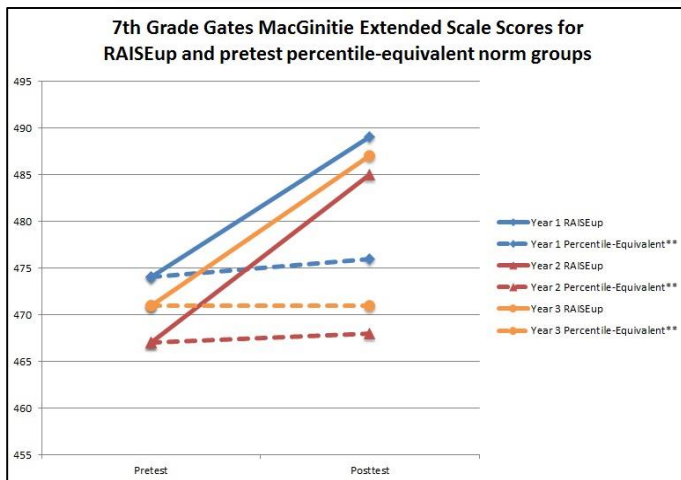
“This is the first thing I’ve learned that changed my teaching practices, and when I adopted the RAISEup Texas model with my students, I saw their unit test scores go up at least 25%.” ~ 7th Grade English Teacher



RAISE^{UP} Texas: Proven Success

To validate the efficacy of **RAISE^{UP} Texas**, a 3.5-year, \$3M Demonstration Project was launched in 2011. Whole-school implementation of SIM was demonstrated in six schools in districts across Central Texas. The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk conducted an in-depth formative and summative evaluation of the program.

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



Demonstrated Results

The results are compelling: in every grade over multiple years, struggling learners in **RAISE^{UP} Texas** schools gained more than **10 times as many points** on pre-versus-post-tests than their nationally-normed peers across the country. Principals, teachers, and students all see the results and love it. 75% of **RAISE^{UP} Texas** schools in our target districts received the state distinction for closing performance gaps, as opposed to only 25% of middle schools across the region.

"I was reluctant at first – was this just another fad? But when I tried it I found that ALL my students were really improving quickly. Now I'm a total convert." ~ 8th Grade Math Teacher

Scaling for Population-Level Change

The **RAISE^{UP} Texas** Demonstration Project has provided PROVEN results ready to take to scale. **RAISE^{UP} Texas** can change the lives of tens of thousands of students. E3 Alliance is now seeking a total of \$5.5M: \$3.3M in private investment, to be matched by \$2.2M in district investment, to scale to 16 schools of concentrated need over the next five years. **The lives of over 28,000 students will be changed over a 5 year scaling plan** while laying the groundwork for sustained change for many more. By targeting enough of those schools - the *right* schools – there is a unique opportunity to demonstrate a tipping point for real **population-level impact** that shifts economic outcomes for an entire region. If instead we choose not to act, and just 1/2 of the struggling learners in those same 16 middle schools drop out, it will cost our taxpayers **2.8 BILLION dollars more** in lost wages and taxes.

\$3.3M now *-or-* **\$2.8B** later

By successfully improving the educational outcomes of so many learners in these targeted low growth schools and achieving true population-level impact in our region, **RAISE^{UP} Texas** will become a model for middle school reform across the state and nation.

"We are excited that **RAISE^{UP} Texas** has truly transformed middle schools, for only about \$200 per student. That's a steal for real change in education! We encourage other funders to be part of the effort to expand this transformative work."

- Jami Hampton, Senior Program Officer, RGK Foundation