

JOHN H. REAGAN EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL

Austin, TX

Reagan Early College High School's makerspace is a place where creative freedom meets engineering technology. There are two connected spaces: (1) a computer lab where students can explore 3D modeling and computer programming and (2) an adjacent workspace where students can 3D print their creations, machine their ideas out of wood, or assemble electrical circuits and mechanical systems. It is a place where students feel welcome and part of a community of innovators and continuous learners.

Meet the Makers at John H. Reagan Early College High School

July Update

1. How is your vision for a makerspace innovative?

The most unique aspect of our makerspace vision is that the technical leads will be students. A core group of student leads will be certified for different tools in the lab and serve as the experts for helping and training other students. This frees the adult supervisors to oversee the makerspace as a whole rather than focus on one project or one set of students to help at a time.

2. What are you most excited to get started on this summer?

We had to completely clear the rooms for the maintenance crew this summer so we are most excited about setting up a brand new room layout with all of our new equipment!

August Update

3. Can you describe the people who have been involved in your build out?

Six students volunteered their time this summer to help Mr. Shaffer and the campus IT staff to make significant progress on our makerspace. Together they moved two entire computer labs (including furniture), set up the new 3D printer room, and relocated fabrication equipment to new locations. And, notably, we started to "use the makerspace to build our makerspace." With our new supply of raw materials one student made ceiling mounts for our two projectors which saves a lot of space and cleans up wires in the computer lab portion of our makerspace.

4. What has been the most challenging part of the summer build out thus far?

By far the most challenging part of the build out was finding time where teachers and students were available. We had to delay the build-out until two weeks before class began due to travel and other obligations. However, starting the school year with the announcement of a fledgling makerspace has brought a new group of teachers and students with interest in using for amazingly creative projects.

5. Have you made adjustments to your original plan since starting your build out? If so, can you describe how you have changed your plan and what sparked the change?

After insights gained from a consulting call with MakerEd and a walkthrough of our building with a Microsoft technical consultant, the Reagan High School makerspace plans have improved and expanded. Our school's administration allocated a third adjacent room for our makerspace. This will provide us three unique spaces to serve our students. Our computer lab will be in one room, another room will be dedicated to robotics and large fabrication equipment, and a third room will serve as a multipurpose makerspace with hand tools, small power tools, electronics and 3D printers. We're excited to see this new space come to life!