



A Quarterly Newsletter on the
Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

Inside this issue:

Cover Story	1
Program Initiatives	2
Calendar of Events	3
Program Initiatives	4-5
Campus Highlights	6-7
Financial Spotlight	7
Profiles-GEAR UP Grads	8
<i>New!</i> Partnership High Schools	9
Contacts	10

A New Voice for Our Youth: Region One GEAR UP conducts first Youth Advisory Council retreat

By Melissa Lopez
Senior Education Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

Eighty-seven Region One GEAR UP student leaders gathered at the Wyndham Hotel in McAllen, Texas from May 17th-19th, 2007. The students attended the GEAR UP Youth Advisory Conference which was an event designed to build a leadership structure to develop and empower student leaders in the Region One GEAR UP Program. Each middle school was invited to send a Student Leadership Team consisting of three officers: a *Research Captain*, who takes lead in conducting peer to peer research; a *Writing Captain*, who takes the lead in the formation of a written summary of the research; and a *Communications Captain*, who is the leader in the

creation of the presentation. The National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP), GEAR UP for Excellence and the Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership joined

and topical forums. In addition to building leadership skills and developing a sense of community, participants discussed how their work can be continued beyond the Conference and throughout their educational careers.



Through the course of the next four years, the Youth Advisory Committee at each high school will work towards three specific goals:

- Creating a team of students who know about college admissions and access issues and are prepared to share that information with their peers;
- Enabling students to gather information from their peers and communities and share it with staff, parents, and administrators to help the work of GEAR UP; and
- Planning a minimum of one to two college access and /or academic enrichment events each semester.

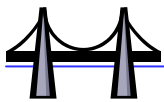
forces to create this student advisory group whose ultimate goal is to take positive action in their member schools and communities towards creating a college-going culture. During the conference, the students participated in team building exercises, leadership development activities,



Upcoming Events:

STC 2007 Teen's College	6/4-6/15/07
UTPA Summer Camps (Girls)	6/10-6/13/07
UTB Summer Camp	6/11-6/22/07
UTPA Summer Camps (Boys)	6/17-6/20/07
Facilitator Strategic Planning Session	6/19/07
District Leadership Team Meeting	6/20-6/21/07
SpringBoard/ELA Training	6/25-6/29/07
Math Initiative Training	7/30-8/3/07
Science Initiative Training	8/6-10/07





SpringBoard English Textual Power training being offered this summer to GEAR UP partnership ELA teachers

By David Hernandez
Senior Education Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

The Region One GEAR UP program is continuing its partnership with the College Board to provide training in the SpringBoard English Textual Power curriculum this summer for both middle schools and high schools.

Created as the College Board's equity initiative, SpringBoard hopes to bridge the gap between high school and college expectations.

Training will be held June 25-29th at PSJA North High School. The training will be for ELA teachers in 6th-12th grades. The training will be provided by CollegeBoard trained teachers from around the country.

SpringBoard is a unique program based on extensive research with college faculty, middle and high school teachers, and content area experts from across the country. This comprehensive program, framed by the skills and understandings identified by college faculty as needed for success in college-level work, integrates professional development, diagnostic assessments, and instructional materials.

GEAR UP will be transitioning to twenty-one (21) regional high schools this fall and concentrated efforts are being made to train teachers at the ninth grade level, as well as the upper grade levels as they prepare to receive GEAR UP cohort students.

Teachers will need to register for workshop #15239 on the Region One ESC professional development website (www.esc1.net).

Partnership Profile



The College Board is a not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity.

Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 4,700 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations.

Each year, the College Board serves over three and a half million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, and teaching and learning.

SpringBoard is the College Board's rigorous and coherent plan for schools and districts in English Language Arts for students in grades 6 to 12.

"The Youth Advisory Conference was a great experience that we are happy to have been able to participate in. We found it very resourceful, informative, and not to mention lots of fun. It was a great way to learn about leadership and ways to help spread the word about it to our fellow classmates. We met many new people who share the same ideas that we have, and the activities were a great way to share ideas and perspectives with others. The instructors were very motivational and did a great job with their overall presentation; they kept us excited in learning new things and we were never bored. Overall it was a great learning experience and we are looking forward to future conferences!"

**-Brandi Leal & Sara De la Rosa,
Weslaco B. Garza MS GEAR UP
8th Graders**





June 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
					1	2	6/4-15/07
							6/10-13/07 6/11-15/07
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	6/12-13/07
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	6/17-20/07 6/18-22/07 6/18-21/07
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	6/19-07
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	6/20-21/07
							6/25-29/07

STC 2007 Teens' College @ Weslaco, McAllen, Rio Grande City
 UTPA Girls' Summer Camp
 UTB Summer Camps (ELA/Social Studies)
 GEAR UP Advisory Training @ Region One ESC
 UTPA Boys' Summer Camp
 UTB Summer Camps (Math/Science)
 National Ford PAS Conference @ Louisville, Kentucky
GEAR UP Facilitator Strategic Planning Session
GEAR UP District Leadership Team Meeting
 SpringBoard ELA Training @ PSJA North HS, 8:30a-4:00p

July 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7/22-25/07
							7/30-8/3/07
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	
29	30	31					

GEAR UP National Conference @ San Francisco, California
 GEAR UP Math Initiative Training @ Region One ESC

August 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
			1	2	3	4	8/6-10/07
							8/5-8/07 8/13-14/07
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	8/15-16/07
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	8/21/07
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		

GEAR UP Science Initiative Training @ Region One ESC
 Ford PAS Training @ Region One ESC
 Web-Plus Tutor Training (Mathematics) @ Region One ESC
 Web-Plus Tutor Training (Science) @ Region One ESC
 GEAR UP Facilitator Meeting @ Region One ESC



GEAR UP participates in UTPA Regional Middle School Science Bowl

By Sonia Arce
ESL Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future
Partnership

Eight Region One GEAR UP campuses competed in this year's Regional Middle School Science Bowl hosted by UTPA in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy.



Students participated in two competitions at the Regional Middle School Science Bowl—an academic math and science competition and a model fuel cell car competition. The win-

ning team in the regional competition advanced to the National Science Bowl in Washington D.C.

The academic competition consisted of a fast-paced question answer format that tested students on topics in earth, physical science, life science, general science and math.

A featured event in the Middle School Science Bowl is the hydrogen fuel cell car race which challenged students to design, build, and race model cars. This competition tested the creative engineering skills of many of the brightest math and science students in the region as they gained hands-on experience in the automotive design process and with hydrogen fuel cell technology.

Region One GEAR UP

students from Brewster School, Carlos F. Truan Jr. High, Dora Saucedo Middle School, Grulla Middle School, Ida Diaz Jr. High, Santa Maria Middle School, Travis Middle School and Veterans Middle School competed against eight other school campuses on April 21, 2007. Carlos F. Truan Jr. High team, "La Maquina" placed second in the regional competition. All students and coaches worked extra hours to be prepared for the academic and hydrogen fuel cell car competitions.



The creativity of the students was evident by the unique designs of fuel cell cars raced during the competition.

Santa Maria Middle School Students compete at Middle School Regional Science Bowl

By Carlos Hernandez
GEAR UP Facilitator
Santa Maria MS
Santa Maria I.S.D.

Four 8th grade students represented Santa Maria Middle School at the University of Texas Pan-American Middle School Regional Science Bowl Competition.

The competition consisted of two parts. Part one included the academic competition. It contained ques-

tions about earth science, physical science, life science, math, and general

science. Part two of the competition was to model a hydrogen fuel cell car. Once the students completed designing and building the model fuel cell car, they had the opportunity to race them.

Juan Mendoza learned how to use a fuel cell and stated, "There is not one thing I regret because I had a lot of fun learning and laughing along the way."

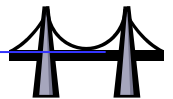
All the participating students and coaches were invited to attend an awards luncheon sponsored by UTPA on May 25, 2007.



Left to right: Nereida Villarreal, Emmanuel Gonzalez, Aida Gonzalez, and Juan Mendoza.

COUGAR PRIDE





GEAR UP Parents-Reaching out to the Community



*By Norma Ortiz McCormick
Senior Education Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the
Future Partnership*

A certification ceremony was held on Wednesday, May 23, 2007 at the Social Club in Edinburg, Texas to recognize parent educator volunteers and parental involvement representatives with a certificate of completion.

Throughout this year, parent educator volunteers have attended training involving the “Abriendo Puertas” curriculum which has been co-developed by Texas A & M and Region One GEAR UP.

The focus of the 8th grade level lessons involved communication, personal growth and transition to high school. Parents at this event were also recog-

nized for their efforts in outreach throughout the year.

The campuses which provided the most service hours included Alton Memorial Jr. High in Mission, Grulla Middle School in Rio Grande City and Roma Middle School. Roma Middle School provided the highest amount of outreach service this year with parents reaching out into their communities to share the important message of college preparation.

Parent volunteers shared some of their insight regarding this year’s training and experiences. Some of the parent educator volunteers stated that the GEAR UP program provides them with a very important tool for sharing information for post-secondary preparation. Other parent educator volunteers shared that the work that is being done now will show positive benefits

for the community as a whole.

In attendance were representatives from the twenty-eight middle schools participating in this initiative, representatives from Texas A&M College Station, Hector Al-dape and Dr. Aida Acuña-Garza, Region One staff and Region One Executive Director, Mr. Jack Damron.



An Initiative of:
The College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
Texas A&M University

Congratulations to all parents and parental involvement representatives for their invaluable contribution to the Region One GEAR UP Bridges to the Future Partnership and for their continued support throughout the year.



Region One GEAR UP Parents “navigating” through technology

*By Norma Ortiz McCormick
Senior Education Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership*



Sixteen parents attended a TI84+ calculator training at Region One on Friday, June 1, 2007. Top performing parents representing twelve Region One GEAR UP campuses attended the session.

Sal Martinez from Texas Instruments presented a session regarding the TI84+ calculator and the TI Navigator system. Parents entered the session a little reluctant at first, but soon “navigated their way through technology.”

Roel Lopez from La Villa ISD was enthusiastic about

sharing the use of the Smart-board with the parents as well as additional tips on using the TI84+ calculators.

Parents shared that they were very enthusiastic about learning new technology and becoming part of the greater learning community so that they could better support their children at home.

Congratulations to these parents for their outstanding efforts in supporting the “Abriendo Puertas” initiative and providing much needed post-secondary information to other parents within their schools and communities.



Mercedes JH holds “Career Fair 2007”

By Rita Cedillo
GEAR UP Facilitator
Mercedes Junior High
Mercedes I.S.D.

On Tuesday, May 8, 2007, Mercedes Jr. High School celebrated their Career Fair hosted by GEAR UP in the gymnasium. About 13 professionals and three colleges and universities were in attendance. There were about 800 students from both 7th and 8th grade who attended this Career Fair.



The colleges present were UTB, STC and TSTC.

Students were excited and were given a career information sheet to interview the different professions that were present.

After the career fair, students visited the GO CENTER mobile unit, where Alex Perez and Agustin Ramos, both graduates from Mercedes High School GEAR UP Class of 2006, gave assessments to the students on career cruising. They were excited to help upcoming GEAR UP students plan their future.

“This day was dedicated for career and college awareness,” stated Mr. David Rivera, principal of Mercedes Jr. High who was with Mr. Luis Ramos, superintendent of Mercedes ISD. Both expressed that Career Fairs are very important for students to start focusing on what they want to be in the near future.



GEAR UP students receive TI-84 calculators for logging in the most time on Web-Plus Tutoring

By David Hernandez
Senior Education Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

The Region One GEAR UP Partnership launched the Web-Plus Tutoring initiative in February as a small pilot program with 180 8th grade students and seven (7) online tutors from across the region.

To encourage students to participate and utilize this innovative new tool, GEAR UP offered TI-84 Plus calculators to the top five students who logged the most time online, interacting with the online tutors.

The following GEAR UP students were the winners for their time logged in on Web-Plus tutoring:

- 1st Place - Tracy Alaniz (Rio Grande City CISD) 22 hours, 20 minutes (50 sessions)
- 2nd Place - Daira Mendoza (A.P. Solis MS, Donna ISD) 5 hours, 26 minutes (12 sessions)
- 3rd Place - Jessica Sanchez (Berta Cabaza MS, San Benito CISD) 5 hours, 16 minutes (19 sessions)
- 4th Place - Joseph Ledesma (Lamar Bruni Vergara, United CISD) 3 hours, 36 minutes (7 sessions)
- 5th Place - Sharon Stubbs (Mercedes JH, Mercedes ISD) 3 hours, 27 minutes (16 sessions)

Web-Plus Tutoring will continue in Fall 2007.



Top: 3rd Place winner, Jessica Sanchez (San Benito Berta Cabaza) and GEAR UP Facilitator, Albie Lopez
Bottom: 1st Place winner, Tracy Alaniz (Rio Grande City Ringgold MS) and GEAR UP Facilitator, Lee Lopez



LBJ Knights Class of 2011 prepare for college and plan for their future

By Dominique Caro-Garza
 GEAR UP Facilitator
 LBJ Middle School
 PSJA I.S.D.

As 8th graders, GEAR UP students asked PSJA’s LBJ Middle School Facilitator, Dominique Caro-Garza, “Why is it was important for me to be thinking about my future now? After all, we are only in eighth grade!”

This comment sparked a series of week-long presentations in all 8th grade social studies classrooms as Mrs. Caro-Garza presented to each of the 412 GEAR UP students on preparing for high school, college, and their future.

Within these presentations, GEAR UP students were given infor-



mation and advice to begin preparing now for their entrance into high school.

Topics of conversation during the presentation included taking courses students will enjoy and that will challenge them, finding out what courses are needed for college admissions, joining clubs, performing community service, and exploring career opportunities. These topics all are neces-

sary components as students prepare to leave the 8th grade and enter the world of high school.

One of the common questions asked during the presentations was “Do I have to finish all my high school credits before I start taking college classes?” Mrs. Caro-Garza explained that students can begin taking concurrent enrollment classes as well as advanced placement courses prior to finishing high school. Each of these options will help students prepare for college level course work and affords them the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school. Of course, students must have the grades to enter advanced placement courses and to participate in concurrent enrollment.

This fact reinforces the need to prepare for the new Distinguished 4 X 4 Plan requiring four years of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Following the 4 X 4 requirements will help prepare students for college after high school.

All LBJ GEAR UP students had the opportunity to learn about high school and post secondary options and allowed them to walk away with the message that what you do now creates habits for future successes in high school, college, and in your profession. These GEAR UP students will now remember as they finish this school year and enter high school that working hard



to earn good grades, taking on leadership roles, joining extracurricular activities, and having good communications skills will all lead to a brighter future.

GEAR UP Finance Spotlight

By Amanda Galvan
 Accountant
 GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

GEAR UP is a Partnership grant funded by the U. S. Department of Education with an in-kind matching requirement.

For every dollar of Federal funds received, at least one dollar of other State or private funds must be contributed in the form of cash or documented in-kind matching materials or services.

To be eligible to be considered as a match, the in-kind contribution must meet

the federal definition of an allowable cost for the program as stated in the grant application

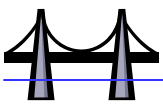
The expense must be reasonable, consistent, and allocable to the GEAR UP cohort. Basically, anything that would be allowable if charged directly to the grant may be included as a match.

As an example, time that teachers spend outside of their regular work day providing services to GEAR UP students can be counted as match.

Community members and businesses can also contribute in-kind match by providing volunteer services and supplies to support GEAR UP.

The objective of the matching requirement is to create partnerships between the school, community and businesses to ensure that all students are better prepared to enter and succeed in college.

Contact your GEAR UP campus facilitator for more details.



Where are They Now? GEAR UP Grads



Name: Jessica Salinas
Class of 2006 Graduate from: Edinburg North High School
Currently attending: Texas A&M—Kingsville
Major: Animal Science

What challenges did you face in preparing for college? *"My main challenge was finding the money to pay for my college expenses."*

What would you have done differently in high school to better prepare yourself for college? *"I would have applied for many more scholarships."*

How can GEAR UP improve services to students? *"I think it's fine the way it is. Even though we've already graduated, GEAR UP is still helping us out through the scholarship."*

What advice would you give new GEAR UP (currently 8th graders) students as they begin their journey to college? *"Start as soon as possible. Do well in school. Don't let people distract you from your studies."*

"The most difficult challenge that I faced in preparing for college was money. My parents are not exactly poor, but are not rich so it made it very hard for me to get any grants."

**-Jessica Salinas,
Edinburg North Class
of '06**



"College never was a big part of my worry list until about senior year in high school. As I have mentioned before, the financial aspect was the biggest hurdle I had to get over, but I just had to keep on trucking towards my goal."

**-Andres Salinas
Rio Grande City
High School '06**



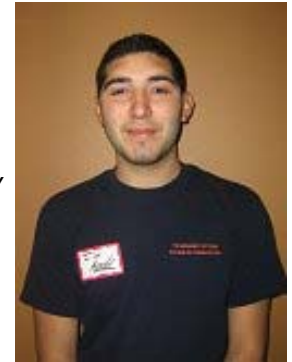
Name: Andres Salinas
Class of 2006 Graduate from: Rio Grande City High School
Currently Attending: University of Texas in Austin
Major: Journalism

What challenges did you face in preparing for college? *"Financing my education seemed to be the paramount obstacle I had to overcome."*

What would you have done differently in high school to better prepare yourself for college? *"I would have taken school more seriously. Studying is a forced habit that I never picked up in high school and now its becoming a problem in college."*

How can GEAR UP improve services to students? *"By providing a more in-depth look into college classes and what it takes to excel in college."*

What advice would you give new GEAR UP (currently 8th graders) students as they begin their journey to college? *"Study, study, study - that's all it takes. If you can study you can succeed in college."*



Name: Nora Cavazos
Class of 2006 Graduate from: San Benito High School
Currently Attending: Texas State University - San Marcos
Major: Anthropology

What challenges did you face in preparing for college? *"I faced the challenges of being financially prepared as well as becoming more mature"*

What would you have done differently in high school to better prepare yourself for college? *"I would have probably researched the different career possibilities open to me and also explored more colleges that I didn't think were possible for me."*

How can GEAR UP improve services to students? *"GEAR UP has done a lot for me. I think GEAR UP can help lead any student to the right path towards success. GEAR UP can really open your eyes to bigger and brighter things. This program has proven to be successful and I believe it will continue through its current efforts."*

What advice would you give new GEAR UP (currently 8th graders) students as they begin their journey to college? *"I would tell them to stay focused in high school and to try their hardest to overcome all the obstacles. Also, I would tell students not to listen to anyone who tells them you can't and to just keep going forward in their road to success."*

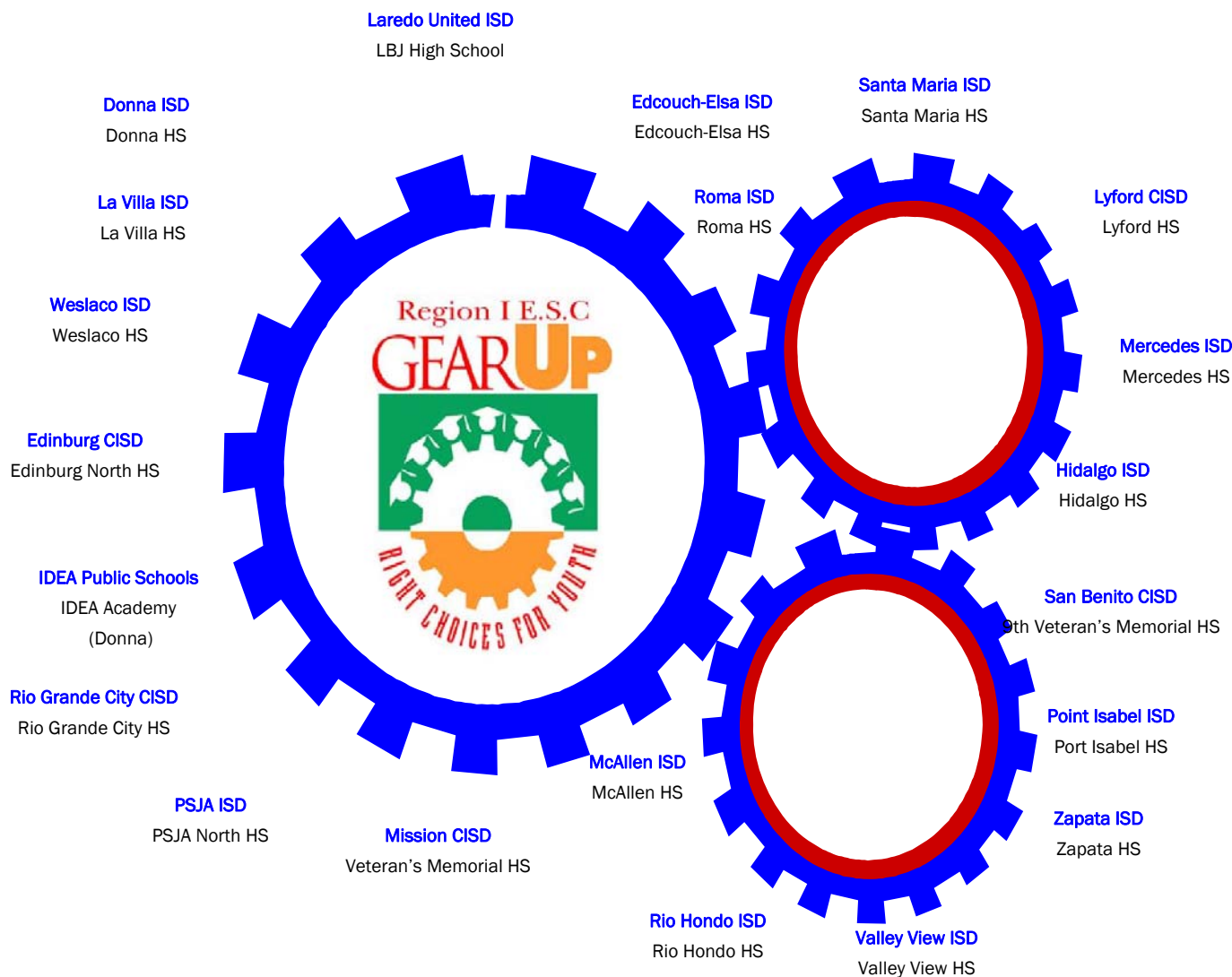
"Transitioning from high school to college was a big change for me. You had to grow up in a summer, have money for school, be ready to live on your own, and set your own ideals, morals and values. It comes at you fast, but you have to learn to take it and run. Having to experience these things in a moment's notice was not easy, but I was able to do it. I don't think anyone can ever really be fully prepared, but you do what you can and be ready for life."

**-Nora Cavazos
San Benito High School '06**



GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

Participating School Districts



Newsletter Design by D. W. Hernandez



1900 W. Schunior • Edinburg, TX 78541

www.esc1.net

GEAR UP Staff

Tina Atkins
GEAR UP Director

Sylvia Leal
GEAR UP Coordinator

Ellie Torres
GEAR UP Specialist

Amanda Galvan
GEAR UP Accountant

Sonia Arce
GEAR UP ESL Specialist

David Hernandez
GEAR UP Specialist

Rosie Lozano
GEAR UP ESL Specialist

Melissa Lopez
GEAR UP Specialist

Jessie Doria
*GEAR UP Lead
Program Assistant*

Norma McCormick
GEAR UP Specialist

Christina Salas
GEAR UP Specialist

Ana Vasquez
*GEAR UP
Program Assistant*



www.esc1.net/gearup

Region One ESC Administration

Jack C. Damron
Executive Director

Dr. Janice Wiley
Deputy Director-Instructional Support Services

Marco Antonio Lara, Jr.
Deputy Director-Administrative & School Support

Frances Guzman
Chief Financial Officer

Claudia Rodriguez
Administrator-Innovation, Research & Development



Region One ESC Board of Directors

Richard R. Cantu, *Chairman*
Place 4 – Hidalgo County

Dora Ruiz
Place 5 – Cameron County

Alicia E. Requenez, *Vice-Chairman*
Place 1 – Hidalgo County

Dr. Manuel Gomez, Jr.
Place 6 – Cameron County

Linda La Mantia, *Secretary*
Place 3 – Webb County

Abel Cavazos
Place 7 – Willacy County

Noe R. Sanchez
*Place 2 – Jim Hogg County, Starr County &
Zapata County*

Crissy Urias
Charter Schools Representative

GEAR UP Partnership School

Place
Postage
Here

Tune in to the

Region One ESC
GEAR UP

Newsbreak

on



Wednesdays
5 o'clock News
Channel 5
