



CALIFORNIA STATE GEAR UP PROGRAM: 2014–2015 SUMMARY

The California State GEAR UP grant is sponsored by the California Education Round Table and administered by the University of California. In 2011, the program was funded for its third six-year cycle. This federal initiative is designed to give more low-income students the skills, encouragement and preparation needed to pursue postsecondary education by developing and sustaining the organizational capacity of schools. GEAR UP provides 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 advanced courses in middle school and high school and enter and graduate with a degree from a higher educational institution. To accomplish its goals, 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 in 2017:

Bridge for Students Model:

The Bridge for Students Model is characterized by collaboration, student progress tracking, and data sharing among a family of schools across educational levels in order to prepare all cohort students for college. The project serves a cohort of 399 tenth graders at Valley High School in the Elk Grove Unified School District.

Students received 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 from GEAR UP staff to monitor student academic progress and facilitate success at the school;
- career exploration with staff in areas of interest, job shadowing, and mentors in connected fields;
- monthly workshops focused on college and career readiness; and
- collaboration with schools in the feeder pattern, local businesses, the school district, and Consumnes River College to offer more rigorous coursework, create a *college-going culture*, increase cross-articulation opportunities in Advanced Placement/Honors coursework, and support, placement, and adoption of Integrated Mathematics.

Whole School Model

The Whole School Model serves 48 low-income middle schools across California. This model is characterized by services, staff, and resources designed to create systemic change at a school site and is predicated on systemic change theory and research about effective learning communities and the critical nature of using data to inform decision-making. GEAR UP School Service Coaches are assigned to each school with responsibility to coalesce a School Leadership Team composed of the principal, other school administrators, guidance counselors, teachers in core academic content areas, a counselor and a family representative.

In fall 2014, GEAR UP schools attended regional Principal and Leadership Team Institutes to provide opportunities to learn from each other and problem solve together about common concerns and issues. These events were customized to meet the needs of participating schools within each region and in

alignment with focused areas of growth identified on the School Self-Assessment Rubric (SSAR) developed by the UCLA Graduate School of Education. The SSAR serves as a yardstick to assess school change over time and guide the development of a *college-going culture* at the school site. These Institutes were followed by Regional Events in spring 2015 focused on classroom practices for implementing Common Core State Standards, developing region-wide professional learning communities, and proactive whole school engagement to address instructional equity for ALL students. (See attached)

GEAR UP schools in the cohort have continued to make progress with the implementation of the Mathematics Diagnostic Testing Project (MDTP) on the Daskala online platform. This diagnostic test measures student readiness for mathematics courses ranging from Pre-Algebra to Calculus. During this year, GEAR UP Coaches and MDTP Directors have collaborated to monitor progress at the school site. This online tool provides teachers timely diagnostic data to identify specific topics and skills that need more attention, allows them to develop formative assessments, and informs and evaluates instruction and curricula to prepare students for success in mathematics courses needed for college and career readiness.

In October 2013, the Program launched a pilot project in partnership with College Board to implement SpringBoard -- the Board's college and career readiness program in English/Language Arts for grades 6-12. The pilot is being conducted with four GEAR UP schools and includes teacher training, progress monitoring through classroom visitations, data collection, and critical understanding by schools of the nature of their learning and the reasons for doing so. Teachers have access to SpringBoard coaches, grade level seminars, and an online digital community for peer connection and support, including videos and instructional resources.

In May 2014, school principals observed teacher commitment to the depth and rigor of the college preparatory curriculum, and thereafter, the schools adopted the SpringBoard mathematics program school-wide. As a result of this pilot, the teachers from the SpringBoard ELA pilot and Mathematics program will be attending the SpringBoard Train-the-Trainer Conference where schools will send their most effective SpringBoard teachers and instructional coaches to become district-endorsed teachers. Other GEAR UP schools will be participating beginning in the 2015-16 year.

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 across California. In July 2014, program staff met with California GEAR UP Partnership project staffs at the National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships (NCCEP) GEAR UP Conference in Washington, DC. The result of these meetings was the launch of the California Partnership Initiative. Through this initiative, the California delegation met again in February 2015 at the NCCEP Capacity Building workshop with plans to meet at the National GEAR UP Conference in July 2015. A Statewide GEAR UP conference is planned for November 2015.

The Program was a lead co-sponsor of the Sixth Annual Professional Development Summit in Oakland in January 2015. This two-day event featured state and national leaders and educators to discuss the social justice agenda for African- American students.

Finally, GEAR UP strengthened its partnership with the California Academic Partnership Program (CAPP) -- a State initiative to improve instruction in secondary schools through collaborative efforts involving higher education. CAPP funded an initiative this year that included four high schools to which GEAR UP middle schools matriculate students in order to sustain a *college-going culture* for those students, particularly in grades 10 and 11.