



CALIFORNIA GEAR UP PROGRAM SUMMARY – Fall 2015

The California State GEAR UP grant is sponsored by the California Education Round Table and administered by the University of California. This federal initiative is designed to prepare low-income students for college by enhancing their skills, motivation, and informational sources. Funded for its third six-year cycle, this Program seeks to develop the organizational capacity of middle schools to prepare ALL students for college through a systemic network of support for middle school counselors, faculty, school leaders, and families. The ultimate outcome expected is that a higher proportion of students will be prepared to enroll and succeed in middle school and high school and enter and graduate from a higher educational institution.

To achieve this goal, GEAR UP consists of three models that share a focus on improving mathematical proficiency and are expected to be sustainable after the end of this grant cycle:

Bridge for Students Model:

The Bridge for Students Model is characterized by collaboration, student progress tracking, and data sharing among a family of schools in order to prepare a cohort of students for college. The project serves 390 eleventh grade students at Valley High School in the Elk Grove Unified School District who have been engaged with this program since they were in sixth grade.

Students receive research-supported, grade-appropriate services, including:

- individualized tutoring in Mathematics three or five days a week, depending on the course;
- enrollment in Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) courses and Career Technical Pathways through Health Teach and Project Lead the Way;
- field trips that expose students to various collegiate environments and careers;
- support to monitor student academic progress and facilitate success at the school;
- career exploration in areas of interest, job shadowing, and mentors in connected fields;
- monthly workshops focused on college and career readiness; and,
- collaboration with feeder pattern schools, businesses, the school district, and Consumnes River College to offer rigorous coursework, create a *college-going culture*, increase cross-articulation in advanced courses, and support adoption of Integrated Mathematics.

Whole School Model

The Whole School Services Model (WSS) centers on creation and sustainability of a *college-going culture* at schools. This model is predicated on research about effective learning communities that underscore the importance of planning time, the principal as an instructional leader, and use of data to inform decision-making in order to create systemic change.

GEAR UP serves 48 middle schools through a team of eight School Service Coaches with support from three Program Advisors, the Communications Coordinator, and a Program Research Associate. In collaboration with leadership teams and school staff, Coaches maintain contact with and visit schools assigned to them across a region. Coaches are the liaisons between the participating schools and the services, resources, and tools offered by this program.

This fall, 288 participants from 37 schools attended four regional institutes and 17 school principals attended two convenings that were customized to meet the needs of schools and were aligned to areas of growth on the School Self-Assessment Rubric (SSAR) developed by the UCLA Graduate School of Education. These events focused on developing region-wide professional learning communities and structured time for schools to learn from each other and problem solve about common issues.

Many school site discussions have led to conversations about the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) that allocates additional funds to schools through the California Department of Education. Coaches recognized the connection between the LCFF priorities and the GEAR UP SSAR and developed a crosswalk that identified the similarities for schools.

As a program of the Intersegmental Coordinating Committee (ICC), GEAR UP is positioned uniquely to design services with support from higher education institutions and engage service providers and program partners in meaningful collaboration. As such, this program is widely recognized as a model of collaboration which is most clearly demonstrated by the breadth of resources that are offered through the WSS model now, including,:

- **A College and Career Equity-Based STEM Strategy (ACCESS):** ACCESS is a professional development experience to promote and increase academic rigor in Mathematics that involves 13 GEAR UP schools in eight districts.
- **California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP):** CAPP's *College-Going Culture* Grant supports high schools in enhancing their transition to the Common Core State Standards that involves currently two GEAR UP schools and four high schools to which their students matriculate.
- **CaliforniaColleges.edu:** Staff at 35 GEAR UP schools have been training on this online college planning tool for students and families and 6,000 student accounts have been established.
- **Coalition for Education Partnerships (CEP):** CEP will provide services for 20 GEAR UP schools in this school year, including college preparatory workshops for families and a Common Core Camp Program featuring project-based workshops for students and families.
- **Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project (MDTP):** This diagnostic test measures student readiness for mathematics courses ranging from Pre-Algebra to Calculus. GEAR UP schools have continued to make progress in implementing MDTP on the Daskala online platform that involves Coaches and MDTP Directors collaborating to monitor school progress.
- **Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE):** PIQE will provide services to 37 GEAR UP schools in this school year, including CaliforniaColleges training for families and on-site training of school staff for sustainability of services.
- **SpringBoard:** SpringBoard is a project of the College Board to improve college and career readiness in English/Language Arts and Mathematics for students in grades 6-12 at seven GEAR UP schools for 5,900 students.

To assess effectiveness of program implementation and guide future planning, internal research is being conducted to:

- analyze and document change over time in the WSS model;
- document the evolution of the roles and responsibilities of School Services Coaches;
- assess the lessons learned from the North State Model;
- examine the urban school service model (King:San Bernardino; Hudson:Long Beach);
- develop a Whole School Services sustainability planning document.

Educational System Transformation Model

This model expands the program's reach in promoting a *college-going culture* for all students and offers opportunities to impact the educational enterprise in the state. In 2014, program staff met with 17 GEAR UP Partnership project staffs. This meeting resulted in the launch of the California Partnership Initiative which is designed to enhance collaboration among this state grant and the partnerships in the state. The California Partnership Initiative conference was held this past November with over 130 attendees.