

# *RAISE<sup>UP</sup>* Texas: Transforming Middle School Teaching and Learning

Middle school years set the stage for students to take ownership of their learning and decide on their academic and career futures. Yet, 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.

To address this key area of need, E3 Alliance, Education Service Center Region 13 and six Central Texas school districts launched

***RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas*: a targeted, whole-school approach to improving student achievement in middle school.**



***RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas™* (Research-Validated Approach to Instruction for Secondary Excellence in Texas) is a viable, whole-school solution 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 the high standards for college- and career-readiness.****

*“The level of academic achievement that students attain by 8<sup>th</sup> grade has a larger impact on college and career readiness than anything that happens academically in high school” - ACT*

The ***RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas*** framework includes a set of learning tools that break down every lesson to actively engage every student in a roadmap for conceptual learning. ***RAISE<sup>UP</sup> 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 the achievement gap

***RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas*** began with a series of meetings among district and community leaders across the Central Texas region to identify solutions that could 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 a 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 effective solution is **a whole-school implementation of *RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas* where every teacher, in every subject is using research-validated tools and strategies to help ALL students “learn how to learn” and think critically.**

*“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.” ~ Maria Gonzales, Math Teacher*

**RAISE<sup>UP</sup> 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<sup>UP</sup> Texas** engages educators to identify struggling students, provide targeted, evidence-based instructional interventions tiered to match the intensity of student need, and monitor student responses to ensure ongoing data-driven decision-making.

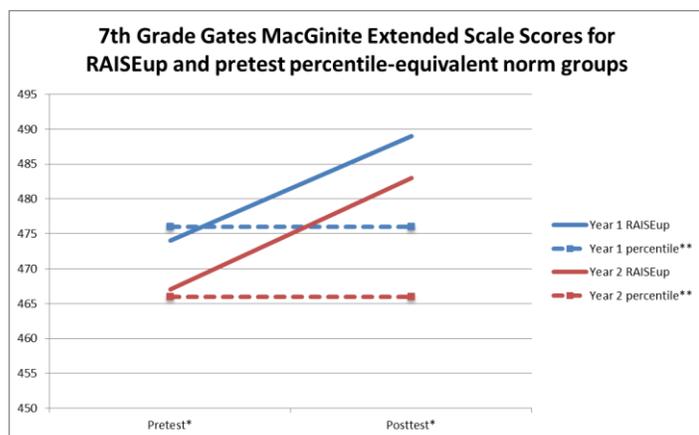
*“This is the first thing I’ve learned that changed my teaching practices, and when I used SIM with my students, I saw my students’ unit test scores go up at least 25%.” ~ Roy Cassidy, English Teacher*

### Demonstration Project

To validate the efficacy of **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas**, a Demonstration Project was launched in 2011, with whole-school implementation of SIM in targeted schools in six school districts in Central Texas (Austin, Eanes, Hays, Leander, Round Rock, and San Marcos).

- E3 Alliance chairs the Regional Steering Committee that allows for aligned collaboration and real-time information exchange by project partners
- ESC Region 13 provides program and fiscal management services, including a robust professional development program, with a team of experienced, certified SIM instructional coaches
- The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk is conducting an in-depth formative and summative external evaluation of the program
- KU-CRL provides guidance and support around SIM theories and application.

**1 out of 2 students in the highest needs RAISE<sup>Up</sup> Texas schools tested two or more grades behind in reading. After joining RAISE<sup>Up</sup> Texas, they gained nine times as many points between pre-and-post tests as their peers nationally**



### Demonstrated Results

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 showed **RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** struggling learners gained nine times as many points as their peers across the nation. Student outcomes are continuing to progress as the project continues, with the most rapid gains seen for struggling learners.

### Replication and Scalability

**RAISE<sup>UP</sup> Texas** is cost effective, reaching up to 13,500 students in the demonstration project over three and a half years, at approximately \$225 per student. The initiative is designed around a platform that can be scaled, replicated, and sustained in the state and beyond. Now in an expansion phase, economies of scale and the lessons learned in the demonstration project have reduced the cost further per student to \$147.

*“Last year and before I made 70s or below in all of my classes, but I am now making all A’s & B’s” ~ 6<sup>th</sup> grade Student*