



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

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GEAR UP campuses strive toward excellence during Campus Leadership Team Trainings

By Norma McCormick & David Hernandez
Senior Education Specialists
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

The Region One ESC GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership and the Institute for School Excellence held its first round of Campus Leadership Team meetings the week of September 11-14 in Cameron and Hidalgo county locations. The first of three meetings for the upcoming school year, the training focused on the understanding and implementation of the School Excellence Model by campus administration, GEAR UP facilitators, and content area teachers.

An underpinning of the Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership plan is the implementation of this

alignment initiative aimed at improving student achievement at the systemic level. This initiative recognizes that specific attention must be given to the importance of district support and systemic processes in the realization of long-term meaningful change toward improving academic performance. GEAR UP is using the School Excellence

the week, with GEAR UP staff participating with each of the thirty Campus Leadership Teams that are part of



Model as the foundation for all its initiatives at the regional, district, and campus levels.

Dr. Ellen Gonzalez and Dr. Roberto Zamora facilitated the meetings throughout

the GEAR UP Partnership. Each team participated on several collaborative learning activities to help build understanding and implementation of the School Excellence Model.

GEAR UP will conduct a District Leadership Team meeting, made up of superintendents, principals and curriculum administrators, on November 30th in Mission. The next Campus Leadership Team meeting is scheduled for the week of January 15-January 19, 2007.

Upcoming Events

JASON Project Online Training	12/02/2006
Facilitator Meeting	12/06/2006
Counselor's Academy	01/11/2007
Campus Leadership Team Meetings	01/15/2007-1/19/2007
Facilitator Meeting	01/24/2007
Facilitator Meeting	02/07/2007
Counselor's Academy	02/09/2006





GEARING UP for Systemic Change in Mathematics

By Rosie Lozano
Senior Education Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future
Partnership

The 2006-2007 8th grade Mathematics Initiative provided by Region One GEAR



UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership offers schools the opportunity to meet the needs of English Language Learners, build the teachers' capacity, and define the

problematic issues between content and language acquisition via the continuous support provided to teachers.



This model is presented in collaboration with the 21 partnering school districts, the University of Texas Dana Center Agile Mind, Texas Instruments, Dr. Jaime

Curts and Region One ESC to enhance the academic

success of all learners.

Region One ESC has brought together each year the cohort Mathematics teachers to provide them Navigator Systems, Smart Board Technology, TI84 Calculators, and training on how to address the needs of English Language Learners and raise the bar on higher order thinking skills of all students. Teachers have been receiving intense training (12 days total throughout the school year) to help incorporate technology in the classroom and provide teachers broader understanding of math concepts. In addition, GEAR UP has provided opportunities for teachers to become certified Texas Instruments Instructors to allow for capacity building within the GEAR UP middle school campuses once GEAR UP transitions to high school. This wealth of opportunities have been provided to Region One ESC GEAR UP middle school campuses to impact sustained improvement in the academic achievement of mathematics.



"It is easy for many of us to forget that we are teaching unpolished minds with little or no exposure to much of the material taught in today's classrooms. These trainings are an excellent opportunity reminding us to think like our students, which helps bring to our attention of the struggles that students have in understanding mathematics."

**-Roel Lopez,
La Villa Middle School
TLC certified**

"Using the TI Navigator system in conjunction with the graphing calculator has spiced up student interest. We are barely using the mere basics and interest level has skyrocketed. So far, we have used the "poll prompt" feature for instant feedback between teacher and students. The Report capability is great for quick result. We just recently finished importing ordered pair to create a desired illustration using the graphing features of the TI 84 plus calculators. Students have done very well."

**-Sergio Villarreal,
B. Garza Middle School
8th Grade Math Teacher**

Partnership Profile



Region One ESC has partnered together with The University of Texas Dana Center Agile Mind, Texas Instruments, and Dr. Jaime Curts to provide a research based Mathematics Initiative for Region One ESC GEAR UP campuses.

The Mathematics Initiative is a data driven initiative to especially impact English

Language Learners in the GEAR UP cohort. As part of this initiative, Dana Center's Agile Mind is providing individual campus visits and serving as mentors to cohort teachers. In addition, administrators and teachers benefit from investigative reflections from partners through face to face technical assistance.

The mathematics partners have also been extensively trained on the School Excellence Model so all focus is on one goal, the GEAR UP purpose: To increase the number of low socio-economic, first generation students entering into and completing a post secondary education.



December 2006

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

12/1/06

Student Cybermentoring Session (Engineering)

12/2/06

JASON Project Online Training (Science Initiative) at UT-Brownsville

12/4/06

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Riverside MS, 8:30am

12/5/06

Student Cybermentoring Session (Human Development)

12/6/06

GEAR UP Facilitator Meeting at TSTC-Harlingen, 8:30am

12/7/06

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Mission JH, 8:30am

12/8/06

Springboard (ELA Initiative) Follow-up Training at Region One ESC

Student Cybermentoring Session (Art, Communications & Media)

Springboard (ELA Initiative) Administrative Training Videoconference

12/14/06

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Los Obispos MS, 8:30am

12/15/06

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Mission Junior High, 8:30am

Time & Effort Reports due from GEAR UP Facilitators

January 2007

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

1/9/07

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Berta Cabaza MS, 8:30am

1/11/07

College Prep Counselor's Academy at Region One ESC, 8:30am

1/12/07

Student Cybermentoring Session (Human Development)

1/13/06

8th Grade Math Initiative Training at Region One ESC, 8:30am

1/15/06

8th Grade Math Initiative Training at Region One ESC, 8:30am

Time & Effort Reports due from GEAR UP Facilitators

1/16/07

Campus Leadership Team Meeting (Cluster 1) at Region One ESC

Campus Leadership Team Meeting (Cluster 2) at Villa de Cortez Hotel, Weslaco

1/17/07

Campus Leadership Team Meeting (Cluster 3) at TBA, Harlingen

1/18/07

Campus Leadership Team Meeting (Cluster 4) at Cimarron, Mission

1/19/07

Campus Leadership Team Meeting (Cluster 5) at Holiday Inn, Laredo

1/24/07

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Ida Diaz JH, 8:30am

1/25/07

GEAR UP Facilitator Meeting at Region One ESC, Webb Room, 8:30am

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Brewster MS, 8:30am

Student Cybermentor Session (Health Science)

1/26/07

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Mercedes JH, 8:30am

1/30/07

Abriendo Puertas Parent Meeting, Lesson 2 (Group A) at Region One ESC

Ford PAS Meeting (CATE & Curriculum Directors)

1/31/07

Abriendo Puertas Parent Meeting, Lesson 2 (Group B) at A&M-Weslaco

February 2007

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

2/1/07

Abriendo Puertas Parent Meeting, Lesson 2 (Group C) at TSTC Halingen

2/2/07

Abriendo Puertas Parent Meeting, Lesson 2 (Group D) at Region One ESC

2/6/07

Abriendo Puertas Parent Meeting, Lesson 2 (Group E) at Salvador Garcia MS

2/7/07

GEAR UP Facilitator Meeting at UTPA, 8:30am

2/9/07

College Prep Counselors Academy at Wyndham Hotel

2/14/07

Technical Assistance Cadre Meeting at Saucedo MS, 8:30am

2/15/07

Time & Effort Reports due from GEAR UP Facilitators

GEAR UP Facilitator Data Work Session at Region One ESC, Webb Room

2/27/07

Ford PAS Meeting (CATE & Curriculum Directors)



Springboard at Central Middle School

By Annabel Mireles
English Teacher
Weslaco Central MS
Weslaco I.S.D.

One of the many GEAR UP initiatives that we would like to showcase at Central Middle School is Springboard. At Central Middle School our goal is to ensure that all students receive the opportunity to be successful now and in the future. Students in Mrs. A. Mireles' 8th grade language arts have just that. Through the implementation of Springboard the students regardless at what level they are at, take an active role in their learning on a daily ba-

sis. Students are actively engaged in the readings and activities that accompany individual readings in their Springboard Level III books. Through the implementation of Springboard, the students



are not only strengthening their problem-solving, and critical thinking skills, but

they are also learning to work collaboratively and are actively engaged in their learning. Springboard provides opportunities for a variety of hands on activities and oral discussions that keep the students interested and wanting to learn. Springboard has been a very worthwhile initiative that will help prepare students for advanced classes at the high school level and ultimately prepare them to succeed in their journey towards postsecondary education. When randomly asked students in Mrs. A. Mireles' all agreed that Springboard has made learning fun.



"As a result of a partnership with the College Board, our Springboard equity initiative is designed to ensure AP quality curriculum throughout the student's high school career."

-Rosie Lozano
ESL Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

Building Relationships Through Advisory

By Gabriela Perez
Gear Up Facilitator
Lamar Bruni Vergara MS
United I.S.D.

The morning bell rings and the discussions begin. Stu-

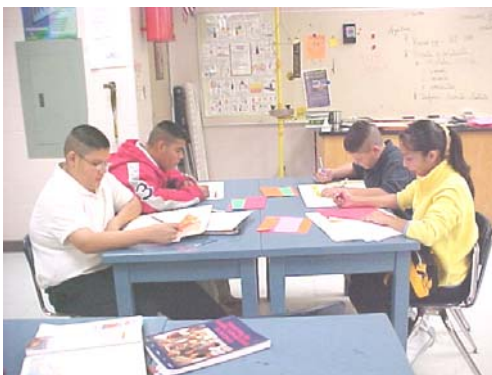
including Lamar Bruni Vergara MS, Los Obispos MS, and Salvador Garcia MS- are actively engaged in conversation centered on student success. The Region One GEAR UP Advisory Curriculum has been adopted as a campus-wide initiative at these three campuses.

Mrs. Rubio, principal at Lamar Bruni Vergara Middle School, has seen the impact that the Advisory curriculum has made at her campus. "The advisory period has given our teachers an opportunity to get acquainted with our stu-

dents through a different method. Our campus is focusing on Responsive Learning Environments and the advisory curriculum lends itself to this type of classroom atmosphere. The lessons contained in the curriculum are user friendly and involve concepts that are of particular interest to our students, therefore, teachers are able to keep the student's attention and are teaching for life-long learning because the lessons are related to real-life." Students at Los Obispos Middle School shared with their social studies teachers, Mrs. Guadalupe Gonzalez that, "They appreciate the time taken to discuss issues other than the academic ones they face." Mrs. Gonzalez contin-

"Through GEAR UP we recognized that many adolescents find themselves lacking the skills needed to succeed in rigorous classes. We created an Advisory Curriculum that can help teachers develop student's skills in organization, study habits, and communication. We're proud to note that this curriculum has been featured in a statewide counselor's toolkit."

-Sylvia Leal
Program Coordinator
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership



dents at the United ISD GEAR UP campuses-

(Bruni Continued on page 5)



GEARing UP for College at Travis Middle School

By Amanda Salinas
 GEAR UP Facilitator
 Travis Middle School
 McAllen I.S.D.

Travis students are college bound!!!! As a result of all of the new and exciting technological advances being made at Travis, (thanks to the Region One GEAR UP Partnership), our students are being prepared academically to enter and be successful in a post-secondary institution. Many of our teachers have attended professional meetings to learn about implementing ideas and strategies that would enhance their student's learning by making the lessons fun, interactive and memorable.

So, how is all of the knowledge they have gained,

transferred over to real-world decisions? The 6th through 8th grade teams here at Travis have selected to name their teams after a college or university, for example, our GEAR UP cohort teams are Team Harvard and Team Miami Hurricanes, who have also created their own team shirts that are sported on Fridays. This campus-wide decision has created team spirit and comrade amongst our students and most importantly is providing college awareness and empowering them to make decisions about what college to attend and what to study. It is very exciting to know

that our students are learning about various college opportunities and that they are beginning to set their minds on getting there!



(Bruni Continued from page 4)

ues by saying, "They feel as if they have been offered an extra hand to help them out." Located on the outskirts of Laredo, Salvador Garcia Middle School, has also embraced the benefits that the Advisory Curriculum offers. Mrs. Elda Guerra, a teacher at Salvador Garcia Middle School says, "Advisory time has given me the opportunity to build a better teacher student relationship. Lessons are easy to prepare and are relevant to students' lives." Yenesey Ramirez, a student at Salvador Garcia, says "Topics covered during the advisory period make me think about important things about life. It helps us be better people and open our minds to new ideas."

A common vision shared by all three campuses is that the Advisory Curriculum is the tool that will ultimately lead to student success.

Tune in to the

Region One ESC
GEAR UP

Newsbreak



Thursdays

5 o'clock News

Channel 5



Advisory Lessons Focused on GEAR UP Overview and Objectives

By David Aguirre
Rio Hondo Junior High
Rio Hondo I.S.D.
GEAR UP Facilitator

Rio Hondo Junior High 8th grade GEAR UP Students reviewed the GEAR UP objectives as stated in the "Bridges to the Future Grant." Students were visited during their English Language Arts classes by Rio Hondo ISD GEAR UP Facilitator, Mr. D. Aguirre.

Mr. Aguirre used The KAGAN and KAGAN Cooperative grouping strategies to focus on GEAR UP Objectives. Students read: Region One ESC: Bridges to the Future Partnership Operating Manual (Overview), took notes, made visuals of the readings, and presented. Students were amazed that the Region One Education Service Center "Bridges to

Future Grant" was in partnership with 30 middle schools that will be articulating into 21 high schools in 21 South Texas school districts. They also were surprised that 8,250 other 8th graders are utilizing the same Curriculum to prepare them for Post Secondary Education. Other topics that were discussed were the School Excellence Model, T-I Navigator Systems, the 4 by 4 High School Curriculum (4x4) and other such topics that would affect them later in school. "A very successful day of learning the program overview and sharing concerns that would have a big effect on them was evident in the discussions" said Aguirre. "This type of introduction to the GEAR UP Program will

make a lasting impact, more so than a piece of paper handed out for them to read at their own leisure."



Rio Hondo GEAR UP students participate in advisory lessons.



Left to right top: Mr. Hernandez-GEAR UP Facilitator, Martin Reyes, April Fernandez, and Abigail Nevarez. Below left to right: Jose Lopez, and Alejandro (Alex) Naranjo.

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

Several students were invited to participate in a motivational conference at South Texas College in McAllen, Texas titled "Planning For Life." This workshop for students was broken

Santa Maria Students Attend South Texas College in McAllen

into three major components: Mind, Body and Soul.

The students listened to several motivational speakers. One of the presenters which captured the students' attention was a presentation of the "Soul" by Lieutenant Colonel Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch, U.S Army (retired).

Another session focused on the "Body". Several Army personnel demonstrated different types of exercises while the student's followed along with the exercise routines.

The remaining sessions emphasized proper nutrition in which students were asked questions concerning healthy food choices,

prizes were given when students answered correctly.

The students were also given the opportunity to use computers and accessed the internet to access a website concerning careers. They were given a brief survey to complete online concerning the "Planning For Life" activities.

The "Planning for Life" conference helped prepare students for their future. They learned about college and career planning, the importance of diet, nutrition, and physical fitness, and staying motivated and focused on the importance of planning for life. The students were escorted by Mr. Carlos Hernandez - GEAR UP Facilitator and Mrs. Irma Ramirez - Counselor. "



COUGAR PRIDE



HESTEC 2006—Inspiring the Next Generation of Explorers

By Christina Salas
Senior Education Specialist
GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future
Partnership

Created five years ago to encourage Hispanic students to consider the fields of engineering, science and technology, Hispanic Engineering, Science & Technology week (HESTEC) 2006 was better than ever. This year's features included a NASA museum, presentations by some of our country's top engineers and scientists, and interactive activities for the whole family.

HESTEC was kicked off with a Sunday night Congressional Dinner hosted by Congressman Ruben Hinojosa where he emphasized the importance of promoting the fields of science, engineering, and technology to our students.

Educator day brought more than 1,000 South Texas teachers, administrators, and superintendents to the University of Texas-Pan American (UTPA) to high-

light the important role they play in preparing students for the fields of engineering and technology. This, in combination with Student Leadership Day, promoted the shared responsibility educators and students have to emphasize the importance of graduating from high school and pursuing a higher education. Bianca Leal, a student at Berta Cabaza Middle School in San Benito said "I have never been to anything like this before. I think that UTPA is a great college and I might come here for engineering."

The enthusiasm students expressed was further enhanced when mothers and daughters attended Latina Day. Approximately 800 8th Grade GEAR UP female students attended this event with their mothers and had an opportunity to listen to inspiring words such as "You could be beautiful and smart. You can be assertive and a leader."

It was a mission to Mars

that ended the educational week as students participated in hands-on activities and educational exhibits by NASA, Boeing, and Lockheed Martin. As HESTEC week came to a close, the excitement of the event lived on in the students, teachers, and presenters as the next generation of explorers were inspired. This fifth annual event was just the introduction students needed to begin planning for their futures.



GEAR UP Finance Spotlight

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

The Primary purpose of GEAR UP funds is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in college. GEAR UP funds are federal funds that are intended to be used to **supplement** existing funds and not **supplant** them. That is, GEAR UP funds must be considered additional money to provide ser-

vices above and beyond what is already provided to a campus as a whole, and not replace any of these services. GEAR UP funds may be used to provide services in 4 major components – academic support, mentoring/tutoring, counseling/outreach, and support services. Examples of allowable uses of GEAR UP funds are supplies and materials to enhance GEAR UP initiatives, tutors to provide academic support to cohort students, and travel for student

trips to colleges, universities, and GEAR UP events.

GEAR UP is a Partnership grant with a matching requirement. For every dollar of Federal funds received, at least one dollar of other State or private funds must be contributed. Learn more about the matching requirement on our next GEAR UP Finance Focus.

Where are They Now? GEAR UP Grads

My name is April Denise Guerrero and I am currently attending Baylor University in Waco, TX. I am a 2006 graduate of the Mighty Yellow Jackets of Edcouch-Elsa High School. I am extremely proud to say that a lot of my success and accomplishments were originated with one single organization called GEAR UP. GEAR UP opened my eyes in so many ways that only benefited me in the future. I can honestly say that I believe I am a stronger student and individual because I participated in such a prestigious organization. GEAR UP not only assisted me financially for concurrent enrollment classes but also gave me the chance to think about my future before I was actually encountered with it. I completely feel that I was prepared for college and all the decisions that come along with being on your own. GEAR UP gave me such a strong background to build up from and for that, I am exceptionally grateful.

Presently, I am majoring in Biology/Pre-Med and have never had to work so hard in my life. College is everything anyone has ever said it would be. Yep, that means no easy walk or stress-free days. College is like a rollercoaster, once you get on you can't get off. Even, when there are those days where I just totally feel like giving up, I make it through the day somehow. And even though I hate those late study nights doing homework for 3 or 4 classes a day, I wouldn't change it for anything. Baylor University is truly a wonderful campus. The administration and instructors are extremely open and only want you to learn. The school spirit is not as enthusiastic as my high school but we are proud to be bears, nevertheless. Recently Baylor hosted a Thanksgiving

feast, outside under a huge tent, for the whole campus. It was very welcoming and made me feel like Baylor was united.

In addition to the great campus life, I have also made numerous friends here at Baylor University. Befriending all different types of people, different races, and meeting people from different backgrounds has truly been a wonderful experience. I have also been blessed to have 3 special friends in my life, that I met here at Baylor, that I can honestly say I can count on them whenever I call. Having that security is just all the better.

In closing, I would just like to say that Baylor University was the right choice for me, and not one day passes by that I regret coming here. I believe that GEAR UP played an extremely significant role in my college decision and for that, I am eternally grateful.



Name: April Denise Guerrero

Class of 2006 Graduate from: Edcouch-Elsa High School

Currently attending: Baylor University

"It is very easy for students who come from obstacle ridden backgrounds to believe that their ambitions are not within reach. GEAR UP teaches those student, students like me, that there are no excuses. Education is priceless, and with it any and all ambitions can be fulfilled."

-April Guerrero



Name: Veronica Treviño

Class of 2006 Graduate from: Hidalgo High School

Currently attending: Baylor University



*By Arnulfo Ruiz
GEAR UP Facilitator
Ida Diaz Junior High
Hidalgo I.S.D.*

Veronica Trevino is a 2006 graduate from Hidalgo High School and participated in the Region One ESC GEAR UP: Right Choices for Youth program since she was in seventh grade. Veronica is currently enrolled in her first semester at Baylor University and will be officially classified as a junior in January 2007. Of the 62 hours of college credit she earned while at Hidalgo High School, 42 hours actually transferred to Baylor for her chosen major.

This Gates Millennium Scholar is majoring in Communication Science and Disorders and is currently taking 16 hours this semester. Veronica is a member of the

National Speech, Language, and Hearing Association and the Catholic Daughters of the Americas.

This former Lady Pirate continues to give back to her community as she did in high school. This Halloween she helped collect canned food door to door instead of candy. The food will be distributed this Thanksgiving for those in need.

Veronica, a former migrant student, credits her mother for instilling the values she has that will never let her forget where she comes from. The former Miss Hidalgo and head cheerleader says that the biggest adjustment she has had to make is getting used to going to a school with only 7% Hispanic enrollment. She has met people from very diverse backgrounds.

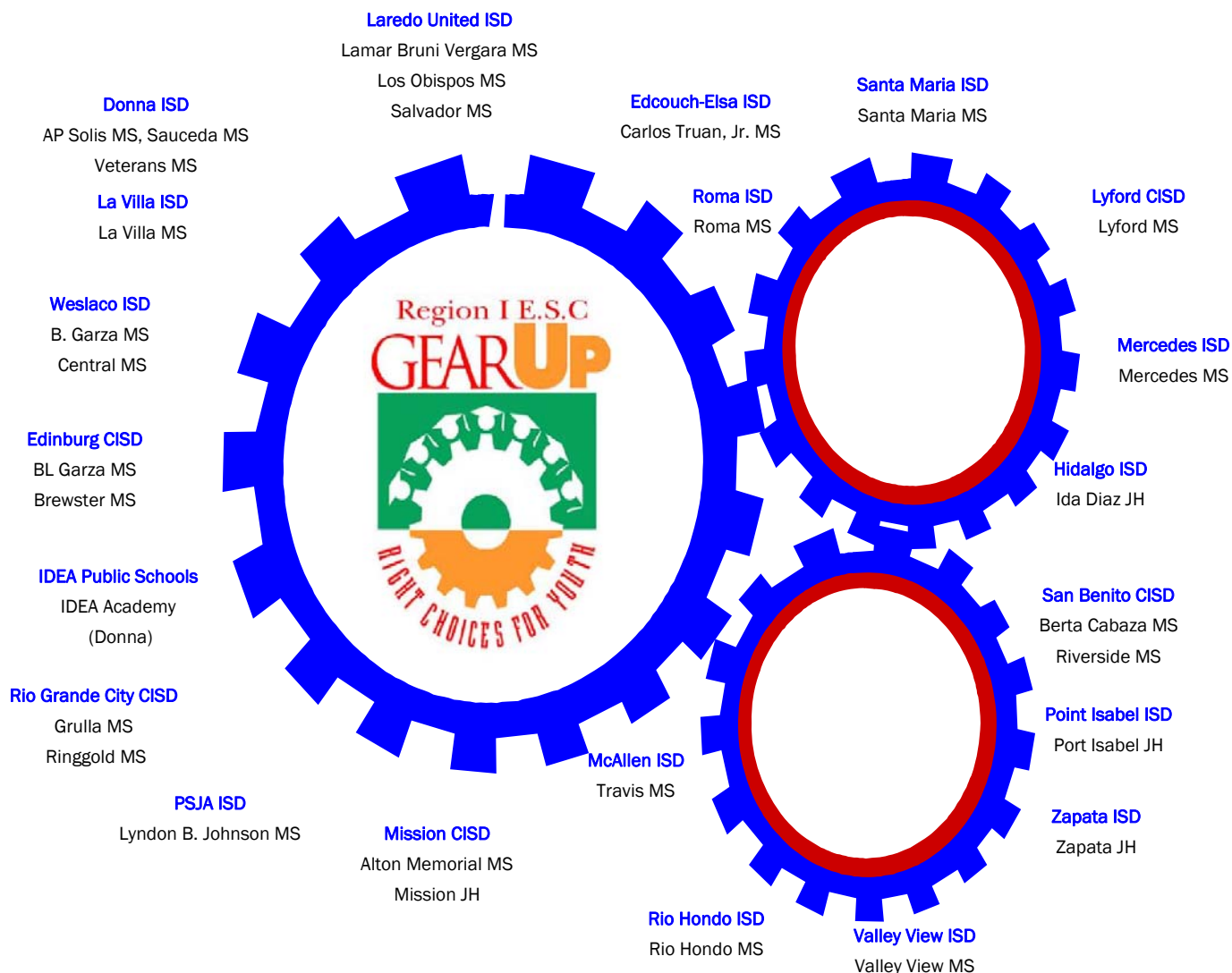
Veronica traveled to Los Angeles November 10 - 12, 2006 to attend a Gates Millennium Scholars regional meeting. She was able to meet William Gates, Sr. and mingle with other GMS recipients.

Veronica advises the current GEAR UP students to "Take the most rigorous courses you can handle; it really does pay off even if you don't think so. Enjoy high school, but always stay focused on your goal and develop good study habits. The more AP courses you take, the better you will be able to handle college courses and earn college credit. And don't forget to thank your family for all they do for you."

BAYLOR
UNIVERSITY

GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

Participating School Districts



1900 W. Schunior • Edinburg, TX 78541

www.esc1.net



GEAR UP Staff

Tina Atkins
GEAR UP Director

Sylvia Leal
GEAR UP Coordinator

Amanda Galvan
GEAR UP Accountant

Sonia Arce
GEAR UP ESL Specialist

Rosie Lozano
GEAR UP ESL Specialist

David Hernandez
GEAR UP Specialist

Melissa Lopez
GEAR UP Specialist

Norma McCormick
GEAR UP Specialist

Christina Salas
GEAR UP Specialist

Ellie Torres
GEAR UP Specialist

Jessie Doria
GEAR UP Lead Program Assistant

Erin Russell
GEAR UP Program Assistant

Ana Vasquez
GEAR UP Program Assistant

www.esc1.net/gearup

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