



NEWS & INFORMATION ABOUT  
PLANNING FOR AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

# The GEAR UP Gazette

FEBRUARY

FOR PARENTS OF 7<sup>TH</sup> & 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENTS

## FRIENDS MATTER



Who your student hangs out with matters when it comes to academics and college-going. It's probably no surprise that teenagers value their peers' opinion more than their parents'. Peer culture (particularly having a cohort of friends who plan to attend college) is more influential on college-going rates than parental encouragement.

- The American Council on Education reports that **students are four times more likely to enroll in college if a majority of their friends also plan to attend.**
- Another study has shown that a student's social network influences his academic achievement. **If a student has friends with good grades, she is more likely to have good grades as well.** But beware – the reverse is also true.
- Peer tutoring and mentoring can also positively affect academic achievement. One study showed that **students who take part in peer mentoring or tutoring reported improvements in test scores, grade point averages (GPAs) and course pass rates.**

Sources: [Reclaiming the American Dream](#), [Education Commission of the States](#), [California Research Bureau](#)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Students who participate in extracurricular activities are more likely to have a higher GPA, skip less school, and plan to earn a Bachelor's degree.

## COLLEGE MYTHS (AND REALITIES)

**MYTH:** Students lose friendships from high school when they go to college.

**REALITY:** Whether your student goes to college in her hometown or across the country, it is natural that her relationship with friends from high school that she used to see every day will change. However, that doesn't mean she will lose friendships – thanks to technology like Facebook and Skype it's easier than ever to stay in touch. It can be tough to balance time catching up with old friends and spending it with new ones, but soon your student will figure out the friends that truly stand the test of time and distance.

## PARENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ **Encourage your student to get involved in school and community.** Suggest sports, school clubs, volunteer opportunities, or part-time jobs that reflect her interests – it doesn't matter what it is, it's just important to be involved!
- ☐ **Get to know your student's friends and their parents.** Know who your student is spending time with and take advantage of opportunities to meet your student's friends and their parents, like at school or community events.
- ☐ **Take advantage of mentoring and tutoring programs.** Encourage your student to take part in school or community mentoring programs, whether they include peer or adult mentors.

## EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS



GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs and is a federally-funded program that helps rural, low-income middle and high schools prepare students for education after high school.

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# COLLEGE. It's not a dream, it's a plan.