

# TeachTown & Canyon ISD

## A Customer Success Story

### BACKGROUND

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**LOCATION:**  
Canyon, TX

### OBJECTIVES:

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In this customer success story, we will define how Canyon ISD is implementing TeachTown's K-12 standards-based, adapted core curriculum, enCORE, along with its supporting learning interventions, to deliver a whole child approach.

### OUR MISSION:

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To measurably improve the academic, behavioral and adaptive functioning of students with disabilities.



At the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, the average pretest score across all TeachTown programs in Canyon ISD was **26.3%**. Today, the average posttest score across all TeachTown programs is **93.1%**.

# INTRODUCTION

Whether you are a seasoned special educator or new to the field, it's no secret that a **one-size-fits-all instructional approach for our most complex learners is not realistic**. A personalized approach to learning for special education students requires careful consideration and a solid understanding of the federal education laws in place to protect our student population. Mix in the need for appropriate rigor, progress monitoring and data collection, and equitable and inclusive access to the general education curriculum, and the search for high-quality adapted curriculum can start to feel like a pipe dream.

This is where [Canyon ISD](#) found themselves during the 2022-2023 school year. After using a different curriculum provider for years, the district recognized the need to move in a new direction. Canyon ISD sought to provide students with rigorous grade-level content, while offering educators access to the time-saving materials necessary to effectively implement a curriculum without having to reinvent the wheel.

After evaluating several vendors, Canyon ISD's Coordinator of Special Education and Instruction, Schuele Batenhorst, M.Ed., says,

**“Our teachers, administrators, and curriculum staff voted unanimously to adopt TeachTown after seeing the all encompassing resources and support available!”**



## Enter TeachTown

**When teachers are offered a seat at the table alongside administrators during the curriculum decision-making process, cohesion and alignment in educational goals and classroom strategies are the result.**



# BACKSTORY

Canyon Independent School District (ISD), located in the Amarillo-metro area of northern Texas, serves more than 11,000 students and 1,700+ educators across 21 campuses in Canyon/Amarillo, TX.

**Seventeen** of the **21** Canyon ISD campuses implement TeachTown with their students:

**6**

**Elementary  
School  
Teachers**

Between 3 campuses

**6**

**Middle  
School  
Teachers**

Between 6 campuses

**5**

**High  
School  
Teachers**

Between 3 campuses

**6**

**ECSE  
Teachers**

Between 5 campuses



Beginning in the summer of 2023, Canyon ISD began to implement the Extended School Year (ESY) Program included with TeachTown's K-12 standards-based, adapted core curriculum, enCORE.

**A full adoption of enCORE, alongside TeachTown's key learning interventions:**

TeachTown Basics, Social Skills, Transition to Adulthood, and Meta-Play, commenced at the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year.






**The rest is history!**



# A WHOLE CHILD APPROACH



Serving students from PreK through transition-age, Canyon ISD and TeachTown now partner to appropriately **challenge** students, guide students from exposure to **mastery** with an individualized learning plan, and **inspire** students to become lifelong learners.

Through implementation of TeachTown’s whole child approach, Canyon ISD is supporting students’ adaptive, social, and behavioral skills, alongside traditional academic instruction:

| <br><u>enCORE</u>   | <br><u>TeachTown Basics</u>   | <br><u>TeachTown Social Skills</u>  |
|--|--|--|
| A K-12 standards-based, adapted core curriculum based on Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) that provides students with moderate to severe disabilities access to the general education curriculum. | This intervention offers a blend of computer-delivered and teacher-led ABA instruction proven to increase a student’s vocabulary, listening skills, social-emotional development, independence, functional academics, adaptive and cognitive skills. | Available for primary and secondary school students, Social Skills is a comprehensive curriculum that offers animated video-modeling episodes, teacher-delivered lesson plans, and student activities. |

| <br><u>Transition to Adulthood</u>   | <br><u>Meta-Play</u>   |
|---|--|
| Available for students ages 14+, this evidence-based curriculum utilizes point-of-view video modeling, task analyses, computer-based lessons, teacher-delivered lessons and visual supports teaching a range of essential, functional skills for students with moderate to severe disabilities. | This play-based curriculum offers a systematic, play-based approach to fostering the development of imagination and play skills in young children diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disabilities, developmental delays, and social and emotional disabilities. |



Canyon ISD’s Director of Innovation and Instruction, Chris Norton, notes that their district was able to use IMA Funds\* to fully purchase all of the TeachTown curriculum and learning interventions being implemented. This includes the software, the physical classroom kits (workbooks, assessment guides, adapted literature, manipulative kits, etc.), as well as the virtual and onsite training.

\*In Texas, IMA Funds, or Instructional Materials Allotment, can be used toward the purchase of instructional materials, technology equipment and/or technology related services.

# IMPLEMENTATION KICK-OFF

Any big change can foster mixed emotions, and implementation of a new curriculum is no different. Administrators can feel overwhelmed with the need to account for proper planning, coaching, and resources to ensure their staff feels supported and able to implement a new curriculum with fidelity. Teachers can feel the pressure of trying to navigate the complexities of a new curriculum, including the hands-on and technology-facilitated components that come along.

To ensure the transition into a new adapted curriculum and learning interventions went seamlessly, Canyon ISD and TeachTown designed a custom professional development plan that included both virtual coaching and on-site training for staff members. Ms. Batenhorst shares:

**“We received a total of three virtual trainings as part of our initial implementation. Our campus teachers and their paraprofessional teams attended together at our district office and we would follow each of the virtual sessions with Professional Learning Community (PLC) collaboration time in the afternoons. These sessions were spread out in 2023 between a required summer session, an August professional development day, and an October staff development day. Following these initial virtual trainings, we hosted an in-person onsite training that November. We provided substitutes for campuses we were not visiting to allow them to be a part of the training as well so that our entire team was able to benefit from the experience.”**

*- Schuele Batenhorst, M.Ed, Coordinator of Special Education and Instruction*

From both a teacher sustainability standpoint, as well as driving measurable student growth, ensuring Canyon ISD’s educators could confidently and effectively implement TeachTown’s K-12 standards-based, adapted curriculum and learning interventions among students remains a priority.



# TEACHTOWN IN ACTION

It comes as no surprise that most teachers prefer to focus less on creating curriculum from scratch and more so on what they do best - teaching! Canyon ISD kept this very sentiment in mind when partnering with TeachTown.



enCORE, which is state-aligned to [TEKS](#) (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills), equips both new and veteran teachers alike with scripted, differentiated lesson plans that anchor all instruction with what works. Whether a teacher is brand new to the profession or entering their 30th year in the classroom, enCORE's teacher guides provide everything necessary to effectively implement a high-quality, personalized learning experience for students.

**“Prior to implementing TeachTown, I visited a middle school classroom where the entire plan for the ELA block was student name identification, tracing, and matching. This particular teacher was trying their best, but we knew we needed this level of instruction to increase to provide our students with meaningful access to grade level content. The first time I visited the same teacher this year these same students were classifying characteristics of ancient civilizations - successfully, thanks to TeachTown!”**

*- Schuele Batenhorst, M.Ed, Coordinator of Special Education and Instruction*

## **Ms. Batenhorst identifies 2 huge wins with enCORE:**

1. Alignment to state standards
2. Reduced teacher burden

## **Philip Sebastiani, a special education teacher in Canyon Intermediate, shares:**

**“Having access to enCORE has saved me LOADS of time prepping for a unit. I typically print everything out for the unit all at once and then I’m set for the next few weeks as we work through the lesson. As my first year with the program ends, the consistency of how the content is presented to students has solidified our routine. My students thrive on knowing their routine and now some are able to complete assignments with minimal cues and support.”**

## **District Secondary Teacher of the Year, Sawyer Clark at West Plains Junior High, says:**

**“In our classroom, enCORE has emerged as an invaluable asset, revolutionizing the way we approach lesson planning and student assessment. No longer do we spend precious hours scouring for materials that meet both grade-level standards and prerequisite skills; enCORE seamlessly integrates both, providing meticulously curated lessons that align flawlessly with our Year at a Glance (YAG) grade-level standards.**

**One of the standout features of enCORE is its comprehensive assessment toolkit. With pre and post-unit assessments readily available, along with daily exit tickets, gauging student understanding has never been easier. These assessments, coupled with the accompanying manipulatives for each unit, ensure that our teaching is not only effective but also deeply engaging for our students.”**

**As a district, Canyon ISD anticipates that access to enCORE will help to retain and attract high-quality special educators who feel empowered by the curriculum.**

# FROM THE FIELD

**“Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of using enCORE is witnessing the transformation in my students.** They are not only excited about learning but also proud of themselves when they master the material. This newfound confidence is invaluable, empowering them to tackle challenges with resilience and determination.

What sets enCORE apart is its seamless integration of engaging, accessible, cross-curricular content that transcends traditional subject boundaries, enriching the educational experience for students and educators alike. One of the standout features of enCORE is its ability to intertwine various subjects, including Math, Science, Social Studies, and ELA, into cohesive and captivating lessons. Gone are the days of compartmentalized learning; **enCORE effortlessly connects these disciplines, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of concepts that extends far beyond the confines of individual subjects.**

The magic of enCORE lies in its ability to relate all content back to the characters and concepts discussed in our adapted books and companion texts. This cohesive approach not only reinforces learning but also instills a deeper appreciation for the interconnectedness of knowledge. Students are not merely memorizing isolated facts; they are actively engaging with content that has relevance and meaning, **sparking a genuine enthusiasm for learning.**

The **high-quality graphics** within enCORE are not merely eye-catching; they play a crucial role in keeping students motivated and focused. Age-appropriate visuals captivate their attention and enhance their learning experience, fostering a positive classroom environment where education is both enjoyable and effective.

Additionally, as an educator committed to fostering student growth and development, **I’ve had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the impact of integrating both physical and digital learning resources into the classroom environment.** Among the array of positive outcomes observed, one standout aspect has been the profound effect on student engagement and mastery, particularly within the foundational Level I curriculum.

Incorporating tangible educational materials alongside an interactive online platform has **yielded remarkable results**, enabling students to effectively demonstrate their comprehension and skills acquisition. The utilization of physical materials provides a tactile learning experience, allowing students to actively engage with content through activities such as cut-and-paste exercises. These activities not only facilitate comprehension but also foster critical thinking as students sort, match, and identify responses, meeting them at their current level of understanding.

Moreover, the integration of an online platform has proven to be instrumental in providing students with the necessary repetition and practice to solidify their learning. Through errorless evaluations and interactive exercises, students are afforded the opportunity to reinforce their understanding before progressing to more advanced concepts. Witnessing the visible sense of **accomplishment and enthusiasm** as students discover correct answers, regardless of the number of choices, serves as a testament to the efficacy of this approach.

Furthermore, **as students advance to Levels 2 and 3, the curriculum seamlessly adapts to meet their evolving needs**, progressively challenging them to engage in higher-order thinking and problem-solving. This gradual increase in rigor ensures that students are continually pushed to expand their cognitive abilities while building upon their existing knowledge base.”

- Sawyer Clark, West Plains Junior High (7th-8th)



# RESULTS

Finding the preferred pathway for every student in Canyon ISD is stitched into the district's value statement and a commitment that they don't take lightly.

Access to TeachTown's dedicated support team has had a tremendous impact on successful implementation of TeachTown's whole child approach and the impressive student growth in Canyon ISD that has followed, according to Ms. Batenhorst:

**“Having knowledgeable contacts at TeachTown who can troubleshoot, brainstorm, and collaborate with our team so quickly and effectively has meant no teacher has been left feeling unsupported or unable to provide the best services for our students.”**

**26.3%**  
Pretest Score

**93.1%**  
Posttest Score

**68%**  
Growth Rate

At the beginning of the 2023-2024 school year, the average pretest score across all TeachTown programs in Canyon ISD was **26.3%**. Today, the average posttest score across all TeachTown programs is **93.1%**.

Meaning that within less than a traditional school year's timeframe, TeachTown's adapted curriculum, enCORE, and supporting interventions are driving a nearly **68% student growth rate** in Canyon ISD.

In Arden Road Elementary, a K-4 school in Canyon ISD, special educators Tasha Aylesworth and Alex Junell, express that their students have been able to successfully use their comprehension skills to identify key words in story problems this year - a skill their students have previously struggled with prior to using enCORE.

Sinci Rios, a special educator in Canyon ISD's West Plains High School, expresses that the adapted grade-level content in enCORE has been a breath of fresh air and continues to make a positive impact on her students.

**“The feedback has been frequent, incredible and on-going from all stakeholders. Our teachers express their gratitude and appreciation for TeachTown nearly each time I see or talk with them. Parents and families of our students have seen the benefits for their students and have been very complimentary during Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) meetings and parent conferences. Our campus administrators and district curriculum staff have been blown away by the difference in the quality and rigor in our classrooms when conducting walkthroughs and evaluations. This has been echoed all the way up to our Superintendent, who has personally been very impressed with the positive impact. We can't stop celebrating this, and look forward to so much more in the coming years!”**

- Schuele Batenhorst, M.Ed, Coordinator of Special Education and Instruction







# LEARN MORE

As special educators, we all have the same goal in mind: providing our students with comprehensive learning opportunities that pave the way for educational and personal success.

**Our award-winning adapted core curriculum solutions and supporting interventions deliver a whole child approach.**

We help you measurably improve the academic, behavioral, and adaptive skills of your students—from Pre-K through the transition years. Our entire curriculum has been founded upon what works for students with moderate to severe disabilities.



**Scan the QR code to learn more about how TeachTown can work in your district.**



*Leading provider of K-12 standards-based, adapted core curriculum*

*Our suite of special education solutions offers students with moderate to severe disabilities equitable and inclusive access to the general education curriculum and the individualized interventions that support their success.*



**[www.TeachTown.com](http://www.TeachTown.com)**