

IMPACT REPORT: Project Explore + Project Explore Jr.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Vision + Mission

To provide early awareness and exposure to college and careers to enable students in grades five through eight to make informed decisions about secondary and postsecondary education and career pathways. To help a targeted cohort of students develop early career beliefs and ideals to maximize opportunities and empower students to make successful secondary and postsecondary choices based on their interests, goals, and strengths.

Opportunity & Impact

- **College and career exploration** – Empower students to explore focused programs of study through research and field lessons.
- **One-on-One Advising** – Advisors conduct one-on-one advising sessions to guide and support successful secondary and postsecondary choices.
- **Secondary Planning** – Assist students in the exploration of high school programs and career options.
- **Postsecondary Planning** – Develop college and career readiness mindsets with students.

PROGRAM SUMMARY

Target Student Population

Project Explore program is comprised of the following criteria:

- Fifth - eighth grade students who achieved *Meets Grade Level* on STAAR test.
- Recommendations from teachers, counselors, and other campus administrators.

Staffing

- One director
- Two senior managers
- One manager
- One Administrative Assistant II
- Four Project Explore Jr. Advisors
 - 100 fifth grade cohort students to one advisor
- 28 Project Explore Advisors
 - 75 middle school cohort students to one advisor

Student Enrollment:

- 2,100 sixth – eighth grade students across 28 campuses
- 400 fifth grade students across 16 campuses

See Appendix A for full list of campuses and program enrollment.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Student Engagement

- 2,500 students participate during the 2022-2023 school year.
- 700 eighth grade students participated in at least four on-campus career workshops.
- 700 seventh grade students participated in at least two on-campus career workshops.
- 700 sixth grade students participated in at least two on-campus career workshops.

One-on-One Advising – Project Explore Jr. and Project Explore advisors conduct one-on-one advising sessions to guide and support successful secondary and postsecondary choices.

- As of May 2023, 4,808 cohort students have received a one-on-one advising session on college and career goals.

College and Career Exploration – Empower students to explore focused programs of study through research and field lessons.

- 2,100 Project Explore middle school students received eight College, Career, & Military Readiness (CCMR) lessons.
- 400 elementary students received five CCMR lessons.
- Students engaged in over 115 out-of-classroom learning and experiential opportunities.
- 1,978 Project Explore and non-Project Explore middle school students completed the Career Cluster Interest Survey through the Pathful Explore Platform to help identify potential career clusters.

Goal Mapping notebooks - Project Explore and Project Explore Jr. students identified personal and career goals while walking through the necessary steps to accomplish each goal.

CareerMania (Fall) and CollegeMania (Spring) Research Projects

These semester long projects are activities to aid students in exploring various careers as well as researching postsecondary education opportunities, creating PowerPoints and Poster boards for a district-wide competition.

Project Explore Jr./Project Explore Summer CCMR Enrichment Camp

Advisors to host and lead rising fifth-eighth students in campus wide college and career exploration workshops. Project Explore Jr. and Project Explore Summer CCMR Enrichment camp topics will include career investigations, college success strategies, official PSAT/SAT prep through Khan Academy, and soft skills development.



Increase from previous year (% improvement):

- Elementary programming expanded from four to 16 campuses, increasing from 100 to over 400 students.
- 300% increase in college/industry field lessons for fifth grade programming
- 463% increase of CCMR platform usage for fifth grade programming
- Doubled the number of designated campus college centers on campuses.
- Doubled the number of CCMR lessons and advising sessions for sixth grade cohort students.
- 167% increase in CCMR lessons for seventh grade cohort students.
- Doubled the number of CCMR lessons for eighth grade cohort students.
- 120% increase in college/ industry field lessons for fifth – eighth grade programming.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Summer Longhorn Engineering STEM Camp

The UT Youth Engagement Team is teaming up with the Cockrell School of Engineering to host the Longhorn Engineering Summer Camp exclusively for Project Explore students. The camp is an interactive learning experience that engages rising 8th and 9th-grade students in activities that promote the broad impact of engineering. Participants experience how engineering mixes with art, sports, medicine, sustainability, and more. The camp is led by UT faculty and current students from the Cockrell School of Engineering. Facilitators provide the curriculum, technology, and student supplies.



Houston Community College & Project Explore Career Expo

Over 700 Project Explore middle school students participated in the “Houston Community College and Project Explore Career Expo”. Hosted at the five Houston Community College campuses, students engaged in hands-on experiences at various Centers of Excellence and learned about programming such as dual credit, Upward Bound, HCC Honors College, and other opportunities facilitated by professors and student ambassadors.

Lone Star Flight Museum Tour & Drone Dynamics Outreach

Over 670 Project Explore middle school students from 19 middle schools engaged in an interactive field lesson hosted by the Lone Star Flight Museum. Focused on how aviation intersects with the STEM field, students explored the museum, attended a presentation about aviation, and participated in a flight simulation exercise. The Drone Dynamics Outreach aviation professionals guided students through flight path coding and an obstacle course experience.



Project Explore Jr./Project Explore & Ignite High School Showcase

Over 300 Project Explore Jr. 5th graders and Project Explore 8th graders visited various HISD high school campuses for a glimpse at high school life. Students observed classes, interacted with student ambassadors, and had unique experiences such as participating in a mock EMT activity and a live jazz session.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (cont.)

Middle School Transition

Project Explore Jr. offers Middle School Transition Workshops to all fifth-grade parents and students on all 16 elementary campuses, supporting more than 1,000 families as they navigate the shift to middle school.

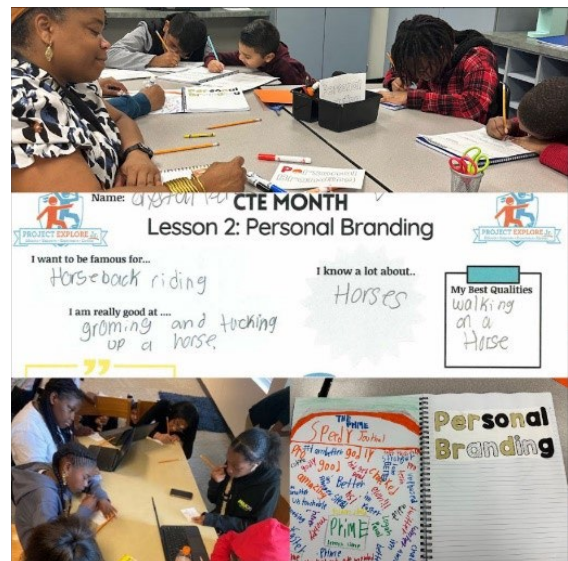


October College, Career, Military Readiness Month and CTE Month

Project Explore Jr. and Project Explore supported College Readiness “October College, Career, and Military Readiness Month” and Career Readiness “CTE Month” by delivering curriculum across all 44 campuses, reaching nearly 3,220 students.

Notable Experiences:

- JFK 60th Anniversary “Moon Shot” Speech
 - 18 campuses 479 students
- Black College Expo
 - 5 campuses 125 students
- Hispanic Scholarship Forum
 - 4 campuses 32 students
- R.A.P Your Career¹
 - 7 campuses 106 students
- Girls In Industry Day²
 - 5 campuses 80 students
- United Airlines Career Expo³
 - 5 campuses 83 students



¹ The HISD Career Readiness Department hosted their Inaugural Boys Fall Festival: R.A.P Your Career.

² The HISD Career Readiness Department hosted their inaugural event designed to expose BIPOC 8th grade girls to occupations in STEM, Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence, Construction Technology, and more.

³ HISD Career Readiness Department partnered with United Airlines to host a learning opportunity for middle school students.

STUDENT STORY HIGHLIGHTS



Kelli Asiel, Mading Elementary School

We get to do fun things like Pathful Explore. The field trips are fun! Project Explore Jr. is helping me figure out what I want to do when I am older. I'm learning how to plan [for the future]. We need to go to college to get a good career.

Jaqueline Almanza 2023, Worthing High School

"Project Explore exposed me to different career pathways, colleges and different high schools. My favorite thing about Project Explore was the different field trips we went on; it really gave me a chance to explore options that I never knew existed. It truly got me prepared for life after high school before I entered high school. I will be attending Texas State University in the fall to become a nurse and Project Explore was a big part of my journey. My advice to all Project Explore students is make sure you stay on track freshman year, that's when you set the tone for your high school career."



Isis Ramirez, Mading Elementary School

Project Explore Jr. is helping me get to know what I want to do when I get older. Before Project Explore Jr., I didn't know what I wanted to be. Now I know I want to be a nurse because it's important to help people.

Jacqueline Alvarado 2024, Furr High School

Project Explore helped me get ready for high school by showing me what high school would be good for me to attend. Even though I couldn't attend the high school I wanted, it still helped me to understand what I wanted to do with my future and motivated me to join other programs in high school to help prepare me for college. Project Explore gave me the opportunity visit college campuses and hear from different professionals.

Challenges

- Students at the elementary school and middle school levels are highly transient. Project Explore advisors must replace exiting cohort students.
- Lack of buy-in from campus administration to gain access to students and implement program elements with fidelity.
- The lack of a dedicated meeting space and identified courses to pull students from create challenges for program continuity.
- Due to constraints with the use of Title I funds, we are not able to purchase incentives to aid in promoting program initiatives.

Collaboration and Next Steps

- **CCMR Month** Project Explore Jr. and Project Explore support the College Readiness October CCMR month and Career Readiness CTE Month efforts by delivering curriculum about career clusters and exploration platforms across all 44 campuses, reaching nearly 2,500 students.
- Project Explore Jr., Project Explore and **AVID** (non-elective campuses) to conduct large-scale presentations and industry workshops, & coordinate field lessons and facilitate soft skills lessons.
- Partner with **Houston Community College campuses** to plan and execute Career Expo events for the 28 middle school Project Explore campuses.
- Collaborate with **Momentum Education** to connect Project Explore students to industry and professional visits.
- Work with **DiscoverU** to recruit students to participate in summer learning opportunities.
- **UT Youth Engagement** and **UT Austin Cockrell School of Engineering** to plan and implement the Summer Longhorn STEM Camp for Project Explore students.
- Continue work with the **Lone Star Flight Museum** to expose students to aviation and STEM.
- **BP Energy Company** will partner with Project Explore Jr. to extend mentorship and field lessons related to STEM careers. Project Explore Jr. campuses will be the recipient of yearlong mentor chats by **BP employees** to discuss navigating the multiple areas of STEM. Students will tour the BP campus and participate in hands-on experiences to strengthen their knowledge of BP and like companies.
- Provide two grade-level presentations (one in the fall, one in the spring) at Project Explore Jr. and Project Explore campuses.
- Provide career interest surveys for all fifth-grade students at Project Explore Jr. and all grade levels at Project Explore campuses.

GOAL ALIGNMENT

Board Goal Progress:

- **Measure 3.1:** The percentage of students who by the end of eleventh grade have demonstrated college readiness by satisfying the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) requirement via SAT, ACT, or Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) will increase eight percentage points from 24 in 2019 to 32 in 2024.
- **Measure 3.2:** The percentage of students who by the end of 11th grade have demonstrated college readiness via Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate (AP/IB) examinations, dual-credit coursework, or dual-enrollment credit eligibility will increase 8 percentage points from 26% in 2019 to 34% in 2024.
- **Measure 3.3** The percentage of students who by the end of 11th grade have demonstrated career readiness via an industry-based certification will increase 8 percentage points from 0 in 2019 to 18% in 2024.

Office of CCMR Department Goals:

- Increase out-of-classroom learning and experiential opportunities for students in College, Career, and Military Readiness programs.

Short-term Goals/Outcomes:

- Recruit and track caseload of targeted students.
- Increase usage of CCMR platforms including job shadowing videos, interest assessments, financial literacy, and college and career exploration lessons.
- Establish a college-going culture through the development of a designated college area at 16 elementary and 28 middle school campuses.
- Cultivate soft skills and academic mindset through at least two field lessons prior to entering middle school.

Mid-term Goals/Outcomes:

- Student development is demonstrated through the desire for information, acquiring and accessing career information, self-discovery, and inquiry.
- Students engage in career, financial, and college planning; 2,100 middle school students and 400 fifth grade students receive CCMR lessons, field lessons, financial literacy, and advising support.
 - Fifth through eighth grade had an 81% completion rate in success skills lessons.
 - Fifth through eighth grade had an 83% completion rate in career planning lessons.
 - Fifth through eighth grade had a 69% completion rate in financial planning.
 - Sixth through eighth grade had a 75% completion rate in college planning.

Long-term Goals/Outcomes:

- Determine the effect of elementary to high school postsecondary pipeline.
- Impact behavioral processes such as decision-making styles, critical thinking, expressions of values, interest, skills, and concepts influencing future career and life choices.
- Cultivate a college-going culture through early awareness prior to entering high school.
- Increase the number of students that will enter middle and high school with knowledge of career beliefs and ideals, feeder patterns, and programs of study.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: List of Project Explore Jr + Project Explore and student enrollment.

Project Explore Jr. Elementary Campuses	Project Explore Jr. Student Enrollment
Bonham	25
Gregory-Lincoln K-8	27
Highland Heights ES	25
Isaacs ES	35
Kashmere Gardens ES	25
Mading ES	26
Martinez ES	24
Pilgrim Academy	27
Billy Reagan K - 8	25
Robinson	25
Sanchez ES	25
Seguin ES	25
Tijerina ES	25
Walnut Bend ES	26
Whidby ES	25
Young ES	25
Total	415

Project Explore Middle School Campuses	Project Explore Student Enrollment
Attucks MS	76
Baylor at Ryan	76
Burbank MS	74
Clifton MS	78
Cullen MS	64
Deady MS	67
Edison MS	78
Fleming MS	78
Fondren MS	70
Fonville MS	75
Forest Brook MS	78
Gregory- Lincoln K-8	75
Hartman MS	61
Henry MS	74
Holland MS	75
Key MS	37
Lawson MS	58
Long Academy	70
Marshall MS	76
Navarro MS	74
Ortiz MS	77
Pilgrim Academy	73
Billy Regan K-8	75
Revere MS	74
Sugar Grove MS	75
Thomas MS	78
Welch MS	77
Williams MS	77
Total	2020