BB-RISE

THE INAUGURAL YEAR

ANNUAL REPORT

SY 2025-2026



FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS,



As I reflect on the 2025-26 school year, I am proud of the progress we have made through BB-RISE and the strength of our regional partnerships. What began as a shared vision across Alpine, Marathon, and Marfa ISDs continues to grow into a model that expands access to meaningful, high-quality pathways for all students.

This year, we saw continued growth in our Health Science and Business pathways, along with approval to add an Educator Pathway. These programs are creating real opportunities for students through shared resources, expanded clinical experiences, and stronger alignment to postsecondary and workforce outcomes.

We have also strengthened the systems that support this work. Through improved advising, data use, and cross-district collaboration, we are ensuring that pathways are intentional, aligned, and built for long-term success.

BB-RISE is made possible by the commitment of our educators, leaders, and partners, including the Education Partnership of the Permian Basin. Their collaboration continues to drive this work forward.

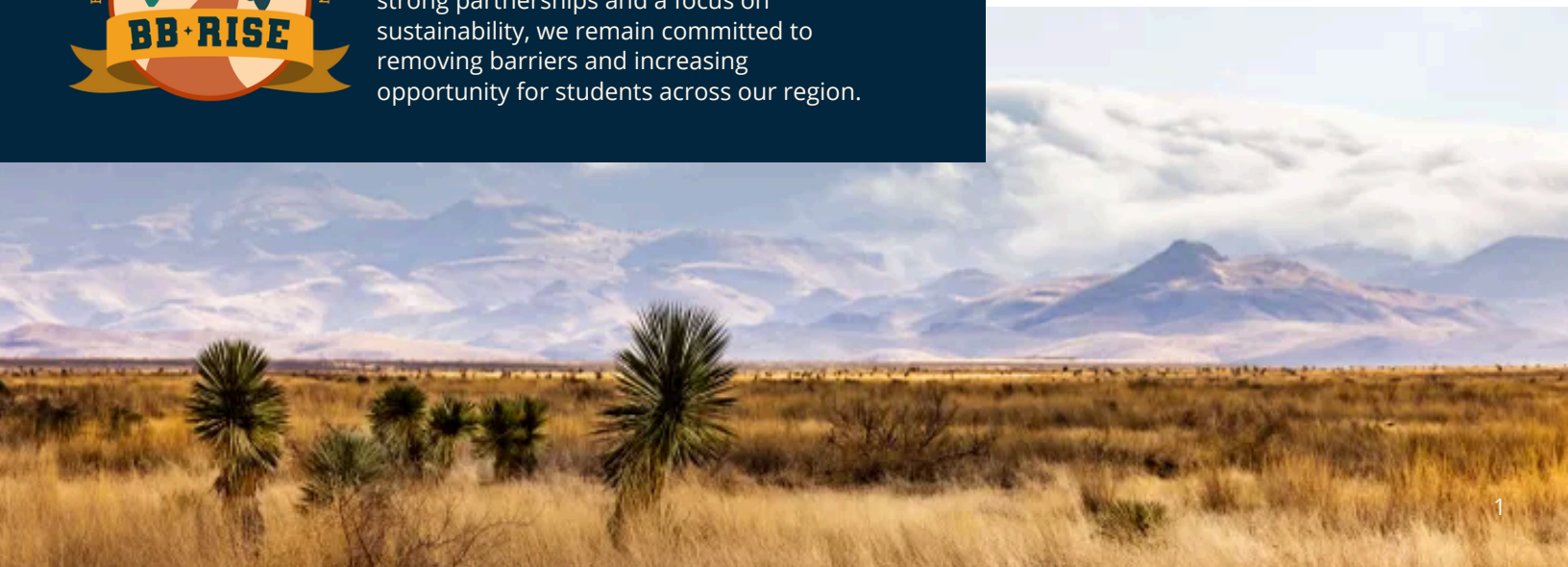
While there is more to be done, the momentum is strong. Together, we are building a sustainable model that expands opportunity for students across our region.

With sincere appreciation,

Jarrett Vickers
BB-RISE Regional Director

LOOKING AHEAD

BB-RISE will continue expanding access to dual credit and workforce-aligned pathways while strengthening advising systems to better support every student. Through strong partnerships and a focus on sustainability, we remain committed to removing barriers and increasing opportunity for students across our region.



BB-RISE PARTNERS

MARFA ISD

MARATHON ISD

ALPINE ISD

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

GAGE HOTEL

BIG BEND REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER

EMPOWER schools

Education Partnership OF THE PERMIAN BASIN

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ABOUT
THE BB-RISE

Big Bend Industry Landscape

Health Care & Social Assistance

Average Wages: $84,100
Jobs in Field: Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioner, Pharmacy Technician

Business Management

Average Wages: $71,600
Jobs in Field: General Operating Manager, Business Owner

Education & Training

Average Wages: $57,300
Jobs in Field: K-12 Teacher, Coach, University Staff

*2024 CareerCraft Labor Market Report

Big Bend Rural Initiative for Success in Education

The Big Bend Rural Initiative for Success in Education (BB-RISE) is a regional partnership among **Alpine**, **Marathon**, and **Marfa ISDs** that brings together school systems, higher education, and community partners to address shared challenges in rural education. This model builds regional capacity by aligning pathways such as **Health Science**, **Business**, and **Education** with workforce needs, while ensuring efforts are locally driven and responsive to community priorities. BB-RISE represents a collaborative, place-based approach to expanding opportunity and overcoming the structural barriers facing rural students.

Mission

Our mission is to promote and provide unique, high-quality, and impactful experiences leading to postsecondary success to rural students across the Big Bend.

Vision

Our vision is to create collaborative and sustainable postsecondary pathways that empower remote, rural students to shape the future of Big Bend communities.



DISTRICT

DEMOGRAPHICS

	Marathon ISD	Marfa ISD	Alpine ISD
Total Enrollment	58	194	903
Hispanic/Latino	64%	92%	64%
Black	5%	1%	1%
White	31%	7%	32%
Economically disadvantaged	71%	100%	52%
Special Education	22%	20%	15%

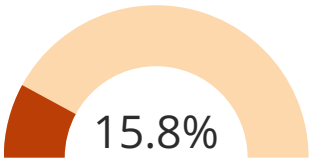
*PEIMS Data



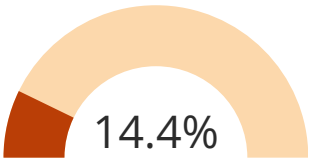
Median Household Income



National Median Household Income



Poverty Rate



National Poverty Rate

*Brewster County, Census.gov

ECONOMIC DIVERSITY OF BIG BEND

The Big Bend region's economy is rooted in industries such as tourism, agriculture, healthcare, and education, but remains limited in overall industry sectors compared to more urban areas.

This lack of varied, high-wage career opportunities often requires students to leave the region to pursue advanced training or employment. Expanding economic diversity is critical to strengthening the local workforce, supporting long-term community sustainability, and creating pathways that allow students to live and work in the region after graduation.

SY 25-26 STUDENT **PATHWAYS**

In addition to their own district's offerings, students had access to two new shared pathways.

Health Science	Business Management
Total Enrollment: 113 **Host District:** Alpine ISD	**Total Enrollment:** 5 **Host District:** Marathon ISD
IHE Partner: Sul Ross State University **Industry Partners:** Big Bend Regional Hospital	**IHE Partner:** Sul Ross State University **Industry Partners:** Mav Bank
Dual Credit Available: 16 hours **Certifications Offered:** Certified Nursing Assistant	**Dual Credit Available:** 15 hours **Certifications Offered:** Microsoft Office Certification

Total School Year 2025-2026 Enrollment: 118



Analia and Karyssa shared that, before BB-RISE, they had not clearly seen a path for themselves after high school. Through the CNA program, they are gaining hands-on experience and meaningful certifications that have strengthened their confidence.

Together, they described how the program is helping them imagine staying in the region, serving others, and building careers they can be proud of, while expanding what they believe is possible.

Analia and Karyssa, Alpine ISD 12th Grader Students

YEAR 1 ACHIEVEMENTS

Data Capacity Building

BB-RISE partnered with CareerCraft to provide a 5-part data systems training series for key staff, including superintendents, principals, and PEIMS from partner districts. These trainings strengthened PEIMS reporting, CCMR tracking, pathway planning, IBC monitoring, and data-driven decision-making.

50+ Work-Based Learning Experiences

Over 100 students participated in 50+ work-based learning experiences, gaining hands-on exposure to careers through internships, clinical rotations, industry tours, career fairs, guest speakers, and career-focused coursework. These experiences helped students connect classroom learning to real-world career opportunities and make informed decisions about their futures.

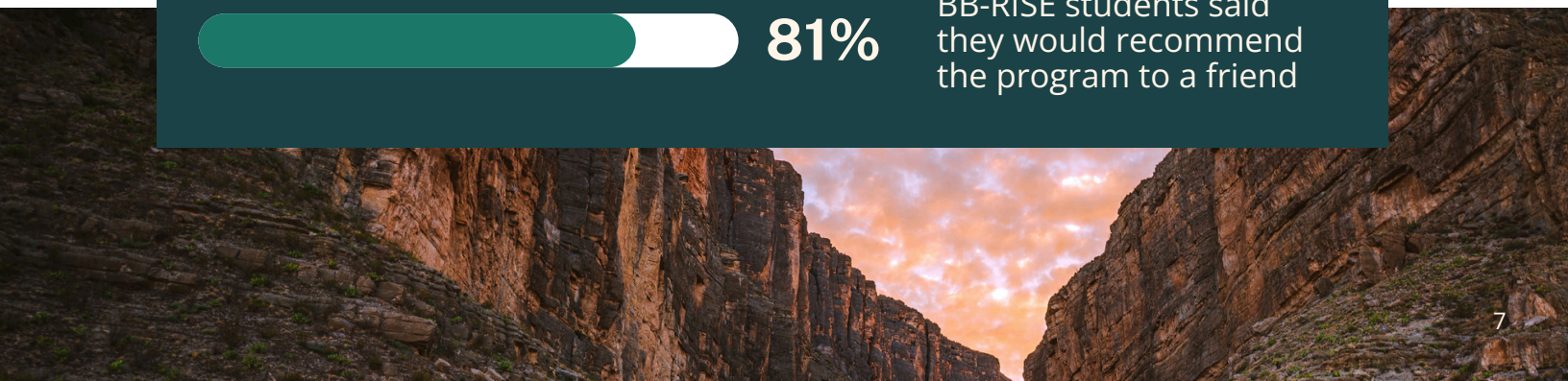
$250K in Unrestricted Funds Awarded

The Trust for Civic Life awarded BB-RISE a $250,000 philanthropic grant over three years to expand student access to high-quality CTE opportunities and strengthen cross-district collaboration. This grant gives flexibility to direct resources where they can have the greatest impact.

Championing the Work

Director Jarrett Vickers elevated BB-RISE and the R-PEP model nationally, sharing the Big Bend's work at the Education Commission of the States National Forum in New York and with Montana's Legislative Interim Education Committee, spotlighting the region's students and educators.

81% BB-RISE students said they would recommend the program to a friend



YEAR 1 SPOTLIGHT

Kickoff Event

BB-RISE officially launched with a kickoff celebration at Sul Ross State University, bringing together partners, educators, and students from Alpine, Marfa, and Marathon ISDs. The event featured a student panel and remarks from regional leaders, including Texas Senator César Blanco, highlighting the excitement and shared commitment to expanding opportunities for Big Bend students.





14 BB-RISE Students

100% Paid Internships

Bucks at Work

With support from the 2026 TEA Summer CTE grant, BB-RISE launched its Bucks at Work program, placing 30 Alpine ISD students in fully paid, pathway-aligned internships. Fourteen were BB-RISE students. Students earned wages in career-related roles with local employers, including Alpine ISD, the City of Alpine, Agave Home Health, and Big Bend Regional Hospital.

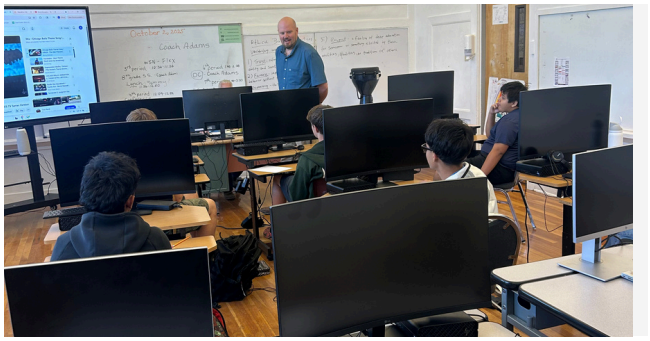


MILESTONE **TIMELINE**

Summer 2024

Marfa ISD & Alpine ISD superintendents learn about Rural Collaboratives.

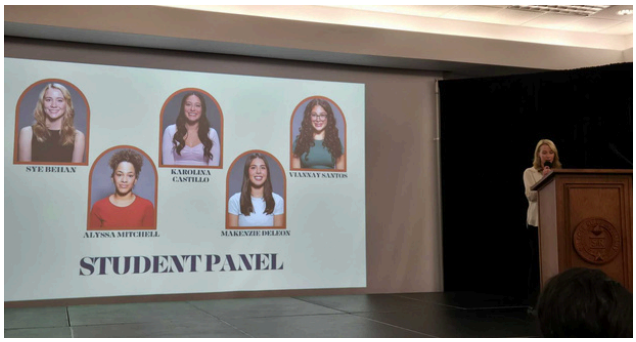
Planning meetings kick off with Empower Schools and Marfa, Marathon, & Alpine ISDs.



Fall 2024

With support from CareerCraft, a labor market analysis is completed for the Big Bend Region.

The Education Partnership of the Permian Basin was selected as the BB-RISE coordinating entity.



Spring 2025

TEA designates BB-RISE as an R-PEP.

Advisory board meetings begin.



Fall 2025

BB-RISE Kickoff Event at Sul Ross State University with remarks by Texas Senator César Blanco

Students start participating in shared pathways.

Spring 2026

BB-RISE advisory board votes to expand pathway offerings to include an Educator Pathway starting in the 2026-2027 school year.

GRANTS & PHILANTHROPY

Thank you to the district staff and partners who contributed to grant writing, and to the funders whose support made this work possible in the Big Bend.

State Grants

BB-RISE successfully secured multiple state grants to strengthen and expand student opportunities across the region. These funds supported essential equipment and supplies for career pathways and provided paid internship opportunities for students.

Texas Regional Pathways Network Grant

$500,000

CTE Summer Grant

$50,000

R-PEP Expansion Grant

$80,000

R-PEP Funding

Generated by Marfa ISD, Marathon ISD, and Alpine ISD.

2025-2026 R-PEP Funding

$225,000

Philanthropy

BB-RISE secured philanthropic investments to support critical needs, including staff salaries, medical equipment, and startup funding for the new business pathway. These investments demonstrate a growing commitment from funders to the Big Bend region and its students.

Trust for Civic Life

$250,000

Moody Foundation

$200,000

King Foundation

$32,500

Big Bend Regional Medical Center

$68,400

Total State & Philanthropic Grants

$1.18M+

WHAT'S **NEXT**

Looking ahead, BB-RISE will build on the momentum of its launch year by strengthening existing pathways, expanding student opportunities, and deepening partnerships across the region.

In SY 2026-2027, BB-RISE will expand work-based learning opportunities for students at every level, offering a diverse range of hands-on, career-connected experiences. A key focus will be increasing access to paid internships for students across all BB-RISE districts.

BB-RISE is expanding its pathway offerings with a new Educator pathway, giving students the opportunity to explore careers in education. Students will connect classroom learning with hands-on experiences in their own school districts, gaining real-world insight into the teaching profession.

With support from the Texas Education Agency's Expansion Grant, BB-RISE will spend part of the 2026–27 school year exploring opportunities to welcome neighboring districts into the collaborative. This potential expansion will extend access to more pathways and opportunities for students across the Big Bend region.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU TO OUR SCHOOL YEAR 2025 - 2026 PARTNERS AND KEY CONTRIBUTORS

BB-RISE Regional Director
Mr. Jarrett Vickers

EPPB Executive Director
Mrs. Shannon Torres

Superintendents
Dr. Michelle Rinehart - Alpine ISD
Mr. Arturo Alferez - Marfa ISD
Mr. Keith Kimbrough - Marathon ISD

District Leaders
Mrs. Luane Porter - Alpine ISD
Mrs. Amy White - Alpine ISD
Mrs. Linda Ojeda - Marfa ISD
Mrs. Amy Anthony - Marathon ISD

Alpine ISD School Board
Mr. Eddie Natera
Mrs. Nikki Ahrens
Mrs. Haley Babb
Lt. Jimmy Morris
Dr. Adrian Billings
Mr. Joe Portillo
Mr. Josh Cross

Marathon ISD School Board
Mrs. Cheyenne Marta
Mr. Hayes West
Mrs. Marina Aguilar
Mr. Andrew Lewis
Mrs. LeAndra Ramirez
Mr. Craig Carter
Mr. Timothy Roberts

Marfa ISD School Board
Mr. Jonathan Lockett
Mrs. Lori Flores
Mr. Jay Foster
Mr. Rene Gonzales
Mr. Phillip Boyd
Mr. Ruben Martinez
Mrs. Teresa Nunez

BB-RISE Advisory Board
Dr. Michelle Rinehart
Mr. Arturo Alferez
Mr. Keith Kimbrough
Dr. Adrian Vega
Mr. JR Torrez
Mrs. Angela Juett
Mrs. Laci Schniers
Dr. Dean Culpepper
Mrs. Shannon Torres

Institution of Higher Education
Sul Ross State University

Industry Partners
Mav Bank
West Texas National Bank
Workforce Solutions Borderplex
Big Bend Regional Hospital

Technical Assistance
CareerCraft
Empower Schools



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