

## **Teaching Texas Kids Virtually Appealing to Local Educators**

*iUniversity Prep, online public school based in Grapevine, attracts teachers/students throughout state*

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Stephenville – Three local teachers are preparing curriculum for students they may never meet face-to-face, and who live in cities as far away as El Paso, San Antonio and beyond. Andres Betancur, John Bowman and Lucas Burch, all Stephenville residents, are employed by Grapevine-Colleyville ISD's iUniversity Prep, a tuition-free, a state accredited virtual learning school. They teach a variety of subjects including Art, Math, Geography, Physical Education, and more to elementary, middle and high school students. Outside of North Texas, Stephenville has the highest concentration of iUniversity Prep teachers.

Like their fellow iUniversity Prep teachers, they work from their respective homes. "We record one live lesson per subject a week, and we spend the rest of our time working on curriculum, and tutoring students," explained Andres Betancur. "We work about the same amount of hours as teachers in traditional bricks and mortar schools."

Throughout the year they setup in-person study groups at coffee shops, and administer state mandated tests at public libraries. "We drive within 150 miles of students. Last year I went to Lubbock, San Angelo, and Austin to administer tests," said John Bowman.

The Grapevine-Colleyville ISD administration office is about 100 miles away from Stephenville, and the friends turned coworkers frequently carpool to attend required meetings. Despite spending three or more hours on the road every week, the three say they're happy with their decision. "We chose iUniversity Prep because it has a great reputation," said Lucas Burch.

In 2014 the Texas Education Agency rated iUniversity Prep as one of the highest performing virtual schools in the state. iUniversity Prep will begin its third year of instruction in August. There are only two other online schools run by independent school districts in the state. "Our teachers have helped make iUniversity Prep a sought-after learning opportunity for students who desire a rigorous choice, and want a college prep education from a recognized school district," said Kaye Rogers, Ph.D., Grapevine-Colleyville ISD Director of Virtual Education.

All students living in Texas who are in fourth through 12<sup>th</sup> grades are eligible to enroll in iUniversity Prep. Students can attend class, take tests and complete work from any location as long as they have access to a mobile device and an internet connection. Those interested in enrolling a student for fall 2015 should call 855-779-7357 or visit [www.iuniversityprep.org](http://www.iuniversityprep.org).

### *About iUniversity Prep*

*iUniversity Prep opened in August 2013. The academy is a tuition-free, state-accredited online public school operated by Grapevine-Colleyville ISD and is one of only three public virtual education solutions in the state offering elementary, middle and high school programs. It provides rigorous academics under the guidance of engaging instructors all within a collaborative school community. iUniversity Prep offers an inspiring, flexible learning environment that encourages and prepares students to be college and career ready by supporting learning through technology, fostering citizenship, and teaching the importance of mutual respect in a virtual environment. Visit [iuniversityprep.org](http://iuniversityprep.org) for more details.*