



GEAR UP

Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership



“Around the nation, more people are asking whether schools as most now look – large, anonymous, places that shuttle students through a fragmented day and test them with impersonal zeal – are designed to best yield the engaged and thoughtful citizens the next century requires.” - Coalition of Essential Schools

REGION ONE GEAR UP: BRIDGES TO THE FUTURE PARTNERSHIP

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GEAR UP: Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

GEAR UP is a national initiative aimed at encouraging more young people to have high expectations, stay in school, study hard and take the right courses to go to college. It provides for an ongoing process that will help students and families to learn about and plan for college from the middle school on and to ensure that every student is academically ready to attend college!

Research shows that children who take challenging courses in middle school, including algebra, are much more likely to succeed in

high school and college. Only 47 of every 100 students from low income families in the nation immediately enroll in college or trade school, compared to 83 of every 100 students from high income families. Only 19 of every 100 Hispanic high school graduates earn a bachelor’s degree by their late twenties, compared to 35 of every 100 whites. *Region One GEAR UP can help!*

Region One GEAR UP works with students at 30 middle schools to help them prepare to enter and succeed in college. Region One GEAR UP and our partners work with school districts, parents, community partners, and colleges and uni-

versities to provide services to children to prepare them for college. Students are provided:

- Tutoring Services
- Mentoring by community members
- Academic and financial counseling
- Outreach activities from higher education entities
- Support services, including financial aid opportunities
- College/University field trips
- Career Exploration opportunities
- Campus and community-based activities

Participating Districts

Donna ISD	La Villa ISD	Point Isabel ISD	San Benito ISD
Edcouch-Elsa ISD	Lyford CISD	PSJA ISD	Santa Maria ISD
Edinburg CISD	McAllen ISD	Rio Grande City ISD	United ISD
Hidalgo ISD	Mercedes ISD	Rio Hondo ISD	Valley View ISD
IDEA Public Schools	Mission CISD	Roma ISD	Weslaco ISD
Laredo ISD			





MEET THE REGION ONE GEAR UP TEAM



Tina Atkins serves as Director of GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future for the Region One Education Service Center. As program director, Ms. Atkins oversees professional development and support for districts in all aspects of this grant. Ms. Atkins has 22 years of experience in an education setting, as a teacher, gifted specialist, education consultant, and program administrator. She has served as program director for General Education, the Office of Middle Schools, and multiple grants and projects for the region.



TINA ATKINS
GEAR UP Director



SYLVIA LEAL
GEAR UP Coordinator

Sylvia Leal is the Coordinator for Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future, where she oversees and coordinates the initiatives of the GEAR UP Partnership. Ms. Leal has 18 years of educational experience including being a classroom teacher, a bilingual educator, a teacher of the gifted and talented, and as a Senior Education Specialist at Region One Education Service Center. In that capacity she has provided curriculum guidance in science, inclusion,

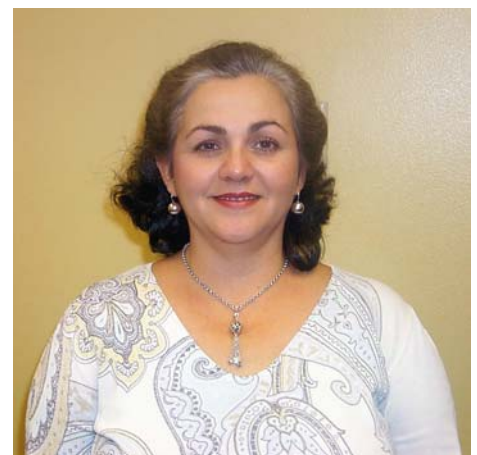


the middle school concept, and in implementing and understanding the state standards. Among several GEAR UP initiatives, she has co-developed the Advisory curriculum and coordinates overall project functions. Ms. Leal has a Master's of Education in School Administration with a Principal Certification and is currently pursuing a Doctoral Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Houston.



Amanda Galvan is the Accountant for the Region One Education Service Center GEAR UP Partnership. She monitors the GEAR UP budget, and assists the department with their financial needs. She also maintains the financial records necessary for the Annual Performance Report submission. Prior to Region One, Amanda worked for 11 years in various areas of school finance. She was the Accounting Supervisor at Valley View ISD for seven years. She spent two years as the Child Nutrition Program Accountant for Mission CISD, and was the Finance Director at Valley View ISD for a period

of one year. Ms. Galvan also taught accounting and business classes for two years at Memorial High School in McAllen. Ms. Galvan obtained her Accounting degree from the University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg, Texas.



AMANDA GALVAN
GEAR UP ACCOUNTANT



MEET THE REGION ONE GEAR UP TEAM

Ms. McCormick has been involved in the GEAR UP partnership since the inception of the Right Choices Grant. She has worked as a campus GEAR UP facilitator for a period of five years, where her responsibilities involved implementation of GEAR UP initiatives so that grant goals and objectives were met. During this time, she provided workshops in the parental involvement area, oversaw campus activities and services and coordinated a College and Career Center at the high school campus level.

As a Senior Education Specialist at Region One Education Service Center,

Ms. McCormick is involved in the parental involvement and in college preparation area where she works with parents, counselors and facilitators with the overall goal of increasing the number of low income students who are prepared to enter post-secondary institutions.

Ms. McCormick's professional training includes a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Master's in Education degree in Counseling and Guidance from the University of Texas-Pan American in Edinburg, Texas



NORMA MCCORMICK
Senior Education Specialist



ROSIE LOZANO
Senior Education Specialist (ESL)

Ms. Lozano is an Education Specialist with GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future under the Office of Innovation, Research and Development. Rosario is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the SpringBoard Curriculum Initiative and the Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies (PAS) Initiative. She will also guide GEAR UP facilitators to closely monitor progress of English language learners through tutoring, mentoring, and academic enrichment activities.

Ms. Lozano received both her Bachelor's

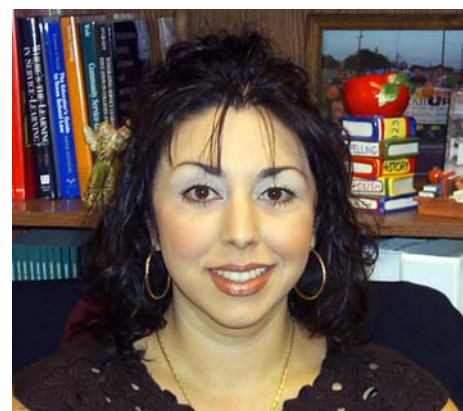
and Master's from the University of Texas Pan American. She received her Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a specialization in Bilingual Education and Mathematics. Her Master's degree in Education is in School Counseling and Guidance. In 1996, she began her career as a fourth grade teacher at LBJ Elementary in Edcouch-Elsa. In 2000, she served with the GEAR UP: Right Choices for Youth Program as a facilitator at Edcouch-Elsa Jr. High. In October 2005, she joined the team at Region One ESC.



Melissa Lopez is a Senior Education Specialist at Region One ESC under the GEAR UP Program. Prior to working at Region One ESC, Ms. Lopez was employed at the Rio Grande City CISD for 7 years. She was a teacher at Grulla Elementary where she served as grade level leader, SBDM Chairperson, LPAC Representative, TxBESS Mentor, and UIL Coach. Ms. Lopez was also named "Teacher of the Year" at her campus during the 2000-01 school year. She later became GEAR UP Facilitator at Rio Grande City HS where she worked for 3 years. During this time, Ms. Lopez was

worked with Region One GEAR UP as a concurrent enrollment coordinator at UTPA. Her current initiatives focus on providing educational field experiences for students through several partners, including UTPA Summer Academic Camps, STC Teens' College, the Challenger Learning Center, the JASON Project, and the International Museum of Art and Science.

Ms. Lopez earned her Masters in Educational Administration from the University of Texas-Pan American in December 2000 and also holds principal certification.



MELISSA LOPEZ
Senior Education Specialist



MEET THE REGION ONE GEAR UP TEAM

Sonia Arce is a GEAR UP Educational Specialist at Region One Education Service Center. She is one of the newest members of the GEAR UP team. Sonia has been in the education field for a total of eight years. She worked in Weslaco ISD for two years as a middle school math teacher, in Edinburg CISD for five years as a math and Spanish teacher and was recently a GEAR UP Facilitator at PSJA North High School.

Ms. Arce earned her Master's in Counseling and Guidance in July of

2003 from the University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas. She is currently pursuing a Master's in Bilingual Education and a certificate in Educational Leadership from the University of Texas-Pan American. Ms. Arce's focus in GEAR UP is to ensure that all GEAR UP English Language Learners receive the services they need to be academically successful and graduate college ready.



SONIA ARCE
Senior Education Specialist (ESL)



CHRISTINA SALAS
Senior Education Specialist

Christina Salas is a Senior Education Specialist for GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future at Region One Educational Service Center in Edinburg, Texas. Prior to this, she was a Career and Technology Teacher at Edinburg High School, teaching Career Connections and Business Computer Information Systems for Tech Prep Credit. Her work experience also involves serving as a mentor for the Ready for the Real World Project with Tech Prep and Workforce Solutions, as well as being a College Admissions Advisor at Texas State Technical College.

At this time, her focus includes Cybermentoring for GEAR UP Students with Engineers from Texas Instruments and The National Hispanic Institute, Public Service Announcements, and implementing Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies (PAS) in participating Ford PAS Schools. Ms. Salas earned a Master's in Educational Administration in May of 2005 from the University of Texas - Pan American, and a Bachelors in Business Administration in May of 2000. She currently holds a Texas Teaching Certificate as well as a Principal's Certificate.



David Hernandez is a Senior Education Specialist at Region One ESC under the GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future grant. Prior to working at Region One ESC, Mr. Hernandez was employed at Brownsville ISD for 9 years. He was a teacher at Senator Eddie A. Lucio, Jr. Middle School, where he taught Pre-Advanced Placement English. He was also an academic team leader, journalism club sponsor, and coached in several areas, including UIL, Mock Trial, and softball. David later became a GEAR UP Facilitator at Lucio M.S. under the "Right Choices for Youth" grant, where he continued to serve for 5 years, transitioning to Simón Rivera High School supporting his GEAR UP students

their four years in high school.

As a Senior Education Specialist, Mr. Hernandez will be assigned to the Cameron and Willacy county GEAR UP campuses, and will focus on technology initiatives and data collection for the program.

Mr. Hernandez earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Texas at Brownsville and holds a Texas Teaching Certificate in Secondary English. He currently is pursuing a Master's in Educational Administration at the University of Texas at Brownsville.



DAVID HERNANDEZ
Senior Education Specialist



MEET THE REGION ONE GEAR UP TEAM

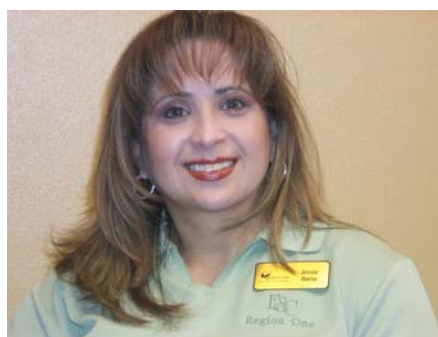
Ellie Torres is a GEAR UP Education Specialist at Region One Education Service Center. She is one of the newest members of the “Bridges to the Future” GEAR UP team. Ms. Torres served the students of Edinburg CISD for seventeen years. She was an elementary teacher for six years, a middle school teacher for five years and the GEAR UP Facilitator for Edinburg North High School “Right Choices for Youth” GEAR UP Program for six years.

Ms. Torres earned her Master’s in Counseling and Guidance in August of 2000 from the University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg, Texas.

Ms. Torres’s focus in GEAR UP is to ensure that the students of the “Bridges to the Future” GEAR UP Program receive the services and guidance necessary to be academically successful and prepared for the transition to post secondary institutions.



ELLIE TORRES
Senior Education Specialist



JESSE DORIA
Lead Program Assistant

Erin Russell is a Program Assistant for the GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership. She has worked with the Region One ESC for two and a half years. In that time she has worked for the Principal’s Assessment and Development Center, Safe and Drug Free Schools and Teacher Recruitment. Prior to her employment with Region One and valley life, she spent 10 years living and working in the Houston area. Proud to call the Rio

Jessie Doria is the Lead Program Assistant for the GEAR UP Partnership and has been with the Service Center for a total of fourteen years. During her time with Region One, she has worked within many departments including the General Education Department, The Office of Middle School and the department of Gifted and Talented. Jessie’s cur-

Grande Valley her home, she is excited about this new school year and working with all 30 middle schools in the GEAR UP partnership. She and her husband of 4 years are expecting their first child in November 2006 and are anxiously awaiting the arrival of their newest family member.



rent role with the GEAR UP Partnership includes working closely with the Amanda Galvan on the budget and with the program director, Tina Atkins. She is anxious and eager to start this new school year working with the Office of Innovation, Research and Development.



ERIN RUSSELL
Program Assistant



ANA VAZQUEZ
Program Assistant

Ana Vasquez is a Program Assistant with the Region One ESC GEAR UP office. She attended Edinburg High School and after High School she began attending UTPA and STC. She will continue to pursue a degree in Nursing. Prior to her employment with Region One Education Service Center, She worked with Texas Workforce Solutions as a youth case manager for 3 years in assisting with the TAAS Program for the Edinburg High Schools. Her work experience also in-

cludes the medical field and has been employed within the Home Health Care setting and was employed with Tropical Texas Center for MH/MR. The most important aspect in her life is her family and her job. She has been blessed with a great husband and four adorable children, and one grandson. “Life has taught me that unexpected, unexplained challenges can come my way but only with God as my foundation I shall overcome all obstacles.”



MEET THE MATH TEAM



SABRINA FRANCO
Math Coordinator

Sabrina Franco is the Math Coordinator in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment at Region One Education Service Center. She has thirteen years experience in Education. She has worked as a 6th-8th grade math teacher in Progreso ISD, Kindergarten teacher, Music teacher, 5th grade self-contained teacher at PSJA ISD, 6th grade Math teacher, High School Curriculum Supervisor, and District Science Specialist at Edcouch-Elsa ISD. Ms. Franco also taught Algebra I and GED classes with Upward Bound and the High School Equivalency Program at the University of Texas-Pan American.

Ms. Franco earned a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies with a specialization in Mathematics in 1993 and a Masters in Educational Leadership in December 2000 from the University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas. She currently holds a Principal's certification and has had five years experience as a school administrator.

Ms. Franco's focus in GEAR UP is to ensure that all GEAR UP math initiatives support students, teachers, and administrators in the improvement of mathematics achievement.



Gerbie Rodriguez has just joined the Math Specialist team at Region One ESC. She has been involved with education for 23 years. Her years in education have been with Edinburg CISD. She was an elementary teacher for 18 years, SEM Specialist for two years, and a Reading Strategist/Instructional Lead Teacher for three years.

Gerbie received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Pan American University in 1982. She is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership. Gerbie's main focus at Region One ESC is to provide teachers, students, and administrators with assistance, guidance, and support to ensure student success in mathematics.



Gerbie Rodriguez
Math Specialist



Rogelio Solis
Math Specialist

Rogelio Solis is a Math Specialist at Region One Education Service Center. After graduating Valedictorian from Hidalgo HS, he completed his undergraduate coursework at University of Texas-Pan American. Then he went on to work for Hidalgo ISD as a middle school and high school teacher. During his tenure at Hidalgo ISD, Solis won a district championship in basketball and took students to compete in math at the state level for three consecutive years.

Solis earned his Master's in Educational Leadership in May 2006 from the University of Texas-Pan American. He is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in the field of Curriculum and Instruction.

Rogelio's focus in Region One is to help all stakeholders receive the services they need to be academically successful and graduate college ready.



Norma Hernandez is a Math Specialist at Region One Education Service Center. She is one of the newest members in the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Norma has been in education for eight years. She worked in Edinburg ISD as a second grade teacher and in Edcouch-Elsa ISD as a second grade teacher, elementary facilitator, and Math Specialist for the district.

Norma earned her Bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies with a minor in Bilingual Education in May of 2000. She further pursued a Master's in Educational Leadership in December of 2004 from the University of Texas-Pan American.

Norma's focus in Region One ESC is to facilitate for students, teachers and administrators in the area of Mathematics, ensuring that all students are taught research-based practices that will help them be life long learners.

Norma's focus in Region One ESC is to facilitate for students, teachers and administrators in the area of Mathematics, ensuring that all students are taught research-based practices that will help them be life long learners.



Norma Hernandez
Math Specialist



INITIATIVES

Academic Support

Math

A systemic grade 7-12 Math initiative is provided to GEAR UP cohort students and teachers in an effort to improve the understanding and implementation of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills. This initiative represents an effort to systematize teacher learning beyond mere skill acquisition and includes questioning techniques to improve instruction and student achievement. In addition, the use of technology will aid this initiative as participating campuses will learn to utilize Navigator systems, calculators, media projectors, and Smart board technology to integrate within the classroom. Partners in this endeavor include: Texas Instruments, the Charles A. Dana Center, UTPA, and Region One ESC as well as with monthly campus visits by Math specialists to assist teachers in utilizing equipment and lesson implementation, trouble shooting, and installation of Navigator systems as needed.

English Language Learner Initiative

Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership has organized an initiative to target the English Language Learners in the GEAR UP cohort. GEAR UP ESL Specialists will provide direct technical assistance to core area teachers of English Language Learners. In addition, the GEAR UP ESL Specialists will collaborate with the campus GEAR UP Facilitator to closely monitor English Language Learner needs by ensuring proper tutorial services, student activities, mentoring services, and teacher staff development.

SpringBoard

In order to increase the number of students prepared for college level work and/or participation in Advanced Placement courses, Region One GEAR UP has collaborated with the College Board to provide SpringBoard, a 6th through 12th grade vertically aligned English Language Arts curriculum tool. This initiative will include scaffolded teacher training, a web-based program to support English classroom teachers with professional feedback, diagnostic assessments, and instructional material.

Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies (PAS) Initiative Overview

Ford PAS is an academically rigorous, standards-based program with an interdisciplinary curriculum specifically designed for students who want to get more out of high school and who want to better prepare for post-secondary studies, professional careers, and roles as future leaders. This advanced studies program creates a dynamic link between what is learned in the classroom and what will be expected of students in college and beyond. Ford PAS students will work with peers to explore ideas, analyze problems, and find solutions to real-life challenges.

Mentoring/Tutoring

Region One GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership will utilize student data to guide diagnostic-prescriptive tutoring, including web-based online tutoring services and videoconferenced Cybermentors. This tutoring program includes educational consulting services, provided through SureScore, which will provide live tutors via the Region One GEAR UP website. Tutors will provide assistance to students on deficient skill areas including the core content areas of Math, Science, Reading, and English Language Arts.

Support Services

Region One GEAR UP provides support services through initiatives including Public Service Announcements (PSA) through KRGV News Channel 5, videoconferencing for staff development and meetings, the Region One GEAR UP website, and the annual HESTEC event at UTPA.

These support services are geared toward the GEAR UP cohort students, teachers, schools, and community. Region One GEAR UP aims at utilizing best practice information resulting from its action research in designing interventions for these support services.

Counseling/Outreach

Abriendo Puertas

In partnership with Texas A & M, a parental involvement component will address parental involvement outreach services. The “Abriendo Puertas” parental involvement initiative is a model parent-to-parent training model whereby the parents share and present information to each other regarding specific lessons regarding communication with adolescents, academic services and post-secondary preparation.

Summer Camps

Region One GEAR UP has partnered with South Texas College and UTPA to create summer camps focusing on academic enhancement. The STC Teens’ College is a hands-on college camp that offers students the opportunity to participate in a work setting that encourages problem solving and team building. Additionally, The University of Texas-Pan American developed academic enrichment programs for pre-college age youth with the aim of introducing Rio Grande Valley students to college campus life. Camps offered include: Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Astronomy/Physics, Nursing, Communication/Leadership, Clinical Lab Science, Computer Science, and English as well as other areas such as Drama and Geography.

College and Career Centers

College and career centers at each campus are developed to provide career orientation, access to college applications, information and scholarships, career interest inventories, and career information. These career centers will help in providing guidance towards helping students select career pathways and pathways to college and other post secondary institutions. Along with college and career center development, Go Centers may be established at the campus to reinforce college outreach with the “Education, Go Get It” campaign and the College for Texans.

Planners

In connection with academic support, mentoring/tutoring, counseling/outreach, and support services, Region One GEAR UP will provide cohort students with a student planner correlated to Covey’s “Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens.” This planner serves as a time management tool, with the ultimate goal of assisting students to self-regulate their behavior.

Advisory

Since 78% of the cohort students in this project are potentially the first generation to attend college, many students need to rely on adults outside the family unit for basic academic guidance. The advisory program allows the middle and high school communities to become the surrogate provider of academic information and guidance students need to prepare for college. Lessons will help students develop good study skills and habits, become aware of career options, develop strong character traits, develop a positive attitude toward school and set goals for higher education.



Region One Education Service Center

GEAR UP: Bridges to the Future Partnership

Community Partners



Institute for School Excellence

DAY Enterprise

MARQCOM, Inc.

Charles A. Dana Center, UT-Austin

Dr. Jaime Curts

Agile Mind

Jason Foundation

International Museum of Arts & Sciences

Challenger Learning Center

Texas Instruments

College Board

Princeton Review

Premier Agendas

UTPA-Office of External Affairs

The University of Texas-Pan American

National Council for Community and Education Partnership

The National Hispanic Institute

City Span

Abriendo Puertas

KRGV-Channel 5

South Texas College

Ford Partnership for Advanced Studies

