



College. It's Not a Dream, It's a Plan

Oregon GEAR UP 2012–13 Evaluation Report
Federal Schools

January 2014

About Education Northwest

Founded as a nonprofit corporation in 1966, Education Northwest builds capacity in schools, families, and communities through applied research and development.

This external evaluation of Oregon's statewide GEAR UP program was conducted at the request of Oregon GEAR UP program administrators. Education Northwest evaluated implementation of GEAR UP in rural middle and high schools across the state.

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Executive Summary

The Oregon GEAR UP Program is a six-year statewide effort that serves to increase the number of rural low-income students who are prepared for, pursue, and succeed in postsecondary education. The program addresses academic rigor, linking educational and career choices to course-taking behaviors, opportunities for students to explore career interests, family and community engagement, and information about applying to and paying for college. Grant monies have been invested strategically to create a framework of services that supports the state's ambitious "40-40-20" goal and can be sustained after funding ends.

The Oregon GEAR UP model has five dimensions: Rigor, Right Classes, Relevance to Career, Relationships, and Raising Awareness. The Five R framework aligns with Oregon's new high school diploma that requires schools to strengthen math, writing, and reading instruction; provide career awareness activities; and help students plan their pathway to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education.

Education Northwest collaborated with the Oregon GEAR UP team to design an external evaluation plan of the six-year federally-funded GEAR UP program. The focus of this report is the first five years (2008/09–2012/13) of Oregon GEAR UP operations.

Oregon GEAR UP strives to increase college enrollment of rural students while building a college-going culture in participating schools. To accomplish this, implementation of GEAR UP services focused on supporting the 2014 graduating class as they progress from grade 7 to high school graduation while maintaining services for younger grades. In Year 1, funds were used to support students in grade 7; in Year 2, funds supported grades 7 and 8, and so forth. To maximize the efficiency of GEAR UP services, the schools included high school educators and students in GEAR UP activities whenever possible.

In 2013, two-thirds of the students said they were more aware of college and career options because of GEAR UP. This was a substantial increase compared to previous years. With the exception of 2010, the percentage of students who said their classes helped them identify a clear direction for their future and provided hands-on learning experiences stayed about the same. In 2010, a smaller percentage of students agreed with these statements. As required, GEAR UP schools are in various stages of building a process to support students' career exploration and postsecondary planning. Several schools require students to use computer programs, e.g., "Career Information System" (CIS) or NAV 101 to explore career options and build their portfolio. A number of schools offer career fairs or events where professional speakers, college students, or community members talk to students.

During this past year, over 70 percent of the students said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of two- and four-year colleges. For parents, over half said they were familiar with four-year colleges and about two-thirds said they knew about two-year colleges. Across all

project years, less than half of students and parents said they knew about the entrance requirements of technical, trade, or business institutions.

Parents and students said that they talked to school staff members about financial aid, but the percentages varied from year to year. During the first two years, when GEAR UP services focused on grades 7 and 8, more middle school students said they talked to someone about paying for college. Conversely, the percentage of high school students who talked to school staff members about financial aid increased when GEAR UP services expanded its focus to include grades 9 to 12.

Students generally reported positive feelings about their school and teachers. Over 80 percent of students said their parents expected them to attend college regardless of their perceived academic ability, gender, and race/ethnicity. However, there were differences in the percentage of students who said their teachers expected them to attend college. A higher percentage of students who rated themselves as “A” or “B” students, girls, and White students said their teachers expected them to go to college.

GEAR UP schools have made progress toward building a college-going culture for students. Educators increased their time and involvement in college and career activities. In particular, they became more actively involved in giving students information on financial aid, scholarships, and college choices. They also spent more time familiarizing students with college environments. During the five years of grant operation, the average graduation rate of GEAR UP schools increased, and dropout rates declined. The percentage of seniors who completed OSAC and FAFSA applications also increased. Because of the many education reforms and other factors that influence schools, it is difficult to know whether these improvements are associated with GEAR UP services or other factors. Nevertheless, the GEAR UP schools have made some progress in changing beliefs and behaviors of educators, parents, and students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

College and career readiness is at the forefront of education reforms in Oregon. Significant legislation guiding these efforts is the aspirational “40-40-20” goal that 80 percent of Oregon working adults will have a postsecondary degree or certificate by 2025 (Oregon Department of Education, 2011). The expectation is that 40 percent of adults will hold at least a bachelor’s degree, 40 percent will have an associate’s degree or postsecondary certificate, and the remaining 20 percent will hold a high school diploma or equivalent (Oregon Department of Education, 2012).

Access to higher education remains a challenge for many students who face barriers to college entry and persistence. Low-income students and students who are potentially the first in their family to attend college have lower college enrollment rates than other students (Choy, 2002; NCES, 2008). Although academic preparation accounts for some of these differences, the disparities in college-going rates persist for these groups of students, even when controlling for academic preparation (Ellwood & Kane, 2000; Smith, et al., 1997). College access outcomes have important economic and social consequences—college graduates earn more than those with a high school degree and are more active in their communities (Baum & Ma, 2007; Kane & Rouse, 1995; NCC, 2006; U.S. Census, 2002).



What is GEAR UP

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal initiative that provides early college awareness and support activities to prepare low income students for success in postsecondary education. Many of the students served are disadvantaged first-generation students who have few family and community resources to help them navigate their pathway to college. The program mandates cooperation among K-12 schools, institutions of higher education, local and state education entities, businesses, and community-based organizations to promote the students’ educational aspirations and success. GEAR UP funding provides critical early college awareness and support activities such as tutoring, mentoring, academic preparation, financial education, and college scholarships.

Oregon GEAR UP

Oregon GEAR UP believes that postsecondary education is possible for each and every student regardless of economic background and strives to empower each to realize that ambition. The statewide program has worked for more than a decade to bring this message to middle and high schools, students, their parents, and the community

through early college and career awareness activities, scholarships, financial aid information, and improved academic support to help raise the expectations and achievements of students in grades 7–12.

Oregon GEAR UP, in essence, serves as the backbone organization that helps build a college-going culture in participating rural schools and communities. Effective college and career readiness programs are dependent on community partnerships to facilitate smooth transitions from high school to postsecondary settings (Boroch & Hope, 2009; Kirst, Antonio, & Bueschel, 2004). For this reason, GEAR UP provides services to community-based clusters that include a high school, one or more middle schools, a higher education institution and, if possible, one or more business partners. The services include technical assistance and coordination activities that aim to promote a college-going culture among the clusters as a whole and within each cluster individually. Many of these activities are essential features of effective backbone organizations and collective impact initiatives (Turner, Merchant, Kania, et al., 2012).

Guide Vision and Strategy

The mission of GEAR UP is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The aim is to help communities create new, or expand existing, school programs and provide educational opportunities for students. The program addresses academic rigor, linking educational and career choices to course-taking behaviors, opportunities for students to explore career interests, family and community engagement, and information about applying to and paying for college. The model also supports intentional efforts to promote high expectations of each student—a protective factor that promotes student achievement and contributes to a college-going culture.

Five “R’s”

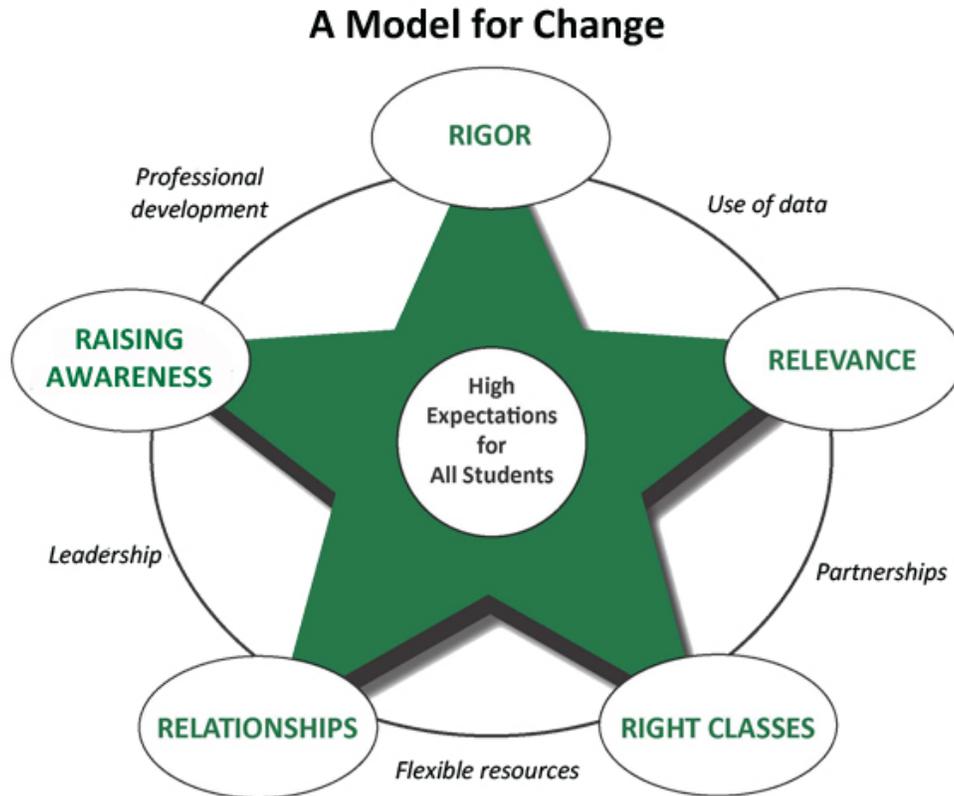
Oregon GEAR UP organizes its college and career readiness strategies into a framework of practices, referred to as the “Five R’s,” that guides annual planning for the program and each cluster (Figure 1). Program administrators provide clusters with a brief description and suggested strategies for each “R.” Each cluster is responsible for developing an annual plan that includes needs assessment data, strategies, and progress indicators for each “R.”

- **Rigor:** provide appropriately rigorous courses for all students as well as necessary academic support programs.
- **Right classes:** ensure that all students understand early in their school careers what curriculum is necessary to prepare them for college-level work and future careers.
- **Relevance:** Link students’ career aspirations with their educational goals.
- **Relationships:** Foster relationships that encourage students’ academic success.
- **Raising awareness.** Promote awareness of college selection, admissions, financial aid, and other critical steps for college entry.

Support Aligned Activities

The structure of Oregon GEAR UP activities is to help community clusters achieve its mission through planning and implementation of the “Five R’s.” These activities include an annual SUCCESS retreat, well-executed communication plan, coordinating attendance at state and national events, and targeted technical assistance.

Figure 1
Oregon GEAR UP’s Model for Change



SUCCESS Retreat

Oregon Gear UP hosts an annual two-day retreat, Supporting Unique Community Coalitions Engaged in Student Success (SUCCESS), which is attended by school teams that include administrators, GEAR UP coordinators, teachers, academic counselors, family, and/or community members. The event has two purposes. It provides presentations about research and innovations to re-energize participants around GEAR UP’s goal and to deepen participants’ understanding about strategies that build a college-going culture. The event also provides time and technical assistance for cluster teams to develop their annual GEAR UP plan.

Communication Plan

The communication plan provides on-going information about state and national GEAR UP activities to program clusters. The program uses a multimedia strategy that disseminates e-newsletters and annual reports to stakeholders statewide. Oregon GEAR UP developed and maintains a website that provides resources, success stories, and informational video clips developed by program resources. Table 1 provides examples of research briefs and toolkits that program participants and the general public can access on the GEAR UP website (www.gearup.ous).

For program participants, GEAR UP provides a weekly news bulletin focused on grant management that shares information about events, research, resources, and program expectations.

Table 1
Oregon GEAR UP Website Resources

Research Briefs	Toolkits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Collaborative School • Alternatives to Suspension • Best Practices in Grading • Coaching Teachers • Common Core State Standards • Dealing with Budget Cuts • Dropout Prevention • Flipped Classrooms • Formative Assessment • High Level Thinking and Questioning Strategies • High School Mentoring Programs • Motivating Math Students • Meaningful Teacher Evaluation • Importance of High Expectations • Parent Engagement • Pathways to College • Rigorous Schools and Classrooms • Poverty and Rural Schools • Small Schools, Big Results • Economy's Impact on Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy—Building Partnerships by Telling Your GEAR UP Story • Career and College Day Toolkit • College Preparation: Timeline and Resources for School Leaders • Community Engagement Toolkit • Creating a SUCCESS Team • Developing a College and Career Center • GEAR UP Informational Handout • GEAR UP Week Toolkit • GEAR UP! A College Guide for Students and Parents • Gearing Up: Helping Your Middle School Student Prepare for College and Career • Highlighting a College-Going Culture • Job Shadow Guide for Students • Parent Newsletters • Planning a Successful College Visit • Preparing and Paying for College: Presentations for Parents and Students • The High School Transition: Strategies to Help Students, Staff, and Parents • Undocumented Students in Oregon

Note: The list of resources includes a sample of available resources developed and available through Oregon GEAR UP.

Source: Oregon GEAR UP website (www.gearup.ous)

State and National Events

Oregon GEAR UP organizes two statewide meetings for program participants—the SUCCESS Retreat, attended by school teams, and a mid-year meeting attended by

principals, GEAR UP coordinators, and key supporters of the program. Both events provide participants with program information and opportunities to network with peers about successes, challenges, and promising practices.

GEAR UP also supports attendance and travel arrangements of educators, parents, and students at national and regional conferences. For several years, a student from Oregon has been selected to participate in the Youth Leadership Summit at the National GEAR UP Conference.

Targeted Technical Assistance

The Oregon GEAR UP team members provide on-going telephone and email support to program participants regarding grant expectations, budget, data collection, and program implementation. GEAR UP also supports on-site, targeted technical assistance to principals and program coordinators to support implementation, sustainability, and outreach to community and family members. Each cluster receives on-site technical assistance to encourage active engagement in GEAR UP work, provide encouragement, and address concerns early. Program participants may also request technical assistance as needs arise. The site visit conversations also help Oregon GEAR UP identify common resource needs across the clusters that guide the creation of research briefs and toolkits (see Table 1).

Oregon GEAR UP also provides targeted technical assistance to promote principal and community engagement. Principals have enormous influence on the success of new initiatives in their school. As such, GEAR UP contracts with a skilled leadership consultant to support and provide information to principals about topics relevant to building a college-going culture. The consultant provides site visits at each school and facilitates two face-to-face principals' meetings each year. The technical assistance provides opportunities for principals to network, keeps them informed about strategies other schools are using, and supports their continued engagement in GEAR UP.

Schools also received technical assistance on strategies to increase community engagement in GEAR UP. The specialist provided consultation on how to plan and conduct events and/or communication campaigns to tell parents and community members about the program and invite their active support. Business and community members supported GEAR UP schools in many ways such as participating in career fairs, conducting guest presentations, mentoring students, and providing job shadow opportunities.

Establish Shared Measurement Practices

Oregon GEAR UP provides each cluster ongoing and annual data reports to track progress and inform planning. Each cluster receives an annual report that summarizes college and career readiness indicator data for the cluster, as well as averages of GEAR UP schools, and the state. The reports include academic achievement, high school graduation, college enrollment, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

application, and Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC) scholarship application data. Each cluster also receives the individual reports of the Oregon GEAR UP student, parent, and educator survey data that provides information about attitudes and behaviors related to college and career readiness. Finally, participants have ongoing access to the Oregon GEAR UP Events and Cost Share Database that stores information about the services and events that each cluster has provided to students, parents, and educators. The database also stores federal annual performance report data, including enrollment in college preparation, Advanced Placement (AP), and other accelerated learning options.

Build Public Will

Oregon GEAR UP is an active participant in state and local efforts to increase college and career readiness for each and every student. The program director has strong relationships with key public agencies that lead the state's education reform efforts, e.g., the Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC), Department of Community College and Workforce Development (CCWD), Oregon Student Access Commission, and Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB). Team members also have strong partnerships with community organizations, including Access to Student Assistance Programs in Reach of Everyone (ASPIRE), Oregon Career Information System (CIS), and the Ford Family Foundation. Two GEAR UP staff members sit on the board of the Oregon College Access Network (OrCAN), a nonprofit organization committed to helping Oregonians “overcome barriers to education and training beyond high school” (Oregon College Access Network, 2014). See <http://gearup.ous.edu/about/partners> for a list of Oregon GEAR UP's partners.

Program team members actively support state and regional events that support college access programs. For example, the program director is on the planning committee for GEAR UP West, a collaborative conference designed to support practitioners' efforts to help low-income and underrepresented students prepare for, and succeed in, college. Attendees include GEAR UP and other college-access program staff members; evaluators; higher education professionals; and middle and high school teachers, counselors, and administrators.

Mobilize Funding

The Oregon University System (OUS) has been the leader in obtaining and administering two federally funded GEAR UP projects. The first six-year grant funded the development of college and career programs in 16 clusters, including 39 schools, from 2002–2008. The second six-year grant provides services to 12 clusters, including 20 schools, from 2008–2014 and is the focus of this evaluation report. In 2011, a third group of 10 clusters, concentrated in Curry, Coos, and Douglas counties, joined Oregon GEAR UP through funding support from The Ford Family Foundation.

Summary

Oregon GEAR UP aims to increase college and career readiness opportunities for low income students who reside and attend school in rural communities. The remaining chapters of this report describe the evaluation methods deployed and the findings for the 2012–13 school year. Chapter 2 describes the evaluation questions and design. Chapter 3 summarizes the progress data for the Oregon GEAR UP program. Chapters 4 and 5, organized by the five “R’s,” include a description of each “R,” a summary of the interventions implemented by the 12 clusters, and relevant findings from the student, parent, and educator surveys. The final chapter reports data disaggregated by student group, including perceived academic ability, gender, and race/ethnicity. The intent of this report is to provide information that will support the important work of Oregon GEAR UP schools and community partners.

Chapter 2

Program Management and Evaluation

In August 2008, Oregon was awarded a six-year state GEAR UP grant by the U.S. Department of Education to help 20 schools build college-going cultures that would increase the college aspirations and enrollment of students in 12 rural communities. Oregon GEAR UP grants range from \$30,000 to \$40,000 per year, based on the number of students served. Schools are required to contribute a dollar for every dollar received. These monies are used only to implement new strategies that promote the goal of GEAR UP and may not be used to supplant funding for existing activities.

The allocation of funding for student activities used a modified cohort model that focused on supporting the 2014 graduating class as they progressed from grade 7 to grade 12. Because the overarching goal of Oregon GEAR UP is to build a college-going culture in the school, funding is not limited to the 2014 graduating class. In Year 1, funds were used to support students in grade 7; in Year 2, funds supported grades 7 and 8, and so forth (Table 2). To maximize the use of program services, the program also encouraged schools to include students and educators in GEAR UP activities whenever possible. For example, programs invited older students to participate in College Application Week, attend guest speaker presentations, or college visits. Clusters also invited educators from all grades to attend funded professional development such as learning about poverty, curriculum alignment, or common core state standards.

Table 2
Oregon GEAR UP Service Implementation Model

Grade Level	Project Year					
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Grade 7						
Grade 8						
Grade 9						
Grade 10						
Grade 11						
Grade 12						

Note: Shaded areas indicate grade levels that Oregon GEAR UP directly funded during each project year.

Evaluation

Oregon GEAR UP has implemented both internal and external evaluation processes to provide information for program management and to make program improvement decisions. The program team prepares annual progress reports that summarize student achievement, college preparation, and college enrollment data. The program contracted

Education Partnerships, Inc. to gather information from principals on program satisfaction and service needs. In 2011, the program contracted the Pacific Research Group to design and manage its Events and Cost Share database that records student-level service data.

Education Northwest is the external evaluator that gathers information from students, parents or caretaking adults, and educators. The Education Northwest evaluation team worked with OUS staff members to develop an evaluation plan to meet the requirements of the Annual Performance Report (APR) for the federal government, as well as to provide formative evaluation information for the programs. This year's evaluation report summarizes findings for the following questions:

1. How has the Oregon GEAR UP 5 "R's" model been implemented in rural schools?
2. How have the attitudes, expectations, and engagement in college readiness activities of Oregon GEAR UP students, educators, and parents changed over time?
3. How has student enrollment in academic rigorous classes, FAFSA completion, high school graduation, and college enrollment in Oregon GEAR UP schools changed over time?

Participants

The participants in the evaluation include students, their parents or caretaking adults, and educators in 20 middle and high schools organized into 12 clusters. The schools are located in all five regions in Oregon (Table 3).

Data Sources

The evaluation gathered information about Oregon GEAR UP from key stakeholders using multiple measures. During this year, the stakeholders included students from all grades, parents or caretaking adults, and educators. Table 4 summarizes the measures, data sources, and informants for the evaluation.

Program Documents and Reports

Oregon GEAR UP provided the evaluation team with copies of the annual GEAR UP plans and the progress reports for each cluster. The plans, organized by the five "R's," outline the strategies that the schools will implement during the year and data they will use to measure progress. The progress reports include aggregated state test scores, dropout/graduation rates, college enrollment rates, FAFSA completion, and OSAC application completion data. The data sources for the reports are Oregon Department of Education (ODE), National Student Clearing House(NSC), OSAC, and federal FAFSA reports.

*Table 3
GEAR UP Participating Schools*

Cluster	Schools	Town
Bend/La Pine	La Pine Middle School La Pine High School	LaPine
Brookings-Harbor	Azalea Middle School Brookings-Harbor High School	Brookings
Glendale	Glendale High School	Glendale
Klamath County	Lost River High School	Merrill
Lincoln County	Taft Junior/Senior High School	Lincoln City
Morrow	Irrigon Junior/Senior High School	Irrigon
North Marion	North Marion Middle School North Marion High School	Aurora
South Lane	Lincoln Middle School Kennedy Alternative High School Cottage Grove High School	Cottage Grove
South Umpqua	Coffenberry Middle School South Umpqua High School	Myrtle Creek
Stanfield	Stanfield Secondary	Stanfield
Sweet Home	Sweet Home Junior School Sweet Home High School	Sweet Home
Three Rivers	Fleming Middle School North Valley High School	Grants Pass

Table 4
Oregon GEAR UP Evaluation

Evaluation Question	Data Variables	Measures/Data Resources
1. How has the Oregon GEAR UP been implemented in rural schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schoolwide interventions Individual student interventions Family interventions Community and higher education partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator interviews Cost share database Site visit protocol School GEAR UP Plan
2. How have the attitudes, expectations, and engagement in college readiness activities of Oregon GEAR UP students, educators, and parents changed over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reported attitudes and participation in college readiness activities (parents, students, educators) Educator involvement in college readiness activities Student enrollment/grades in core classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost share data base Educator, student, and parent surveys 2013-14 Senior Survey
3. How has student enrollment in academic rigorous classes, number of AP/IB/dual credits, FAFSA completion, and high school graduation changed over time?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual Credits- percent of students and average credits per student FAFSA and OSAC completion High school graduation rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost share database OAKS/CCWD data OUS FAFSA completion
4. How do district and school administrators view the benefits and challenges of implementing a college and career readiness culture in their school? How do district and school administrators view the services provided by Oregon GEAR UP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of services Perceived benefits of services Challenges related to program implementation or operation Lessons learned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator interviews Cost share database Site visit protocol Administrator surveys
5. What percentage of students at GEAR UP high schools enrolled in a dual credit course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dual credit – number of dual credits per school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CCWD 2005/06-2012/13 GEAR UP APR data
6. What percentage of students at GEAR UP high schools, who attended community college, enrolled in a developmental education course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student enrollment and completion of developmental education course by subject and course level Student enrollment in credit-bearing, college-level coursework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ODE 2004/05-2011/12 NSC 2005/06-2012/13 CCWD 2005/06-2012/13

Note: ODE=Oregon Department of Education; CCWD=Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development; FAFSA=Free Application For Federal Student Aid; NSC=National Student Clearinghouse. This report comprises findings for questions 1–3. Shaded cells indicate questions that the Education Northwest evaluation will address during the 2013–2014 school year.

Participant Surveys

The purpose of the Oregon GEAR UP surveys is to provide information that cluster teams can use to plan and monitor progress toward building a college-going culture. Education Northwest and Oregon GEAR UP designed the surveys to gather APR information and to learn how students, parents, and educators view the college and career readiness programs at participating schools. The findings provide information about academic expectations, early awareness of college opportunities, and the extent to which students engage in college and career planning. English and Spanish language versions of the student and parent surveys were available on-line and in paper form. The educator survey was available on-line and in English only. All surveys gathered information about the respondent's background information and specific performance measures.

Surveys were administered by schools by late March in 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2013 in time for compilation and inclusion in the April submission of the OUS Annual Performance Report. Each year, the evaluators provided written instructions and ongoing guidance to administer surveys schoolwide. In 2011, surveys were voluntary for schools, resulting in a limited participation. For this reason, 2011 survey data are not included in this report. Table 5 provides a brief summary of the number of schools and participants for each survey administration. Appendix A contains detailed information about the student, parent, and educator survey participants.

*Table 5
Number of Schools and Survey Participants, 2009–2013*

	Schools				Respondents			
	2009	2010	2012	2013	2009	2010	2012	2013
Student	18	16	19	20	4,219	4,128	4,411	5,537
Parent	14	12	18	20	1,111	709	636	1,021
Educator	16	15	20	20	359	255	224	285

Note: In 2011, survey administration was voluntary; data are not reported due to limited school participation.

Technical Assistance Visits

Education Northwest and Oregon GEAR UP conducted technical assistance site visits to review each district's plan and progress data. We also gathered more in-depth information about implementation of activities, GEAR UP successes, and challenges schools were experiencing.

Analyses

This evaluation report provides frequencies and percentages of the archival data collected from 2009–2013 and survey data for all years except 2011. We also calculated the percentage change between 2009 and 2013 data.

Chapter 3

Creating a College-Going Culture

Establishing a school culture that ensures each and every student has access to college and career readiness opportunities is a mission challenging Oregon schools statewide. Accomplishing this goal requires educators to increase their time and involvement in GEAR UP activities. It requires the provision of professional development opportunities to help educators learn how they can create classroom environments that promote students' interest and knowledge about postsecondary education. Building and sustaining a college-going culture also requires a shared commitment and belief in the mission of GEAR UP and the state's 40-40-20 goal among educators, parents, and students (McDonough, 2004). This chapter describes the involvement of educators in GEAR UP activities. It also shares findings about the college expectations of educators, parents, and students. The final section reports the rate of dropout, graduation, OSAC applications, and college enrollment for participating schools.

Educators Increased Their Participation In GEAR UP

The percentage of educators who said they spent one or more hours on GEAR UP activities each month increased between 2009 and 2013, especially in high school (see Table 6). During the 2008/09 school year, 62 percent of the educators said they spent at least one hour on college and career readiness activities each month. In subsequent years, over 70 percent of middle school educators said the same.

There was a 42 percent change in the percentage of educators who spent one or more hours on GEAR UP activities each month. In 2009, 52 percent of the high school educators said they spent time on GEAR UP and 74 percent said the same in 2013.

Table 6
Percentage of Educators Who Spent Time One or More Hours on GEAR UP Activities Each Month

	Survey Year				Percentage change between 2009 and 2013 ^a
	2009 (n=328)	2010 (n=214)	2012 (n=211)	2013 (n=272)	
Grades 7-8	62%	72%	82%	73%	17.7%
Grades 9-12	52%	59%	79%	74%	42.3%

a. Percent change was calculated by $((y_2 - y_1) / y_1) * 100$.

Note: Schools were not required to administer the GEAR UP surveys in 2011, so data from this year are not available. During 2009 and 2010, the major focus of grant funding was on grades 7–8 only. In 2011, grant funding expanded to include high school students.

Source: GEAR UP Educator Survey, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013

The percentage of educators who said they participated in college and career readiness activities sometimes or often increased between 2009 and 2013 (Table 7). The activities that showed the highest percent change were providing information and counseling about college choices and providing information on financial aid and scholarships available for postsecondary opportunities. In 2013, the percentage of educators who participated in these activities was 64 and 57 percent, respectively. The activity that showed the smallest percent change was providing direction and extra instruction to at-risk students. However, across all years, the percentage of educators who said they provided this support was about 80 percent or higher.



Table 7
Educators' Involvement In College and Career Readiness Activities, 2009–2013

	Survey Year				Percentage Change Between 2009 and 2013 ^{a,b}
	2009 (n=350)	2010 (n=249)	2012 (n=217)	2013 (n=275)	
Providing direction and extra instruction for at-risk students	79%	82%	85%	86%	8.9%
Counseling students to take more rigorous courses	62%	73%	77%	76%	22.6%
Providing information about postsecondary work, training, and educational opportunities	55%	59%	64%	71%	29.1%
Informing students of admissions requirements for various institutions of higher education	53%	64%	69%	68%	28.3%
Familiarizing students with college environments	49%	56%	61%	65%	32.7%
Providing information and counseling about college choices	41%	55%	60%	64%	56.1%
Providing information on financial aid and scholarships available for postsecondary education	39%	49%	54%	57%	46.2%

a. Percentage of educators who said they participate in the activity “often” or “sometimes” at their school.

b. Percent change was calculated by $((y_2 - y_1) / y_1) * 100$.

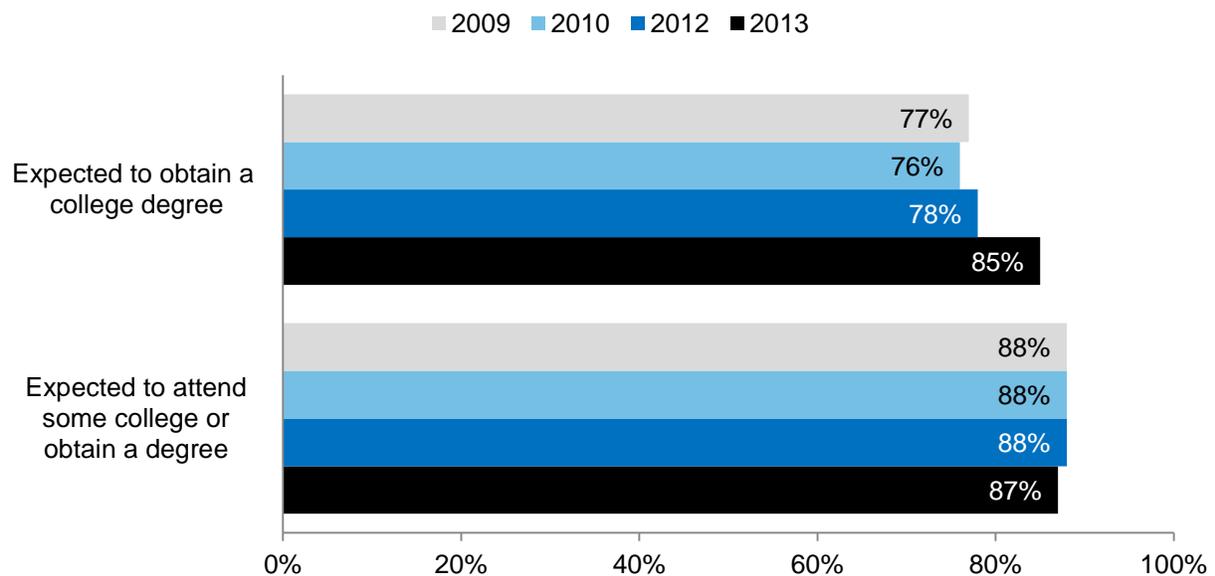
Note: In 2011, schools were not required to administer the GEAR UP surveys so data from this year are not available. During 2009 and 2010, the major focus of grant funding was grades 7–8 only. In 2011, grant funding expanded to include high school students.

Source: GEAR UP Educator Survey, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013

College Expectations: Students, Parents, and Educators

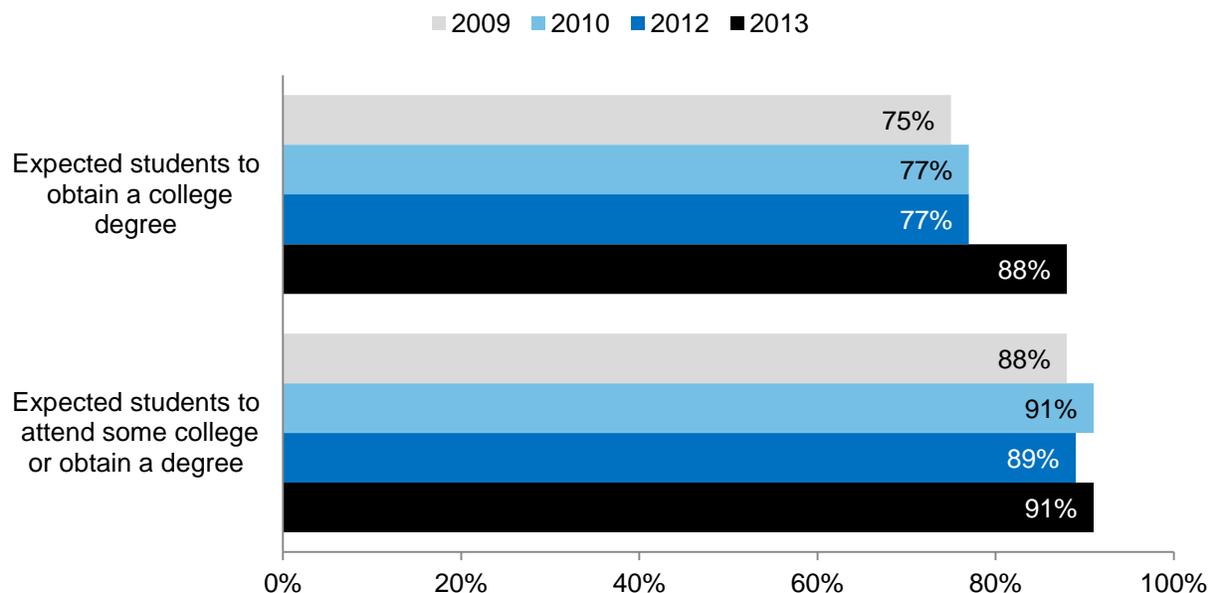
Students and parents have higher postsecondary goals for students than teachers and school staff members. Nearly 90 percent of the students said they expected to attend some college, but the percentage of students who expected to get a degree varied by year (Figure 2). Between 2009 and 2013, the percentage of students who expected to get a two- or four-year college degree increased from 77 percent to 85 percent.

Figure 2
Percentage of Students Who Expected to Attend College and Get a College Degree, 2009–2013



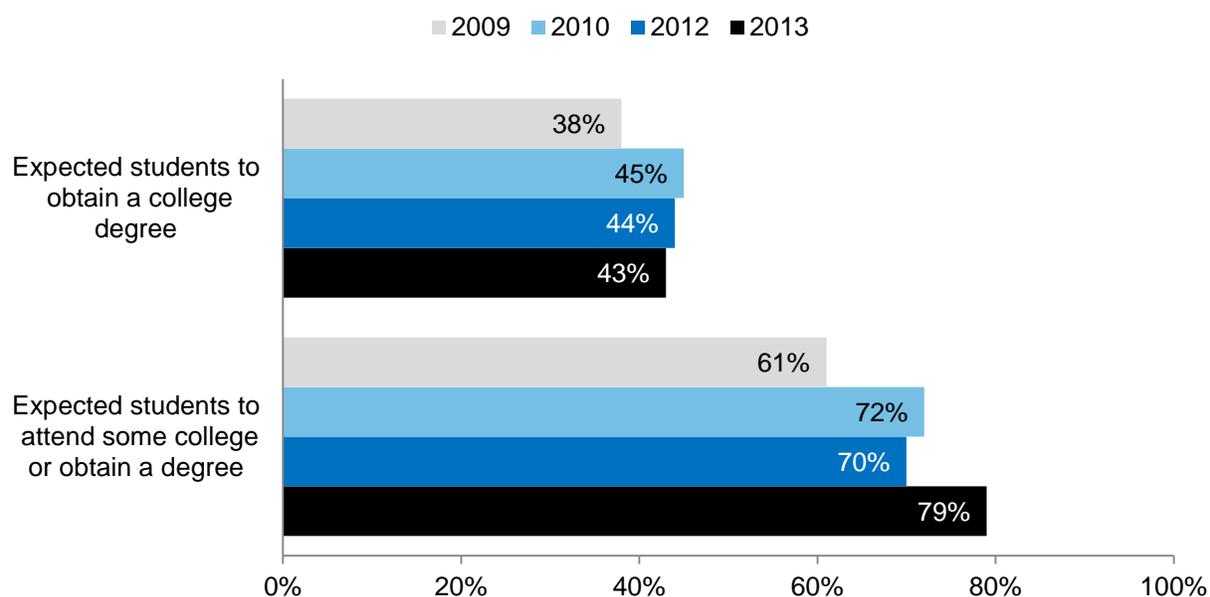
The percentage of parents who expected students to attend college was about 90 percent across the project years (Figure 3). Similar to students, the percentage of parents who expected students to get a two- or four-year college degree increased across the project years. In 2009, 75 percent of the parents said they expected students to get a college degree, and 88 percent had these expectations in 2013.

Figure 3
Percentage of Parents Who Expected Students to Attend College or Get a Degree, 2009–2013



In 2009, at the start of GEAR UP services, 61 percent of the educators said they expected students to attend some college or get a degree (Figure 4). In 2012/13, 79 percent said they expected their students to attend college. Across all years of the project, less than half of the educators said they expected students to get a college degree.

Figure 4
Percentage of Educators Who Expected Students to Attend College and Get a College Degree, 2009 To 2013



On the educator survey, the percentage of educators who said at least half of their students were capable of completing a college preparatory curriculum ranged from 62 percent to 66 percent (Table 8). The percentage of educators who said at least 80 percent of their students could reach this goal ranged from 26 percent to 30 percent.

In 2008, the percentage of educators who said at least half of their students would go to college increased from 31 percent to 43 percent. However, the number of educators who said at least 80 percent of their students would attend college was too small, in recent years, to report.

Table 8
Percentage of Educators Who Believed At Least 80 Percent of Their Students Could Complete a College Preparatory Curriculum or Go to College, 2009–2013

According to educators, the percent of students who are	Percentage of educators who agreed or strongly agreed				Percent change from 2009 and 2013 ^a
	2009 (n=341)	2010 (n=249)	2012 (n=213)	2013 (n=279)	
Capable of completing a college preparation curriculum					
At least 50 percent	62%	65%	68%	66%	6.5%
At least 80 percent	26%	30%	26%	26%	0%
Will go to college					
At least 50 percent	31%	39%	38%	43%	38.7%
At least 80 percent	4%	8%*	*	*	*

a. Percent change calculation was calculated by $((y_2 - y_1) / y_1) * 100$.

* Data are not reported because the cell size is less than 10.

Note: In 2011, schools were not required to administer the GEAR UP surveys, so data from this year are not available.

Source: GEAR UP Educator Survey, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013

Student Outcomes

Table 9 summarizes the average graduation rate and dropout rates of GEAR UP schools and the state from 2008–2012. The table also reports, for the same time span, the percentage of GEAR UP seniors who completed applications for OSAC and FAFSA, and who enrolled in college.

In 2009, prior to initiation of GEAR UP services, the average four-year graduation rate was lower than the state average (Table 9). Following program implementation, the GEAR UP graduation rate increased to 69.9 percent, exceeding the state average. In 2012, the four-year graduation rate decreased to 68 percent for GEAR UP schools.

In 2008, the dropout rate for GEAR UP schools—at 2.8 percent—was below the state average. Following implementation of services, the dropout rate was consistently lower than the state average, ranging between 1.9 percent and 3.3 percent.

The percent of GEAR UP seniors who completed the Oregon Student Access Commission’s (OSAC) application was 14.8 percent in 2008 (Table 9). Following implementation of services, the percentage of GEAR UP seniors who completed OSAC application ranged from 19.5 percent to 24.8 percent.

*Table 9
Graduation, Dropout, OSAC Applications and College Enrollment Data, 2008–2013*

Student Outcome	Graduation Year					
	2008 ^a	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Four-year graduation rate ^b						
GEAR UP	NA	65.8%	69.9%	69.6%	68.0%	NA
State	NA	66.2%	66.4%	67.7%	68.4%	NA
High school dropout rate						
GEAR UP	2.8%	3.3%	2.4%	1.9%	2.5%	NA
State	3.7%	3.4%	3.4%	3.3%	3.4%	NA
OSAC application completion: GEAR UP	14.8%	19.5%	24.8%	20.1%	20.9%	NA
FAFSA completion: GEAR UP	NA	NA	NA	NA	38.8%	40.0%
SAT—Baseline data ^c						
GEAR UP	30%	26%	30%	33%	36%	37%
State	53%	52%	54%	56%	57%	34%
College enrollment rate—Baseline data ^{c, d}						
Fall term	44.7%	42.2%	43.9%	43.9%	–	–
Within a year	49.2%	47.8%	51.3%	49.3%	–	–
More than a year	67.0%	61.7%	61.3%	56.2%	–	–
College enrollment rate ^{e, f}						
Fall term	–	–	–	–	41.3%	46.6%
Within 16 months	–	–	–	–	51.7%	49.7% *
More than 16 months	–	–	–	–	52.8%	49.7% *

* Preliminary numbers; complete 16 month numbers available after October 2014.

- a. GEAR UP services started in 2009.
- b. In 2012, the Oregon Department of Education modified its list of high school graduations to include four-year graduates.
- c. Because the graduation date of the students who received GEAR UP services is 2014, the SAT test taking in this table summarizes baseline data. The first year that the relationship between GEAR UP services and these indicators can be analyzed is 2015.
- d. Because the graduation date of the students who received GEAR UP services is 2014, the college enrollment rates in this table summarize baseline data. The first year that the association between GEAR UP and college enrollment can be analyzed is 2015.
- e. The National Student Clearinghouse may not include all high school graduates who attended college because it includes approximately 93 percent of students enrolled in colleges and universities nationwide. Colleges in Oregon with enrollments over 1,000 that do not report enrollment data to NSC are: Apollo College, The Art Institute of Portland, Pioneer Pacific College, Western Business College, and Western Culinary Institute.
- f. In 2012, the reporting timeline for college enrollment changed from “within a year” to “within 16 months.”

Source: Oregon Department of Education graduation and dropout data, 2008–2013. National Student Clearinghouse and Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC) application, 2008–2013.

The rates of Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) applications were first available in 2011. The percentage of GEAR UP seniors who completed applications was 38.8 percent in 2011 and 40 percent in 2012.

Because the students who received GEAR UP services won't graduate until 2014, the college enrollment rates in this table are baseline data. The first year that the association between GEAR UP and college enrollment can be analyzed is 2015. Between 2008 and 2013, the fall college enrollment baseline data for GEAR UP schools ranged from 42.2 percent to 46.6 percent.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of GEAR UP services, educators have increased the amount of time and their involvement in college and career activities. By 2013, three-quarters of the educators said they spent one or more hours on GEAR UP activities each month. In particular, educators spent more time providing information on financial aid, scholarships, and college choices. They also became more involved in familiarizing students with college environments.

Students and parents have higher postsecondary goals for students than teachers and school staff members. In 2009, 88 percent of the students said they planned to attend college but about three-quarters said they expected to get a degree. However, by 2013, the percentage of students who expected to get a degree increased to 85 percent. Most parents also had high expectations of their students. Similar to students, the percentage of parents who changed their expectations of students from attending some college to getting a college degree increased during the last five years.

Educators who set high expectations and believe their students can succeed is associated with higher student achievement. Achieving the 40–40–20 goal will require educators to believe that the goal is attainable. During the past five years, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of educators who expected their students to go to college and an increase, though smaller, in the percentage who expected students to obtain a degree. However, few educators believed the 40–40–20 goal was possible for their students. Less than a third believed that 80 percent of their students could complete a college preparatory curriculum and even fewer believed their students would go on to college.

During the five years of grant operation, the graduation rates of GEAR UP schools have increased and dropout rates have declined. The OSAC and FAFSA rates have also increased. Because of the many education reforms and other factors that influence schools, it is difficult to know whether these improvements are associated with GEAR UP services or other factors. Nevertheless, the GEAR UP clusters have made some progress in changing beliefs and behaviors of educators, parents, and students.

Chapter 4

Rigor, Relevance, and Right Classes

The mission of GEAR UP is to significantly increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The program addresses academic rigor, linking educational and career choices to course-taking behaviors, opportunities for students to explore career interests, family and community engagement, and information about applying to and paying for college.

The Oregon GEAR UP model has five dimensions: Rigor, Right Classes, Relevance to Career, Relationships, and Raising Awareness. The model is based on the findings of the white paper, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (Bedsworth & Colby, 2006) and aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Institution of Education Sciences (IES) Practice Guide “Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do” (Tierney, Bailey, Finkelstein, et al., 2009). The model also aligns with Oregon’s adoption of more rigorous high school diploma requirements and its interest in expanding the accessibility of accelerated college credit programs—including dual-credit, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate programs—that award college-level credits to high school students. The full Oregon GEAR UP Planning and Evaluation Rubric is in Appendix B.

Oregon Diploma Requirements

In 2007, the State Board of Education voted to adopt new high school graduation requirements. The changes in the diploma were phased in over several years with full implementation required in 2014. A detailed description of Oregon’s diploma requirements are summarized in Table C-2 in Appendix C. Students will need to meet the following requirements to earn a diploma in 2014:

- **Credit requirements.** Students must earn a minimum of 24 credits including four credits in English/Language Arts and three math credits in Algebra I or higher.
- **Essential skills requirements.** Students must demonstrate proficiency in writing, reading, and applied math.
- **Personalized learning requirements.** Students must meet a set of personalized learning requirements intended to help students plan for their post-high school education and career goals.

The five “R” framework that guides implementation of GEAR UP services aligns with Oregon’s new diploma requirements. Strategies related to “Rigor” help schools strengthen math, writing, and reading instruction. Strategies related to “Relevance” provide career awareness activities and those related to “Right Classes” help students plan their pathway to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education. Table 10 and the remaining sections of this chapter describe the

strategies that clusters implemented and progress indicators for “Rigor,” “Relevance,” and “Right Classes.”

*Table 10
Rigor, Relevance, and Right Classes: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies*

Oregon “R”	Five “R’s”: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies
RIGOR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement a curriculum that prepares all students for college and includes opportunities for college-level work for advanced students 2. Identify existing assessments, standards, and data available to provide an estimate of college readiness 3. Utilize performance data to identify and inform students about their academic proficiency and college readiness 4. Create an individualized plan for students who are not on track
RELEVANCE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide hands-on opportunities for students to explore different careers, and assist them in aligning postsecondary plans with their career aspirations 2. Provide students with opportunities to explore their career interests and engage business and community partners in the process
RIGHT CLASSES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a four-year course trajectory with each ninth-grader that leads to fulfilling a college-ready curriculum 2. Ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum

Note: Oregon 5 R’s framework is based on the findings of the white paper, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (Bedsworth & Colby, 2006) and aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Institution of Education Sciences Practice Guide, *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do* (Tierney, Bailey, Finklestein, 2009).

Rigor

Oregon GEAR UP schools have implemented a range of strategies to ensure all students have access to rigorous curriculum that will prepare them for life beyond high school. They have invested in professional development, technology (both hardware and software), and curriculum development. Clusters have also strengthened partnerships with their communities and higher education institutions to increase dual credit offerings. Some clusters developed schoolwide interventions, others targeted certain grade levels, and some increased services for struggling students. The following paragraphs describe strategies that aim to increase rigor. Each cluster implemented one or more of these strategies with the support of GEAR UP funding and service.

- **Extended learning time/out-of-school time.** Some clusters implemented strategies to add extended learning time, before school, after school, or during the summer, in core subjects. The instruction was provided through tutoring by teachers or students.
- **Additional instruction time.** Many clusters added classroom instruction time in core subject areas and study skills. The content areas that clusters addressed were math, reading, writing, and study skills. The strategies used to increase instruction time included student workshops, individualized tutoring, and scheduling longer class periods. Some clusters added course offerings in core subjects.

- **Professional development.** Many clusters used grant funding to increase quality teaching in writing and other core subjects. The professional development strategies included organizing in-service training for their teachers, sending staff members to training events, and creating professional learning communities.
- **Online courses.** One cluster provided students with expanded course offerings by subscribing to online courses. The online courses also provided students with opportunities to enroll in higher education courses.
- **Accelerated Learning options.** Several clusters added dual credit course offerings for students. Dual credit courses allow students to earn both high school credit and required or elective college credits. Although most courses were taught on the K–12 school campus, some clusters arranged for students to attend courses at the community college. A few clusters added Advanced Placement (AP) classes to prepare students for college.

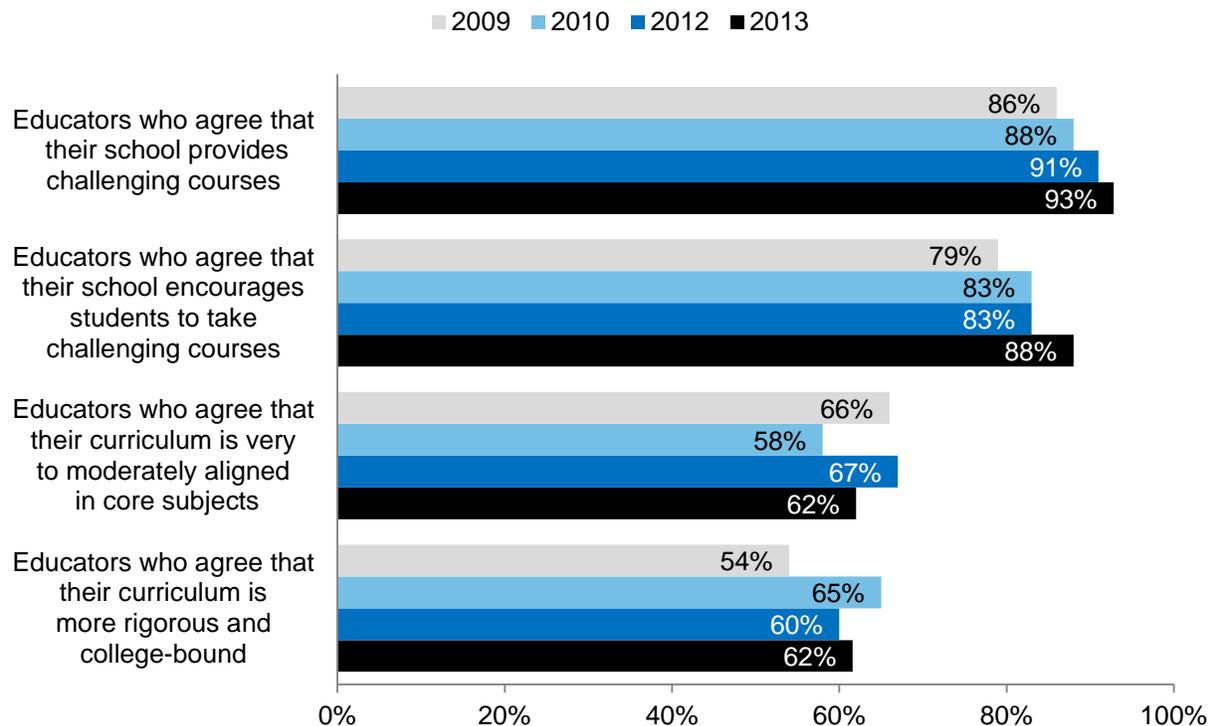
Progress Indicators—Rigor

Educators' Perceptions

The percentage of educators who said their school provides challenging classes to students increased steadily across project years (Figure 5). Between 2009 and 2013, the percentage increased from 86 percent to 93 percent. There was also an upward trend in the percentage of educators who said their school encouraged them to take challenging classes.

Figure 5

Percentage of Educators Who Said Their Schools Provided Challenging Courses, Encouraged Students To Take Them, and That Their School Curriculum Was Vertically Aligned, 2009–2013



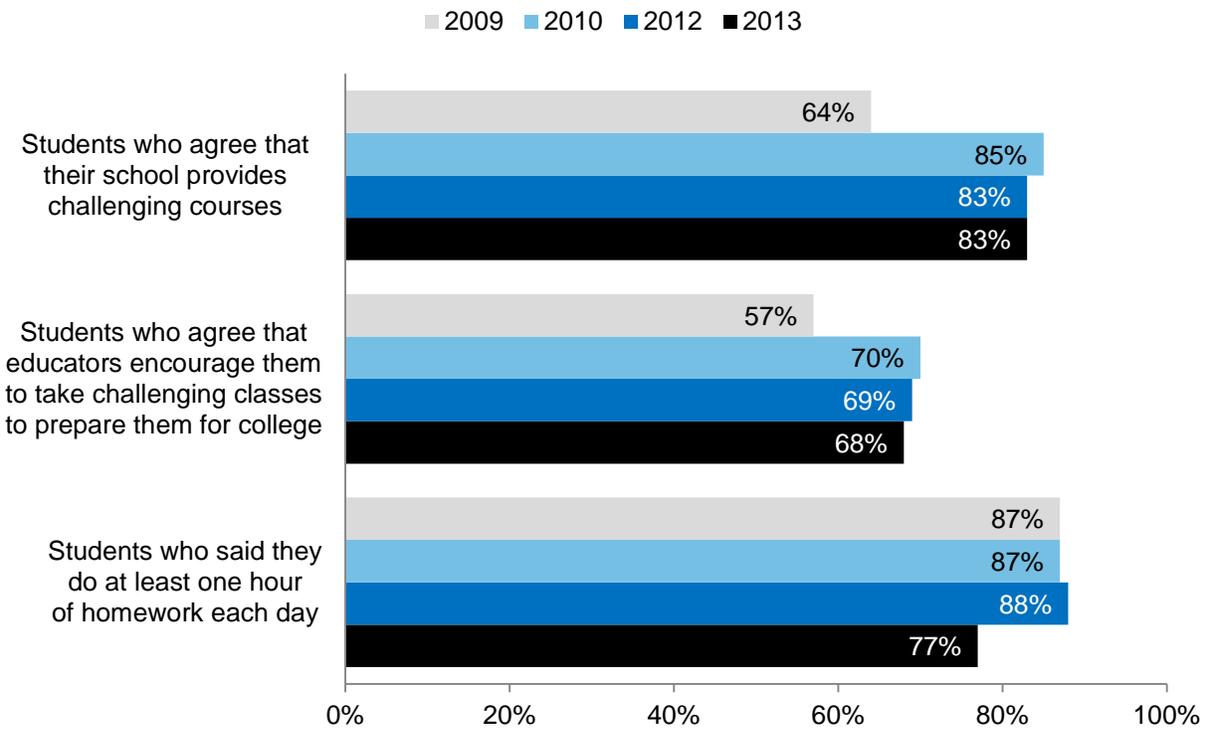
In 2009, 79 percent of the educators said students were encouraged to take challenging classes and 88 percent said the same in 2013. The percentage of educators who said the middle and high school curriculum was moderately to very aligned varied across the project years. In 2013, 62 percent of the educators agreed their curriculum was aligned.

Students' Perceptions of Rigor

The percentage of students who said their school provided challenging courses increased substantially across the project years (Figure 6). In 2009, 64 percent of the students said their courses were challenging. In later years, the percentage of students who agreed with this statement ranged from 83 percent to 85 percent. In 2009, 57 percent of the students said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging courses that would prepare them for college. In later years, the percentage of students who said they were encouraged to take challenging courses ranged from 68 percent and 70 percent.

The percentage of students who said they did at least one hour of daily homework declined in 2013 (Figure 6). Between 2009 and 2012, nearly 90 percent of the students said they did at least one hour of homework each day. In 2013, 77 percent of the students said they did at least one hour of homework each day.

Figure 6
Percentage of Students Who Said Their Schools Provided Challenging Courses and Encouraged Them to Take Them, and Said They Did Daily Homework, 2009–2013



Relevance

Each school district in Oregon is expected to have a comprehensive guidance and counseling program that supports each student's transition throughout school, achievement of the diploma requirements, and preparation for post-high school next steps (Oregon Department of Education, 2013). Strategies related to "Relevance" help students participate in experiences that connect classroom learning with real life experiences in work, college, and community settings. The following paragraphs describe the ways that clusters helped students explore and plan postsecondary education and career goals.

- **Job shadowing and internships.** A few clusters created opportunities for students to experience job shadowing or internships at local businesses. In addition to the real life experience, students completed assignments to help them reflect on their experience and possible career paths.
- **Career classes and clubs.** Some clusters offered career classes or clubs to help students explore career and postsecondary options. The clusters offered the career classes to middle school and ninth-grade students. A few clusters provided clubs or regular meetings to promote awareness and discussions about college and career options.
- **Career fairs and guest speakers.** Several clusters hosted career fairs for middle and high school students. Clusters in smaller communities often co-planned one event for several schools to promote participation from a wide variety of businesses, professionals, and colleges. The events provided opportunities for students to talk with local businesses and college representatives about their postsecondary options. A career photo booth was an activity included in several career fairs. The career photo booth provided students with a picture of themselves and a list of education requirements for a career that interested them. A few schools also arranged for guest speakers to share information about different career paths and to encourage students to dream and plan for college. The clusters sponsored a variety of speakers, including business leaders, professionals, and former graduates who had moved on to college.
- **Career Information System (CIS) and Nav 101.** Some clusters used online resources to help students learn about, plan, and set up career folders and portfolios, and plan for success after high school. Generally, clusters provided instruction and opportunities for middle school students to use the online system and encouraged them to update their career portfolio in high school.



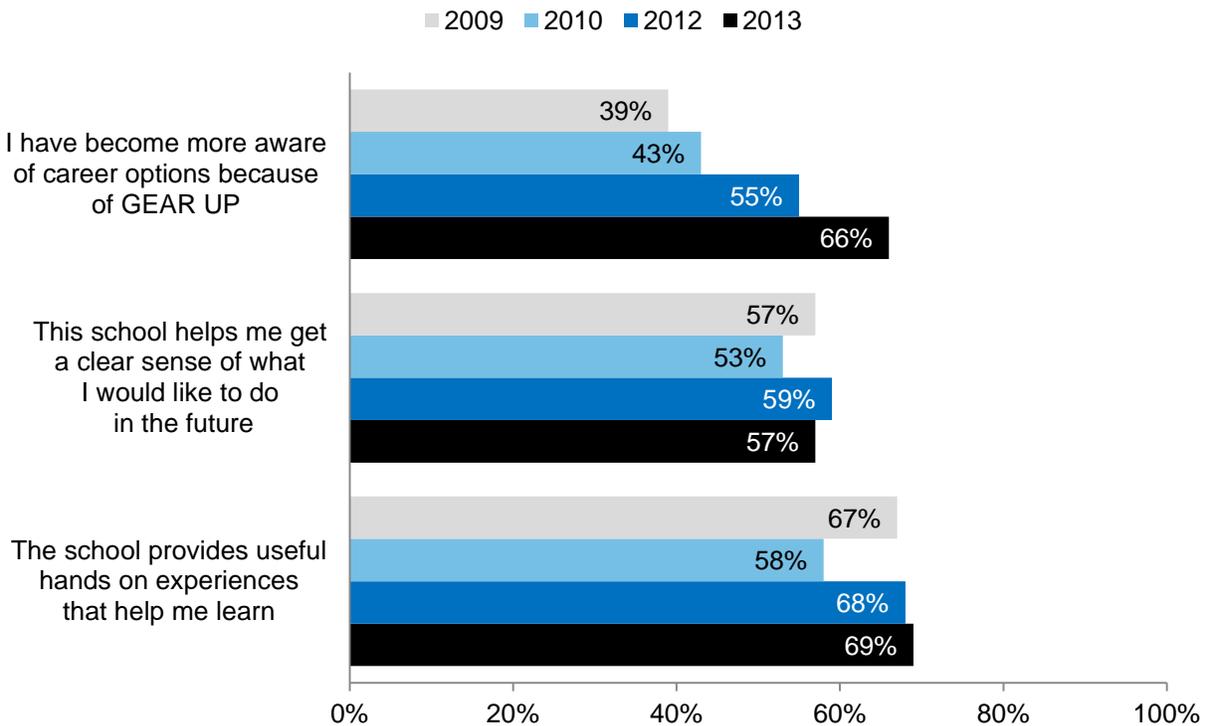
- Other Relevance activities.** Several clusters integrated career awareness in creative ways. For example, one cluster required all seniors to demonstrate career readiness skills through a senior project. The ways that students could complete this requirement included working with mentors, completing internships, conducting community service, and/or participating in job shadow experiences. Another cluster asked their eighth-grade students to complete an essay about their future dreams and goals. The essay was displayed on a poster with pictures representing who the students are now and what they dream to do in the future.

Progress Indicator—Relevance

Between 2008 and 2013, the percentage of students who said they became more aware of college and career options increased from 39 percent to 66 percent (Figure 7). The percentage of students who said their school gave them a clear sense of direction for their future ranged from 53 percent to 59 percent. In 2013, the percentage of student who said their school helped them identify a clear direction for their future was 57 percent.

Across most project years, about two-thirds of the students said their school provided useful hands-on learning experiences that helped them learn (Figure 7). The exception to this was in 2010; the percentage of students who agreed with this statement was 58 percent.

*Figure 7
Percentage of Students Who Said GEAR UP Helped Them Learn About Career Options, Think About the Future, and Have Hands-on Experiences, 2009–2013*



Right Classes

Schools are required to help each student plan the coursework needed to successfully pursue their postsecondary goals (Oregon Department of Education, 2013). The education plan serves as a guide for preparing students to transition to their chosen college or career paths. The student is responsible, with guidance, to develop and manage his or her personal plan and profile. The school is responsible for providing a process and guidance to students. The process should begin no later than seventh grade and continue until 12th grade, with regular reviews and updates. The process should allow students the flexibility to adjust their education plan as their career interests change or evolve. The following paragraphs describe strategies that support the “Right Classes” component of Oregon’s model. Each cluster implemented one or more of these strategies with the support of GEAR UP funding and services.

- **Events to support transition from middle to high school.** Several clusters held orientations for eighth-grade students and their parents. The purpose of the events was to emphasize the benefits of postsecondary education. The events also emphasized the importance of planning high school course work early so that students are prepared to achieve their postsecondary goals. Many events included activities to orient students to high school routines, rules, and culture.
- **College advisory classes.** Clusters increased the opportunities for students to help students plan the right classes, learn about college requirements, and increase their financial aid literacy. Some clusters included information about college and career preparation during advisory periods. One cluster developed and integrated curriculum about preparing for and transitioning to postsecondary education into a required senior class.
- **Online courses.** One cluster used online resources to expand curricular offerings to students. The on-line course provided monitoring information that alerted the students and the school if the student lagged behind or needed more assistance. The online company also provided students with access to higher education courses.

Progress Indicators—Right Classes

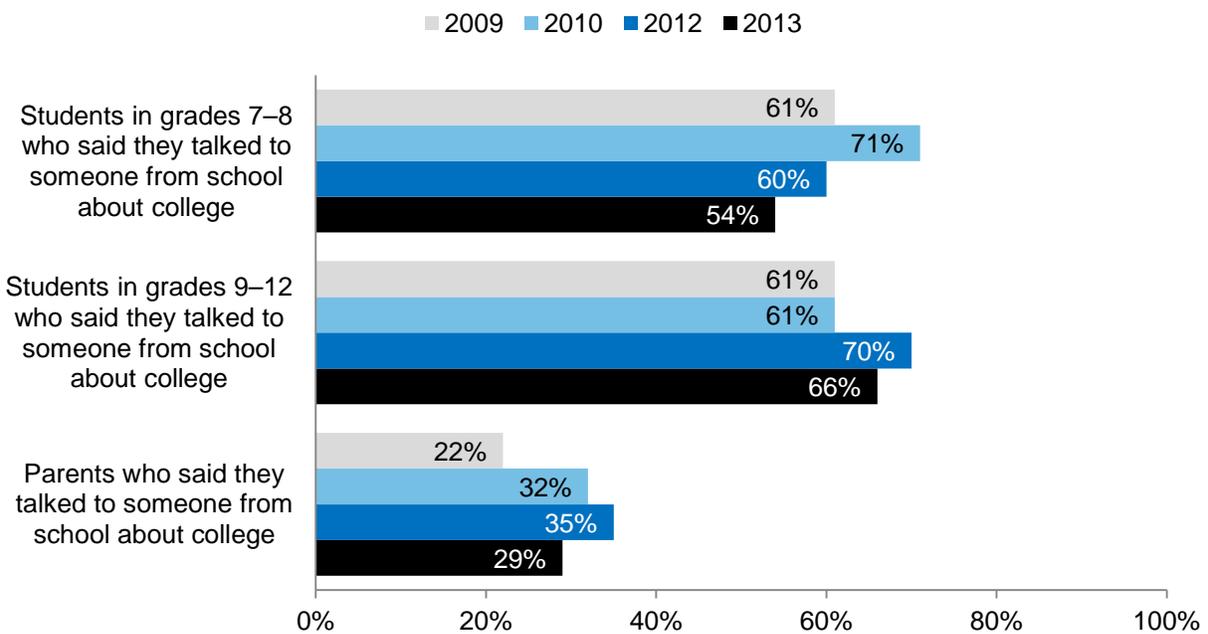
In grades 7–8, the percentage of students who talked with someone from school about college varied across the project years (Figure 8). During 2009, 61 percent of the students said they discussed college with someone from school. During 2010, when grant services were focused on middle school, the percentage of students increased to 71 percent. In 2012, when the grant services expanded to include high school, the percentage of middle school students who said they discussed college with someone from school returned to 60 percent. In 2013, 54 percent of the students said they had talked with someone from school about college.

In grades 9–12, the percentage of students who said they talked with someone from school about college increased during the last two years (Figure 8). During the first two years of the project, when the grant services were focused on middle school, 61 percent of the high school students said they had talked to someone about college. In 2011, the percentage of students who

had discussed college with someone from school increased to 70 percent. In 2013, 66 percent of the students said someone from school had talked to them about college.

Compared to students, the percentage of parents who said they had discussed college with someone from school was substantially lower across all project years (Figure 8). Across the project years, the percentage of parents who said they had talked to someone from school about college ranged from 22 percent to 35 percent.

Figure 8
Percentage of Students and Parents Who Talked With Someone From School About College, 2009–2013

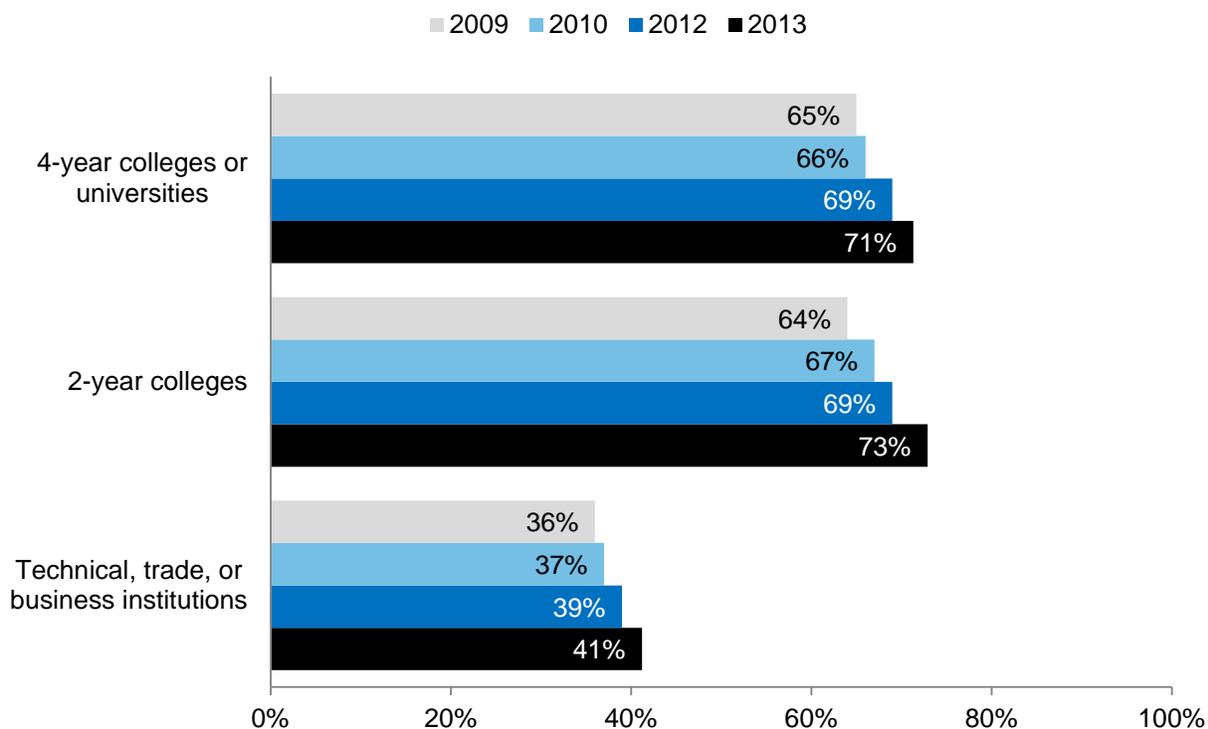


Students’ Awareness of Postsecondary Options

The percentage of students who said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of four-year colleges increased slightly each year (Figure 9). During the first year of the project, 65 percent of the students said they knew about four-year colleges. In 2013, 71 percent of the students said they knew about four-year colleges or universities. For two-year colleges, the percentage of students who said they were familiar with the entrance requirements increased from 64 percent to 73 percent.

The lowest percentage of students said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of technical, trade, or business institutions (Figure 9). Between 2009 and 2013, the percentage of students with this knowledge ranged from 36 percent to 41 percent.

Figure 9
The Percentage of Students Who Said They Were Familiar With the Entrance Requirements of Postsecondary Education, 2009–2013

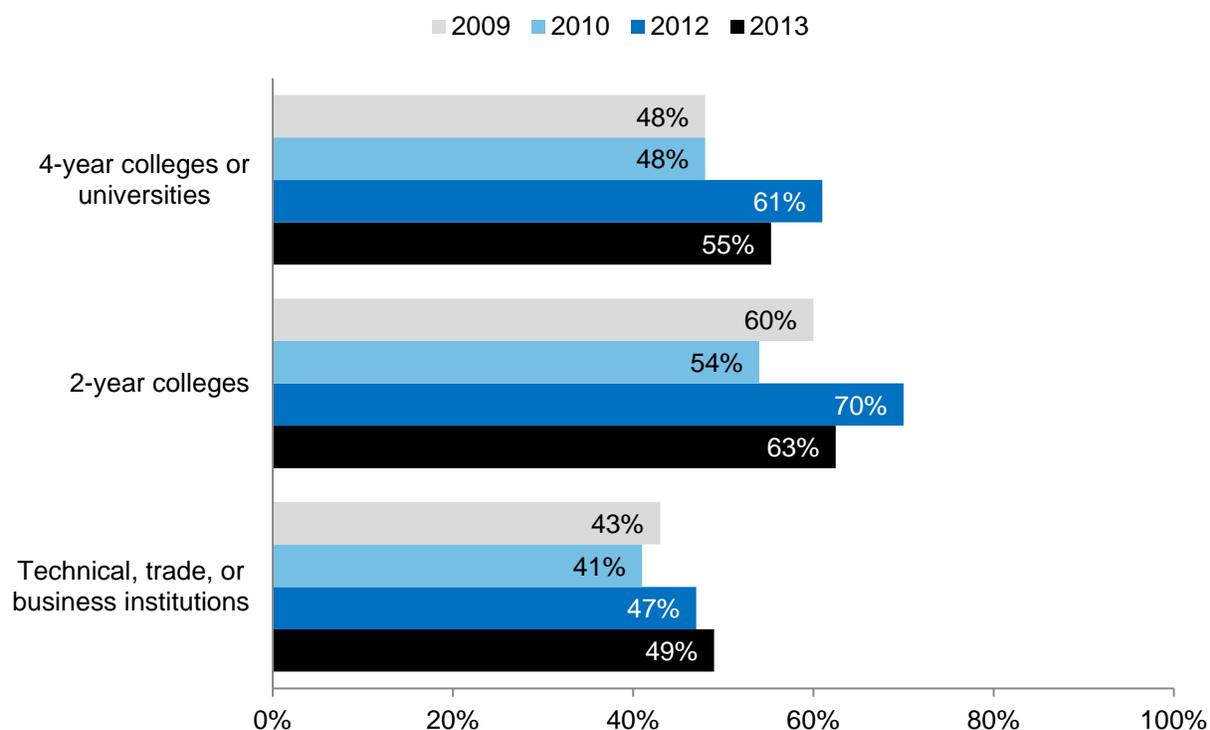


Parents’ Awareness of Postsecondary Options

During the first two years of the project, 48 percent of the parents said they knew about the entrance requirements of four-year colleges or universities (Figure 10). In 2012, the percentage increased to 61 percent, but it decreased to 55 percent in 2013. The percentage of parents who said they were familiar with the requirements of two-year colleges ranged from 54 percent to 70 percent. In 2012, 70 percent of the parents said they knew about two-year colleges; 63 percent said the same in 2013.

Of the three postsecondary options, the lowest percentage of parents said they knew about technical, trade, or business institutions. Between 2009 and 2013, the percentage increased from 43 percent to 49 percent.

Figure 10
Percentage of Parents Who Said They Knew About the Entrance Requirements of Postsecondary Education, 2009–2013



Conclusion

The percentage of educators and students who said the school provided challenging courses increased across project years. There was also an upward trend in the percentage of educators who said students received encouragement to take challenging courses. There was an increase in the percentage of students who said they were encouraged to take challenging classes, but this was acknowledged to a lesser degree by educators. Although both educators and student said classes were more challenging, the percentage of students who did daily homework decreased from 90 percent to 77 percent.

During this past school year, two-thirds of the students said they were more aware of college and career options because of GEAR UP. This was a substantial increase compared to previous years. In contrast, the percentage of students who said their classes helped them identify a clear direction for their future and provided hands-on learning experiences was about the same from year to year.

A core value of GEAR UP programs is to increase college and career awareness among students and their parents or adults at home. During the first two years of the project, when GEAR UP

services was focused on middle school, the percentage of students who said someone from school talked to them about college increased substantially; but this declined when services expanded to include high school. For high school students, the opposite was true. The percentage of high school students who said they had discussed college with someone from school remained unchanged during the first two project years, but increased when services expanded to include high school. Compared to students, the percentage of parents who said someone had talked to them about college was substantially lower. Only 35 percent said someone discussed college with them this past year.

During this past year, over 70 percent of the students said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of two- and four-year colleges. For parents, over half said they were familiar with four-year colleges and about two-thirds said they knew about two-year colleges. Across all project years, less than half of the students and parents said they knew about the entrance requirements of technical, trade, or business institution

Chapter 5

Relationships and Raising Awareness

Many students do not take the necessary steps to prepare for and enter college because they are not aware of these steps or because they lack the guidance or support needed to complete them. In addition to meeting graduation requirements, students need take steps in high school to ensure college enrollment. These steps include taking college entrance exams, searching for colleges, applying for financial aid, submitting college applications, and selecting a college. In their senior year, students have to decide where to go, how to apply, and, most important, how to pay for college. Although many students received information about these issues in earlier years, as seniors, they must make their decisions.

Strategies related to “Relationships” support peer networks, engage families, and develop positive relationships with students. Strategies related to “Raising Awareness” help students and their families understand ways they can pay for postsecondary education (Table 11). The remaining sections of this chapter describe the strategies that clusters implemented and progress indicators for “Relationships” and “Raising Awareness.”

Table 11
Relationships and Raising Awareness: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies

Oregon “R”	Five R’s: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies
RELATIONSHIPS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide mentoring for students by recent high school graduates who enrolled in college or other college-educated adults 2. Facilitate student relationships with peers who plan to attend college through a structured program of extracurricular activities
RAISING AWARENESS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure students prepare for, and take, the appropriate college entrance or admissions exam early 2. Assist students in their college search 3. Coordinate college visits 4. Assist students in completing college applications 5. Organize workshops for parents and students to inform them prior to 12th grade about college affordability, scholarship and aid sources, and financial aid processes 6. Help students and parents complete financial aid forms prior to eligibility deadlines 7. Ensure student awareness; provide financial aid information to students, families, teachers, and counselors 8. Parents Family Community Education and Support: Ensure that parents, families and community members understand how to pay for college and support for students in doing so

Note: Oregon 5 R’s framework is based on the findings of the white paper, *Reclaiming the American Dream* (Bedsworth & Colby, 2006) and aligns with the recommendations outlined in the Institution of Education Sciences Practice Guide, *Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do* (Tierney, Bailey, Finkelstein, 2009).

Relationships

Students and their families need guidance from knowledgeable school staff members if they are to successfully navigate the college application processes. Unfortunately, many students lack adequate advice, particularly if no one in their immediate families has completed a two- or four-year college degree. As a result, the responsibility for helping students gain the academic, social, and cultural skills to successfully enroll in college falls upon teachers, counselors, and school administrators (Savitz-Romer & Bouffard, 2012; Tierney, et. al. 2009). The following paragraphs describe strategies that aim to promote relationships that support students as they plan and prepare for postsecondary education. Each cluster implemented one or more of these strategies with the support of GEAR UP funding and services.

- **Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone (ASPIRE).** Most clusters implement the ASPIRE program. Administered by the OSAC, ASPIRE is Oregon’s official mentoring program to help students access education and training beyond high school. Students receive information about college options, admission, and financial aid from trained and supportive ASPIRE volunteer mentors who work one-on-one with them throughout the year. ASPIRE serves students and families by helping middle and high schools build a sustainable community of volunteer advisors; educating students and families about the scholarship application process and other options for paying for postsecondary education; advising; and providing resources and encouragement to help students access education and training beyond high school.
- **Community organizations committed to college preparation.** Two clusters receive support from College Dreams, a non-profit agency that promotes healthy youth development, academic excellence, and college preparation for students, especially those who face life challenges. College Dreams provides students with an on-site College Preparation Specialist who works with students on a weekly or monthly basis providing activities and experiences centered around careers and college.
- **Peer mentoring.** Many clusters implement peer mentoring programs to promote smooth transitions for elementary students entering middle school and middle school students entering high school. For example, five clusters implemented Where We Belong (WEB) and Link Crew. WEB is a middle school orientation and transition program that aims to make sixth-and seventh-grade students feel welcome during their first years in middle school. WEB trains eighth-grade students to serve as positive role models and mentors to their younger peers. Link Crew is a high school orientation and transition program that increases freshman success. Members of the junior and senior class are trained to be Link Crew Leaders, who act as positive role models, motivators, student mentors, and teachers, and help guide the freshmen to discover what it takes to be successful during their high school transition.
- **Student orientations and parent nights.** Several clusters conducted student orientations and parent nights to orient students and families to the school environment and to GEAR UP. The topics addressed strategies to help students graduate from high school and prepare to transition to their postsecondary education or career choice.

- **Summer enrichment programs. GEAR UP programs** helped students to attend summer enrichment programs, including summer camps and seminars hosted by colleges. For example, students from six clusters participated in the mobile engineering camp conducted by Oregon State University.
- **Club activities.** Some clusters have developed GEAR UP afterschool clubs. Club members learn about the importance of college, investigate various postsecondary educational options, and discuss share findings with the group. Club members also organize college visits.
- **College preparation courses.** One cluster developed a seventh-grade leadership program that provided tutoring in study halls, visited elementary schools for GEAR UP activities, and encouraged businesses to participate in a College T-Shirt Tuesday program.
- **Parent nights.** Over half of the clusters conducted parent nights that provided parents and community members with information about how to support students. The topics addressed strategies to help students graduate from high school and prepare for transition to their postsecondary education or career choice.
- **Recognition and special events.** Clusters have developed several ways to recognize students who have completed important steps toward postsecondary success. For example, one cluster conduct a “Signing Day” to honor students going on to college, trade schools, or the military. Pictures of the students are displayed along with their chosen career or education plans.
- **Communication with parents and community members.** Clusters implemented creative ways to communicate college information to families and community members. For example, a few clusters established parent groups to support GEAR UP activities. Another cluster mailed a quarterly newsletter to parents that provided information about GEAR UP and college/career readiness.

Progress Indicators—Relationships

Students’ Perceptions

The percentage of students who agreed that their school was safe and they had positive relationship with teachers increased during the project years (Table 12). In 2013, most students reported positive feelings about their school and teacher. The highest percentage of students said they felt safe in school. Over 80 percent said they felt respected by their teachers, their teachers were interested in their learning, and they received the help they needed. The lowest percentage of students said they felt comfortable talking with their teachers.

Table 12
Percentage of Students Who Feel Safe in School and Had Positive Relationships With Teachers, 2009–2013

	Survey Year				Percent change between 2009 to 2013
	2009 (n=3,996)	2010 (n=4,010)	2012 (n=4,265)	2013 (n=5,312)	
I feel safe in the school	85%	74%	88%	86%	1.2%
I feel respected by my teachers	78%	71%	82%	82%	5.1%
My teachers are truly interested in my learning	78%	69%	80%	80%	2.6%
I feel comfortable talking with my teachers	71%	65%	75%	77%	8.5%
I have received the help I need from my teachers	78%	70%	82%	83%	6.4%

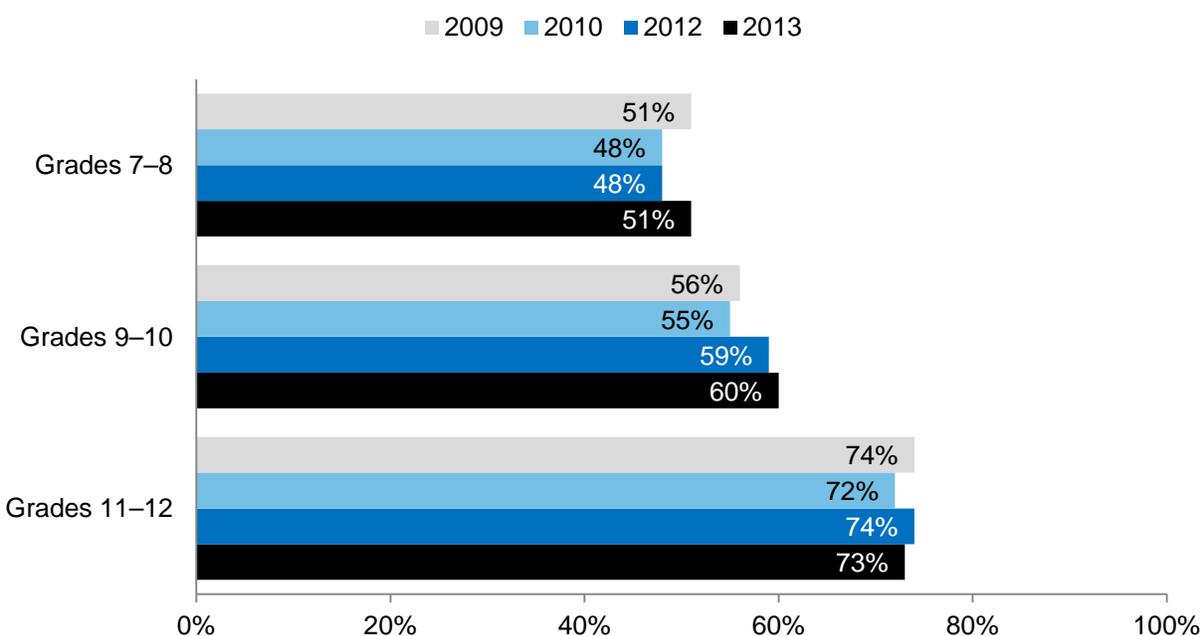
a. Percent change calculation was calculated by $((y2-y1)/y1)*100$.

Note: In 2011, schools were not required to administer the GEAR UP surveys, so data from this year are not available.

Source: GEAR UP Student Survey, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013

The percentage of students who said they talked with friends about college, at least sometimes, was higher in upper grades (Figure 11). About half of the students in grades 7–8 said they talked with friends about college, and about three-quarters of the students in grades 11–12 said the same. In grades 9–10, the percentage of students who said they talked about college with a friend increased from 56 percent to 60 percent.

Figure 11
Percentage of Students Who Talked With Friends About College, 2009–2013

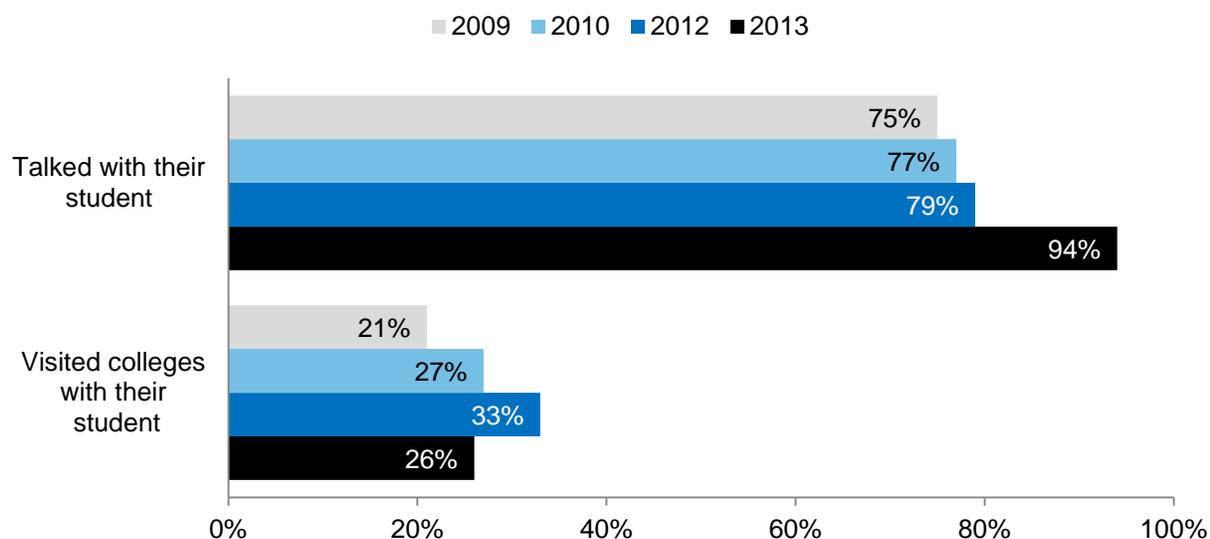


Parents' Perceptions

The percentage of parents who said they talked with their students about college increased, but fewer reported visiting colleges with their student (Figure 12). In 2009, three-quarters of the parents said they had talked to their students about college. In 2012/13, the percentage of parents who had discussed college with their student increased to 94 percent.

Figure 12

Percentage of Parents Who Talked With Their Student About College or Visited Colleges With Them, 2009–2013



Raising Awareness

The high cost of a college education has increased the urgency of providing students and their families with financial aid, student loan, and scholarship information. During the last several years, school counselor positions have been cut and/or the ratio of students to counselor has greatly increased. In response, schools have had to design solutions to get students the college and career information they need, and to get this information to students and parents earlier in their educational career. The following paragraphs describe strategies that aim to promote the affordability of college for students and their families. Each cluster implemented one or more of these strategies with the support of GEAR UP funding and services.

- **College site visits.** All clusters provided students with opportunities to tour colleges. Most clusters organized and scheduled visits to four-year colleges, two-year colleges, and trade schools for both middle and high school students. Some clusters went further and institutionalized college visits as an annual event for their schools. In addition to helping students learn more about career opportunities, site visits provide students with information about financial aid and other fundings support.
- **College preparation classes.** Some clusters developed and implemented classes to provide all students with instruction and support to prepare for postsecondary

education. The classes required students to participate in a variety of college preparation activities including completing a college application, FAFSA forms, OSAC application, and career planning.

- **Financial aid meetings.** Clusters conducted meetings that provided information and/or real-time assistance to students and parents. The aim of the meetings was to help families learn about and complete applications for financial aid, scholarship opportunities, and student loans.
- **College and career centers.** Some clusters used GEAR UP funding to establish college and career centers in their buildings. The centers provided a central location where students could meet with ASPIRE volunteers. The centers also provided a place where students could get information on colleges, applications, scholarships, and financial aid. The centers also made computers available for scholarship searches, SAT/ACT prep, locating college resources, and working on scholarships.

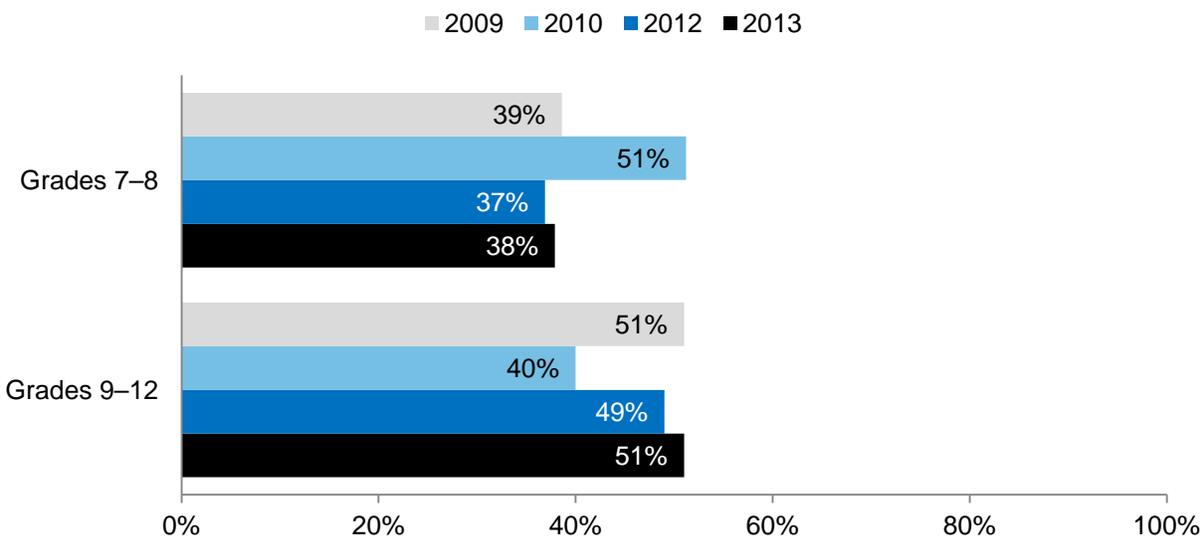
Progress Indicators—Raising Awareness

Students

The percentage of students who said someone discussed financial aid with them was higher for high school students (Figure 13). With the exception of 2010, when grant services were mainly focused on middle school, about half of the high school students said someone from school had talked to them about the affordability of college with financial aid. During 2012/13, the percentage of high school students who had these discussions decreased.

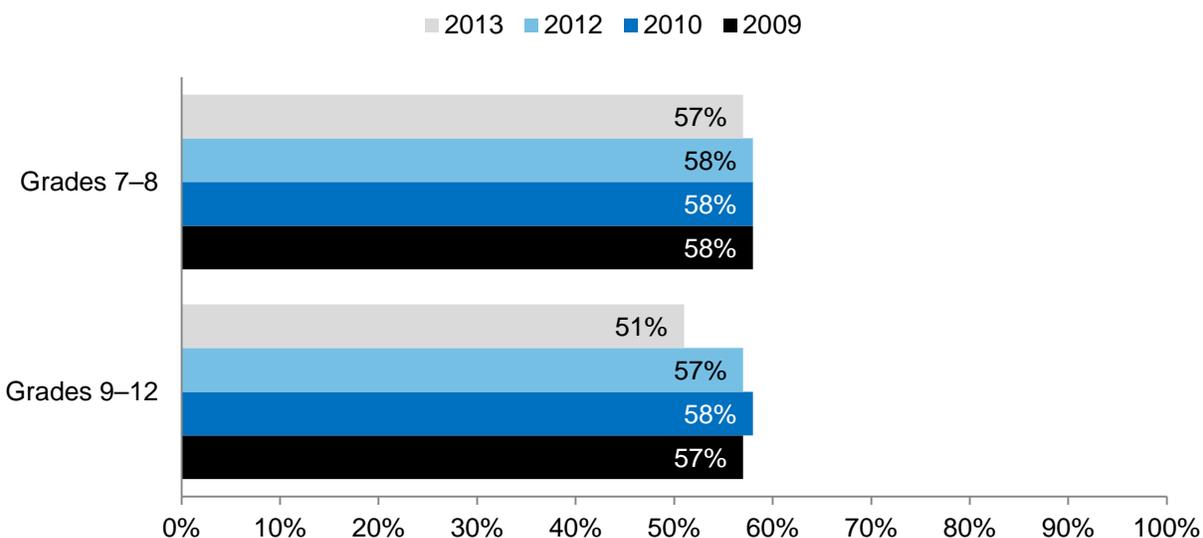
For grades 7–8, the reverse was true. In 2010, when GEAR UP services were focused on middle school, the percentage of student who said someone had talked to them increased. However, when the focus shifted to high school, the percentage decreased.

Figure 13
Percentage of Students Who Talked To Someone About Financial Aid, 2009–2013



The percentage of students who said that college was probably or definitely affordable with financial aid, scholarships, and family resources remained relatively stable across the grant years (Figure 14). The exception was for high school students during this last year. In 2013, the percentage of students who thought college was affordable decreased from 57 percent to 51 percent.

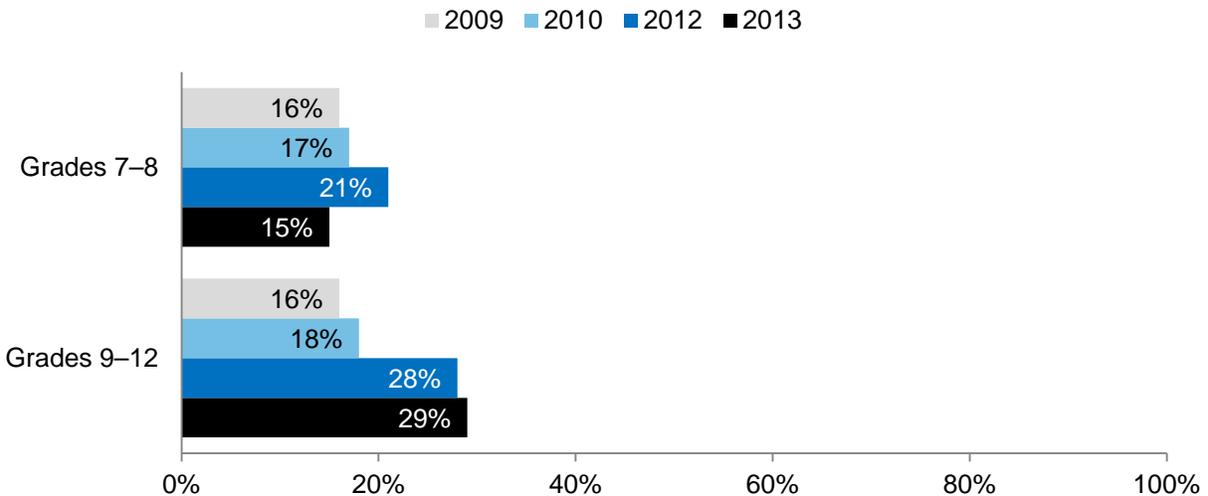
Figure 14
Percentage of Students Said College Was Definitely or Probably Affordable With Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Family Resources, 2009–2013



Parents

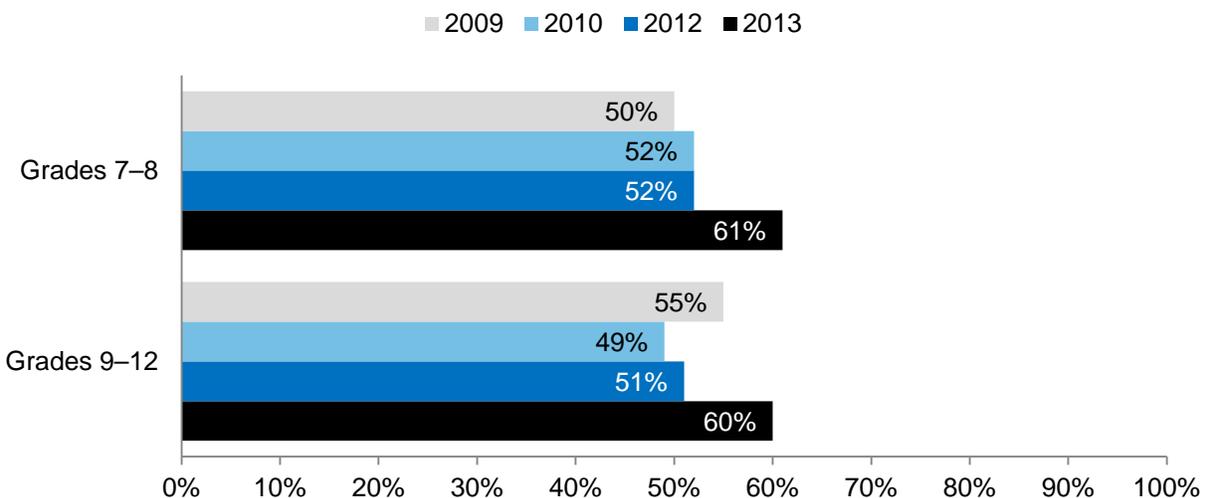
Less than a third of the high school parents said someone from school had talked to them about financial aid; for middle school parents, the percentage was less than a quarter (Figure 15). In grades 9–12, the percentage of parents increased after GEAR UP services expanded its focus to high school.

Figure 15
Percentage of Parents Who Had Talked With Someone from School About Financial Aid, 2009–2013



During this last year, about 60 percent of the parents agreed that college was affordable with financial aid, scholarships, and their family resources (Figure 16). During previous years, about half of the parents agreed this was true.

Figure 16
Percentage of Parents Who Said College Was Affordable With Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Their Family's Resources, 2009–2013

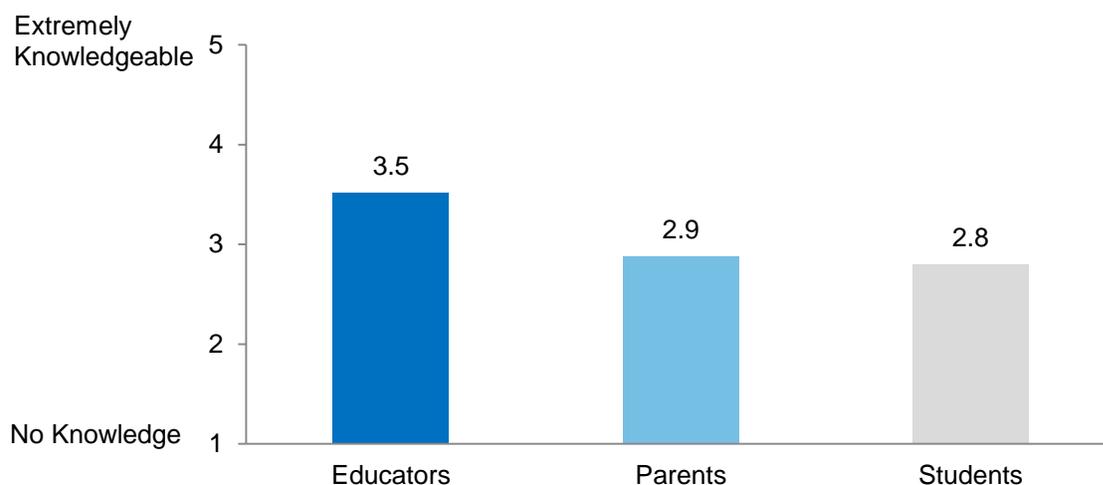


Knowledge About Financial Aid—Students, Parents and Educators

Educators said they were more knowledgeable about financial aid than parents and students (Figure 17). On a scale of 1 to 5, survey respondents were asked to rate how knowledgeable they were about financial aid. A rating of “1” indicated they had “no knowledge” and a “5” rating indicated they were “extremely knowledgeable.” Educators rated themselves as moderately knowledgeable (3.5). Parents and students rated themselves about the same.

Figure 17

Level of Knowledge Educators, Parents, and Students Had About Financial Aid, 2013



Conclusion

Students generally reported positive feelings about their school and teachers. Most felt safe in school, respected by their teachers, and believed they received the help they needed. The lowest percentage of students said they felt comfortable talking with their teachers. The percentage of students who reported talking to peers remained about the same for most years. Students, particularly in high school, discussed college with friends and their parents. About half of the middle school students and three-quarters of high school students said they talked to friends about college “sometimes” to “almost always.” In contrast, the percentage of parents who reported talking to their student increased from 75 percent to 94 percent. Although more parents said they had visited colleges with their student, less than a third had been on a college visit in 2013.

Parents and students said that they talked to school staff members about financial aid but the percentages varied from year to year. More middle school students said they talked to someone about paying for college during the first two years when GEAR UP services focused on grades 7 and 8. Conversely, the percentage of high school students who talked to school staff members about financial aid increased when GEAR UP services expanded its focus to include grades 9 to 12.

All of the clusters have begun, and are in various stages of, developing a logical sequence of college and career activities across grades 7–12. All of the clusters organized college visits for students and their parents. College site visits are a very powerful experience for the students, and serve as a positive motivator for students to set goals for a postsecondary college experience. A challenge reported by many schools was engaging the support and participation of parents. To address this problem of practice, several schools created events for parents to learn more about college—parent to parent events, college prep nights, and financial aid nights. They also provided college and career awareness information at regularly scheduled events including ninth-grade orientation or elementary school carnivals. Schools reported it was difficult to get a large number of parents to attend.

Chapter 6

Who Needs More Support

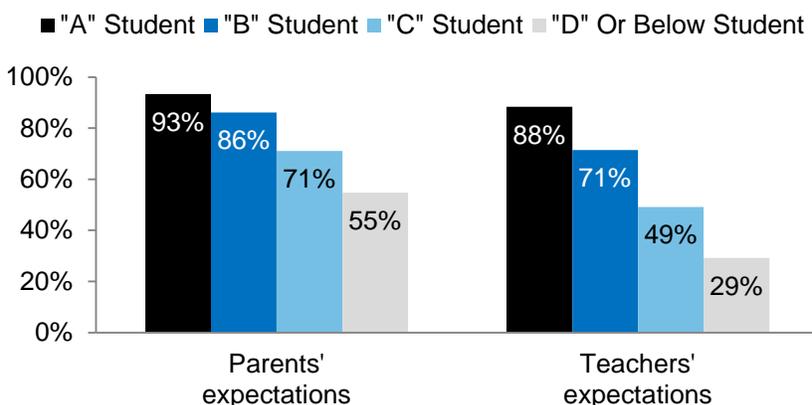
Leaders of Oregon’s education identify the need to use resources strategically to produce the maximum return on our investment in education. They also stress the importance of examining our practices through an “equity lens” to ensure that each and every student has access to educational opportunities that promote his or her success in postsecondary education. Oregon GEAR UP focused its resources on rural schools because of their high rate of poverty and need for resources. This chapter reports what students with different characteristics —academic level, gender, and race/ethnicity—said about their teachers’ and parents’ expectations, someone from school talking with them about college, and their own postsecondary aspirations.

Perceived Academic Ability

Students, in grades 7–12, were categorized into four groups according to how they responded to the survey question, “How would you rank yourself academically—as an “A” student, “B” student, “C” student, and “D” student. For all analyses, the percentage of students who said that their teachers and parents expected them to go to college, they knew about college entrancement requirements and financial aid, and they expected to complete college increased with their perceived academic ability (Figures 18–21).

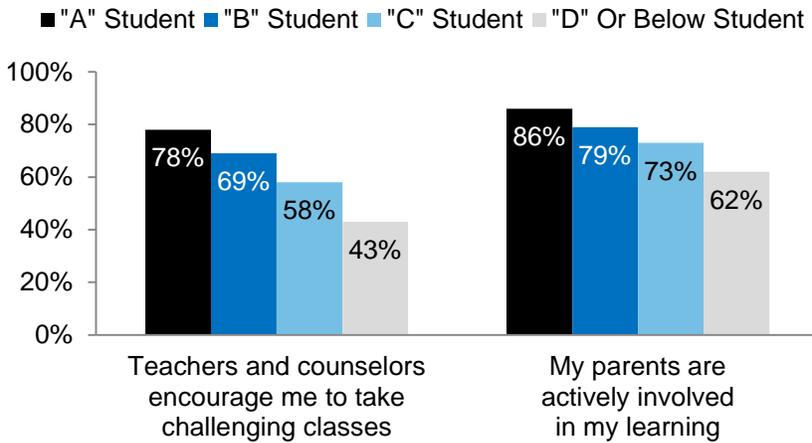
Across all groups, the percentage of students who said their parents expected them to attend college was higher than the percentage of students who said the same about their teachers (Figure 18). The percentage of students who said their parents expected to attend college ranged from 55 percent to 93 percent. In contrast, the percentage of students who said the same about their teachers ranged from 29 percent to 88 percent.

Figure 18
Percentage of Students, by Perceived Academic Ability, Who Agreed Their Parents and Teachers Expected Them to Attend College, 2013.



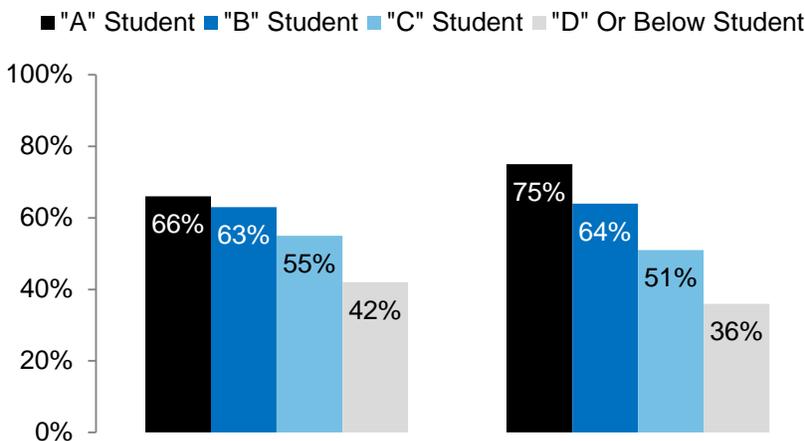
With the exception of one group, the majority of students said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging classes and their parents were involved in their learning (Figure 19). Less than half (43 percent) of the “D” students said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging classes.

Figure 19
Percentage of Students, by Perceived Academic Ability, Who Agreed Their Teachers, Counselors and Parents Encouraged Their Learning, 2013



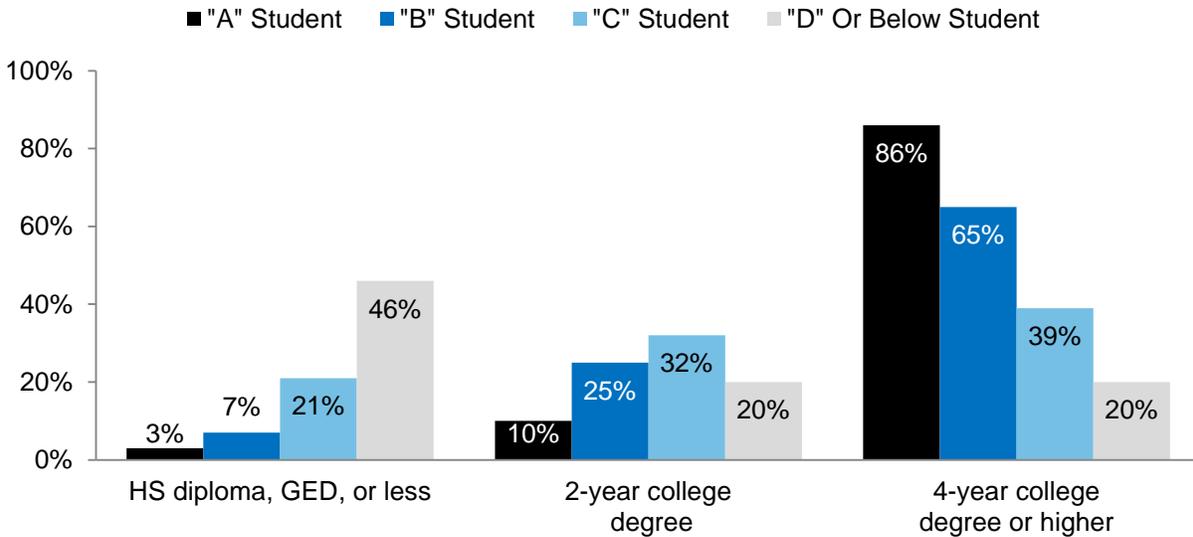
Across all groups, the percentage of students who said someone had talked with them about college entrance requirements increased with their perceived academic ability (Figure 20). Three-quarters of the “A” students said they had talked with an adult at home about college and 66 percent said they had talked with someone at school. A higher percentage of “C” and “D” students said that they had talked about college with someone from school and fewer said they had discussed college at home.

Figure 20
Percentage of Students, by Perceived Academic Ability, Who Talked About College With an Adult at School or Home, 2009–2013



Nearly all the “A” and “B” students expected to get a two- or four-year college degree (Figure 21). About 70 percent of the “C” students said they expected to get a college degree, but 21 percent expected to get a high school diploma, GED, or less. For “D” students, 46 percent said they did not expect to attend college.

*Figure 21
Percentage of Students, By Perceived Academic Ability, Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2013*



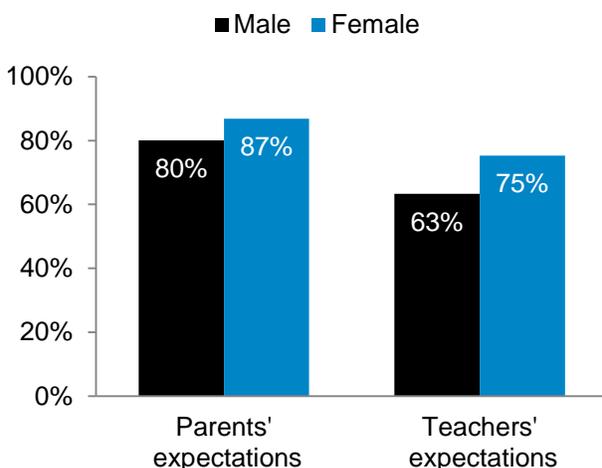
Note: The percentages of students who said they expected to attend a one-year trade school or attend some college but would get less than a college degree are not reported due to the small number of responses.

Gender

The disparity in college enrollment among males and females has raised concerns about equity. In 2012, 48 percent of undergraduate enrollment in four-year universities were male and 52 percent were female (Oregon University System, 2013). This section will report the 2013 Student Survey results. Compared to male students, more female students said their teachers and parents expected them to go to college. A higher percentage of female students also expected they would get a college degree. However, the percentage of male and female students who said they received encouragement and support from teachers, counselors and their parents was about the same (Figures 22–25).

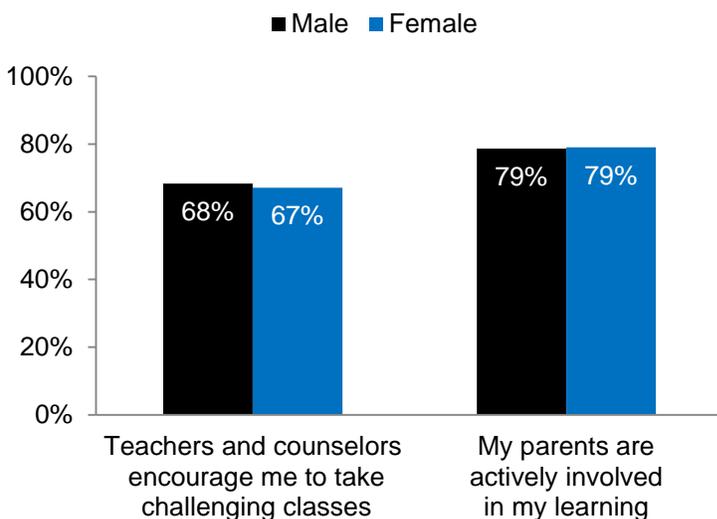
For both groups, the percentage of students who said their parents expected them to attend college was higher than the percentage of students who said the same about their teachers (Figure 22). Three-quarters of the female students said their teachers expected them to go to college and 63 percent of the male students said the same. Over 80 percent of both groups said their parents expected them to attend college.

Figure 22
Percentage of Students, by Gender, Who Agreed Their Parents and Teachers Expected Them to Go to College, 2013



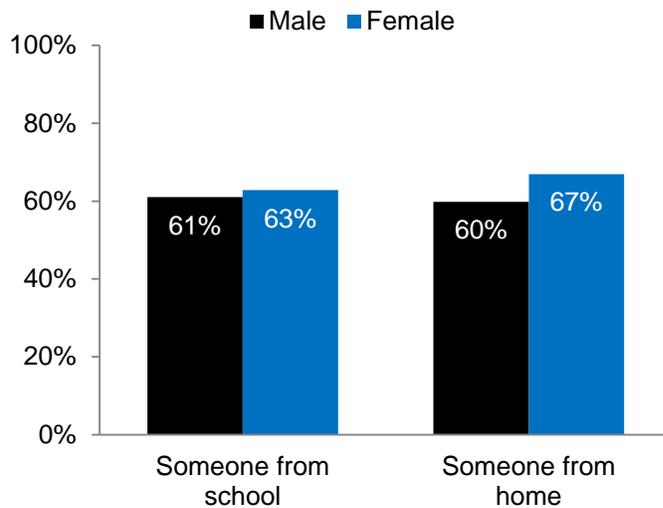
The percentage of male and female students who said they received support from teachers, school counselors, and parents or other caretaking adults was the same (Figure 23). About two-thirds of the students said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging courses, and 79 percent said their parents were actively involved in their learning.

Figure 23
Percentage of Students, by Gender, Who Agreed Their Teachers, Counselors and Parents Encouraged Their Learning, 2013



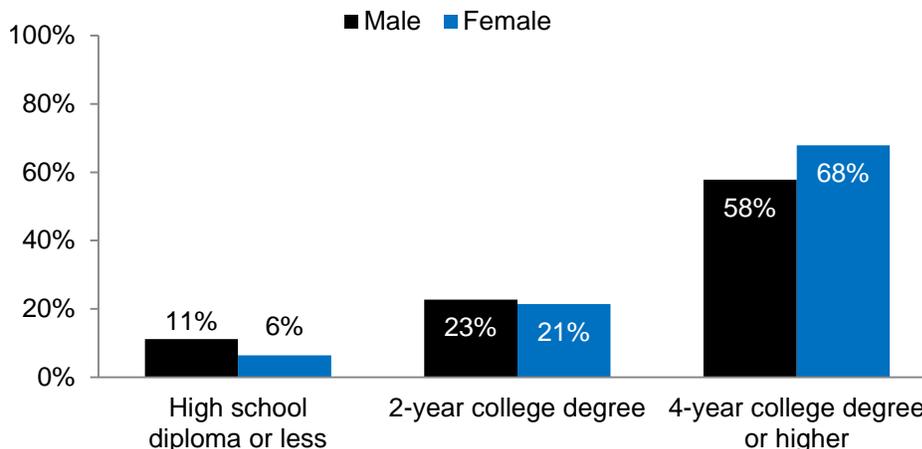
For both genders, about 60 percent of the students said they had talked with someone from school about college entrance requirements (Figure 24). Two thirds of the female students said they had talked to someone at home about college. The percentage of students who said they talked with someone at home about college entrance requirements was about the same for both genders.

Figure 24
Percentage of Students, By Gender, Who Talked About College With Someone from School or Home, 2013



About 90 percent of the female students said they wanted to get a college degree and 81 percent of the male students said the same (Figure 25). The percentage of male students who said they expected to get a high school degree or less was 11 percent for male students and 6 percent for female students.

Figure 25
Percentage of Students, by Gender, Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2013

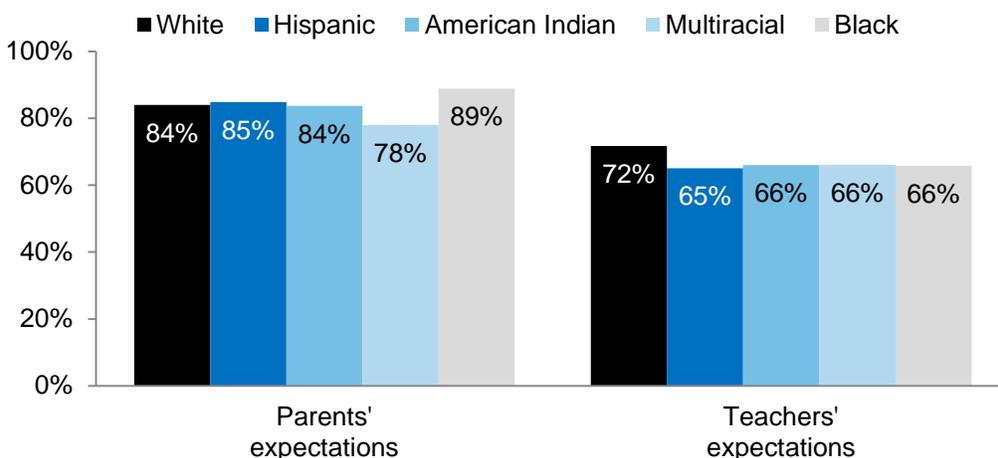


Race/Ethnicity

Although disparity in college enrollment rates for students of color remains a concern, the gap has narrowed steadily since 2002 (Oregon University System, 2013). Figures 26–29 report, by race/ethnicity, the percentages of students who said their teachers and parents expected them to go to college, they had conversations with adults about college entrancement requirements, and they expected to complete college.

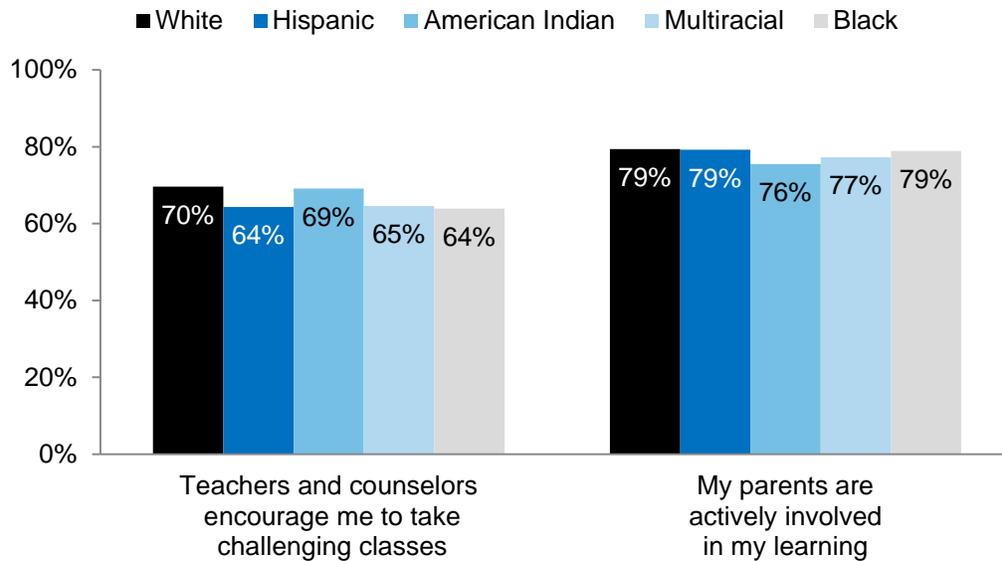
Over 80 percent of White, Hispanic, American Indian, and Black students said their parents expected them to go to college (Figure 26). Black students had the highest percentage of students who said their parents expected them to go to college. Across nearly all the racial/ethnic groups, about two-thirds of the students reported that their teachers expected them to go to college. White students were the exception—72 percent of this group said their teachers expected them to go to college.

Figure 26
Percentage of Students, by Race/Ethnicity, Who Said Their Parents and Teachers Expected Them to Attend College, 2013



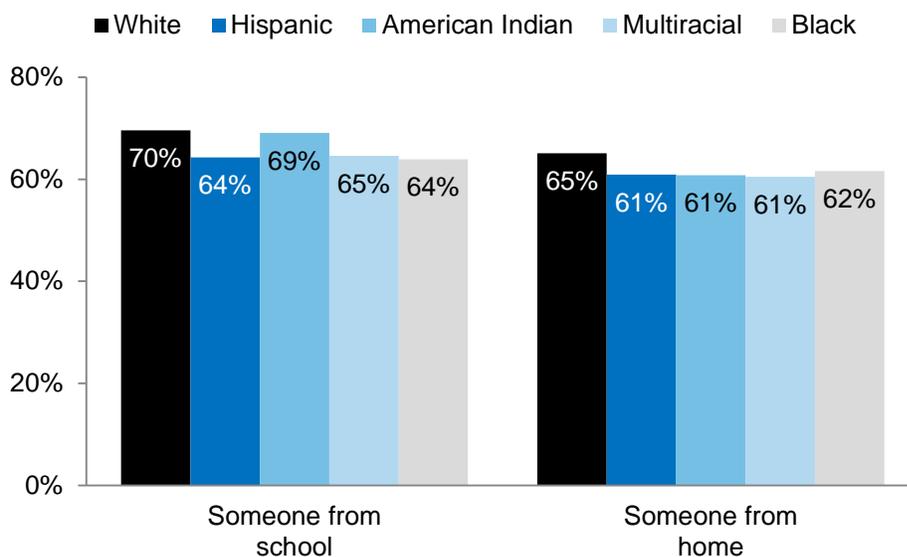
Over three quarters of all racial/ethnic groups said their parents were actively involved in their learning (Figure 27). The percentage of White students who said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging courses was 79 percent. For the remaining groups, the percentage of students who said their teachers expected them to go to college ranged from 64 percent to 69 percent.

Figure 27
Percentage of Students, By Race/Ethnicity, Who Said Their Teachers, Counselors, and Parents Encouraged Their Learning, 2013



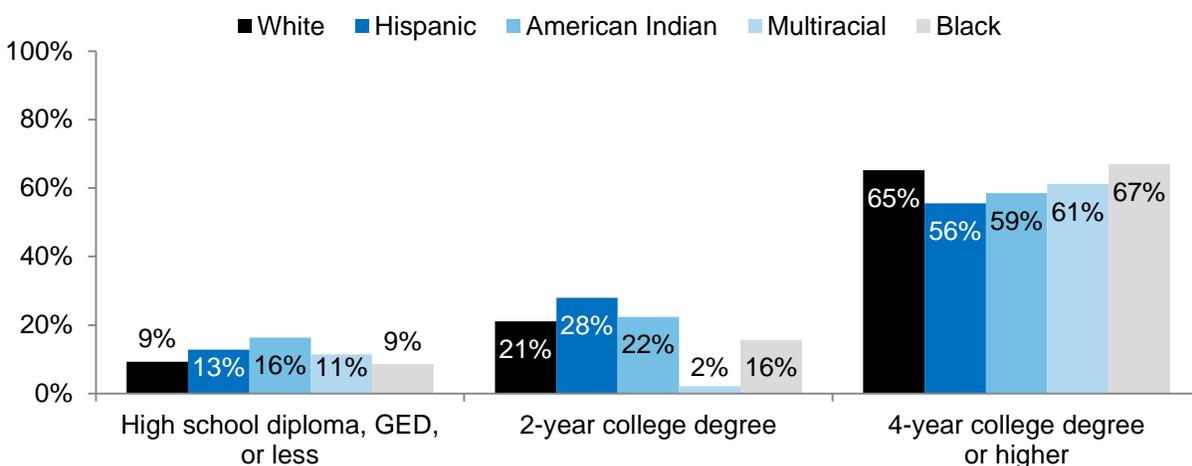
Over 60 percent of the students said they had talked with someone from school and/or home about college requirements (Figure 28). In both settings, a higher percentage of White students said they had talked with adults at home or school compared to the other groups. Between 64 and 70 percent of the students said they had talked with someone from school, and between 62 and 65 percent said they had talked with someone at home.

Figure 28
Percentage of Students, by Race/Ethnicity, Who Talked About College With Someone at School or Home, 2013



Over 80 percent of all students expected to get a two- or four-year college degree (Figure 29). The percentage of students who expected to get a four-year degree ranged from 56 percent to 67 percent. The percentage of students who expected to get a high school diploma, GED, or less was 9 percent for White students and ranged from 9 percent to 16 percent for the remaining racial/ethnic groups.

Figure 29
Percentage of Students, by Race/Ethnicity, Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2013



Conclusion

The highest percentage of students who agreed that their parents and teachers not only expected them to go to college, and that they received encouragement and support to prepare for college, rated themselves as “A” or “B” students. Although the majority of “C” and “D” students said their parents expected them to go to college, less than half said their teachers expected them to do so. A larger proportion of these students also reported that they were not encouraged to take challenging courses and had not talked with an adult, at home or in school, about college entrance requirements.

Compared to male students, a higher percentage of female students said the adults in their life expected them to attend college and that their goal was to get a college degree. The percentage of female students who said they had talked with someone at home about college was also higher than for male students. However, for both groups, two-thirds of the students said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging classes, and 79 percent said their parents were actively involved in their learning.

Over 80 percent of all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, said their parents expected them to go to college. Seventy-two percent of the White students and two-thirds of the American Indian, Hispanic, Black, and Multiracial students said their teachers expected them to attend college. The percentage of students who said their parents were actively involved in their learning was similar across the racial/ethnic groups.

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Appendix A: Survey Participation Tables

*Table A–1
Characteristics of GEAR UP Student Survey respondents, 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2013*

Characteristic	Survey Years			
	2009 ^a (n=4,219) ^a	2010 ^b (n=4,128) ^b	2012 ^c (n=4,411) ^c	2013 ^d (n=5,537) ^d
Gender				
Male	52%	52%	51%	51%
Female	48%	48%	49%	49%
Race/ethnicity				
American Indian or Alaska Native	3%	3%	3%	3%
Asian	1%	1%	1%	1%
Black or African American	1%	1%	1%	1%
Hispanic or Latino	13%	10%	14%	13%
White	61%	60%	57%	57%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	1%	*	*
Multiethnic/multiracial	18%	20%	21%	23%
Other ethnicity	2%	4%	3%	3%
Grade level				
Grade 7–8	50%	34%	42%	35%
Grade 9–10	27%	35%	36%	35%
Grade 11–12	23%	30%	22%	30%
Perceived Academic Ability				
“A” student	26%	27%	27%	27%
“B” student	44%	44%	44%	44%
“C” student	24%	24%	23%	25%
“D” student	6%	5%	5%	4%
Family members who obtained a degree				
Mother/female guardian	42%	44%	42%	40%
Father/male guardian	34%	34%	34%	34%
Brother or sister	27%	30%	23%	33%
Grandparents	31%	31%	24%	48%

- For the 2009 survey, percentages of missing data ranged from 2 percent to 7 percent.
- For the 2010 survey, percentages of missing data ranged from 3 percent to 5 percent.
- For the 2012 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 1 percent to 7 percent.
- For the 2013 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 2 percent to 7 percent.

Source: GEAR UP Student Survey, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013

Table A–2
Characteristics of GEAR UP Parent Survey respondents, 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2013

Characteristic	Survey Years			
	2009 ^a (n=1,111)	2010 ^b (n=709)	2012 ^c (n=636)	2013 ^d (n=1021)
Gender ^a				
Male	23%	29%	24%	75%
Female	77%	71%	76%	25%
Race/ethnicity ^b				
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	2%	2%	4%
Asian	*	*	*	1%
Black or African American	*	*	*	*
Hispanic or Latino	6%	34%	14%	14%
White	81%	55%	77%	77%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*
Multiethnic/multiracial/other	9%	8%	5%	2%

- a. For the 2009 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 2 percent to 9 percent among the characteristics.
- b. For the 2010 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 0 percent to 8 percent among the characteristics..
- c. For the 2012 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 0 percent to 5 percent among the characteristics.
- d. For the 2013 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 1 percent to 5 percent among the characteristics.

Source: GEAR UP Parent Survey, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013 t

Table A–3
Characteristics of GEAR UP Educator Survey respondents, 2009, 2010, 2012, and 2013

Characteristic	Survey Year			
	2009 ^a (n=359)	2010 ^b (n=255)	2012 ^c (n=224)	2013 ^d (n=285)
Race/ethnicity				
White	92%	92%	95%	90%
Non-White	8%	8%	5%	10%
Position				
Teacher	64%	78%	74%	76%
Counselor	5%	4%	5%	4%
Administrator	6%	7%	5%	4%
Secretary/Library/Media Specialist	8%	5%	9%	5%
Paraprofessional	11%	3%	2%	6%
Other	7%	3%	5%	5%
Subject taught most often				
Math	13%	14%	17%	15%
English	12%	13%	17%	16%
Science	8%	11%	11%	10%
Social Studies	8%	11%	10%	11%
I do not teach	24%	48%	19%	18%
Other Subject	35%	3%	26%	31%
Years working at current school				
Less than one year	12%	5%	11%	10%
One to five years	40%	35%	32%	27%
Six to ten years	20%	25%	23%	30%
Eleven to twenty years	22%	23%	24%	21%
Over twenty years	6%	12%	10%	11%
Highest level of education				
Paraprofessional	NA	NA	8%	10%
Bachelor's Degree	35%	21%	15%	19%
Master's Degree or higher	65%	79%	77%	70%

- a. For the 2009 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 1 percent to 14 percent among the characteristics.
- b. For the 2010 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 0 percent to 5 percent among the characteristics..
- c. For the 2012 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 2 percent to 4 percent among the characteristics.
- d. For the 2013 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 1 percent to 4 percent among the characteristics.

Source: GEAR UP Educator Survey, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013 ^t

Appendix B: Oregon GEAR UP Planning and Evaluation Rubric

GOAL 1. RIGOR for all students: Provide appropriately rigorous courses for all students		
Objective 1.1 EQUITY: Explore the equitable availability of courses for all students, particularly those from low-income backgrounds		
Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Attempts are made to provide open enrollment to most courses. However, some students still face barriers to enrolling in rigorous courses, and forms of tracking still exist. There is growing awareness of how equity issues impact student learning and opportunities.</p>	<p>All course offerings are aligned with college admission requirements; barriers to course enrollment are mostly removed. Policies, practices, and support systems provide rigorous opportunities for nearly all students.</p>	<p>School structure and culture fosters challenging and relevant learning opportunities for students from all cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and special needs backgrounds. There are no students assigned to low-achieving classes. Demographics of individual classes reflect demographics of the entire school. Each student receives unique support and academic preparation to achieve college-readiness. All students have equal access to highly challenging coursework that is relevant and connected to real life experiences. Sample strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All students are provided with multiple college-prep options during their high school career. • Regular tutorial periods help all students access additional support. • Every student is provided with an adult mentor. • Summer school is provided for enrichment and remediation. • Strategic use of distance learning tools • Rigorous performance standards are upheld for all students in all classes. • Professional development explicitly addresses issues of equity in the classroom. • A rigorous college-preparatory curriculum is provided for all students • Dual credit programs are offered.

Objective 1.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING: Improve the quality of teaching and learning through professional development.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Teachers have limited repertoire of instructional strategies. Many teachers rely heavily on direct instruction strategies such as lectures and text-based activities. Curriculum tends to be broad and shallow.</p>	<p>Teachers learn and use a variety of effective instructional practices. Curriculum becomes more focused and in-depth.</p>	<p>School has adopted and consistently employs a variety of engaging and effective teaching strategies. Learning goals and expectations are clearly articulated and understood by all students. Curriculum supports in-depth study. Teachers are knowledgeable about cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and special needs characteristics that affect learning and capitalize upon students' backgrounds when designing curriculum to meet individual learning needs. Sample strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of teaching strategies, such as differentiated instruction, project-based learning, community-based or service learning • Exhibitions or public demonstrations of learning • Internship and mentorship programs • Staff meetings regularly used for discussions and demonstrations of best practices • Professional development providing opportunities to learn effective teaching strategies • Curricula / school activities that incorporate students' cultural, linguistic, and historical knowledge • Postsecondary and high school staff members who collaborate, align coursework, team teach • Understanding that cognitive development depends on repeated exposure to inquiry-based and problem-solving learning over time; courses and teaching are designed to contribute to these skills

Objective 1.3 CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT: Curriculum aligned between middle and high school to ensure a seamless and effective transition for students.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Some alignment with standards, some teachers begin to engage students in complex problems or projects.</p>	<p>Curriculum increasingly aligned with standards. Academic challenge is growing but remains uneven throughout the school.</p>	<p>Instruction is aligned with state and district standards and community expectations to prepare students for post-high school education. Students actively explore, research, and solve complex problems to develop a deep understanding of core academic concepts. Students are given multiple opportunities to engage in sophisticated and reflective learning experiences. Sample strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curricular mapping is used to ensure alignment with local and state standards and expectations. • Course sequences are carefully articulated with lower grades to eliminate gaps and overlapping. • Students are supported to produce work that approaches industry standards. • Courses regularly pursue depth over breadth. • Courses are aligned with college courses; articulation agreements allow for college credit to be counted. • Middle/high school teacher teams facilitate understanding of competencies students need for success in high school college-preparatory and advanced level courses.

GOAL 2. RELEVANCE: *Link students' career aspirations with their educational goals*

Objective 2.1 CAREER AWARENESS: Provide students with opportunities to explore their career interests, and engage business and community partners in the process

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>A few classrooms build employer partnerships in school- and work-based settings, but connections mostly limited to guest speaking appearances.</p>	<p>Community and employer partners provide most students with at least one in-depth learning interaction each school year.</p>	<p>Community and employer partners develop rich learning experiences for all students and staff and reap tangible rewards from their relationships with students and the school. Partners actively work to bring school vision to fruition. Partners have opportunities to influence curriculum and program development. Partners receive regular updates on key curriculum and policy changes. Sample strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School supports work-based learning, student internships, and job shadowing. • Employer and community partners work with teaching teams to develop community-based projects. • Employer and community partners regularly serve as audience members for student exhibitions. • Student internships and projects target real needs of employers and community organizations. • School communication plans target employer and community partners. • Integrated use of career information system.

GOAL 3. RIGHT CLASSES: *All students understand early in their school careers what curriculum is necessary to prepare them for college-level work and future careers.*

Objective 3.1 INFORMING and PLANNING: Inform students and their families about college entrance requirements and how to apply, and ensure that students have the information necessary to take the right courses for their chosen academic/career path.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Few students and parents understand the full impact of class choices on college and career access. Few students and parents know the class requirements for graduation and college entrance.</p>	<p>School is aware that some community subgroups are not informed about the importance of class choices. Efforts are made to educate students, family, and community about the impact of class choice, and graduation and college entrance requirements.</p>	<p>Students and parents from all cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, special needs, and socioeconomic backgrounds are informed about graduation and college entrance requirement as well as the importance of making informed class choices. School staff talks to students and parents about the importance of class choice. Sample strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All school personnel coach students to take the right classes. • Eighth-grade requires that 5-year plans are made for all students, with parents involved. • Integrated use of career information system in planning course selection • All school newspapers and communications offer options for translation into different languages. • Parent volunteers coach peers on the importance of college and choosing the right classes. • Student panel made up of recent graduates now attending college informs students of the importance of academic preparation for college. • Special service announcements educate the community about class choice

Objective 3.2 EMPOWERING: Create a school environment, policies, and teacher expectations that support all students pursuing a postsecondary education

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Few school staff members believe that all students are capable of completing a college-prep curriculum. Few staff members believe that a majority of students have the skills to be successful in college. Many students believe that college is only for a select few.</p>	<p>Teacher expectations are changing, with more staff recognizing that college is an option for all students. More students see themselves as college students.</p>	<p>All students expected to take a college-prep curriculum. All students are expected to achieve at high levels. All students understand that college is possible, even for those students who don't come from traditional college-going families. School and community create open and explicit dialogue regarding issues of student achievement, equity, diversity and empowerment. Sample strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and faculty verbalize that college preparation is a goal for every student. • A rigorous core curriculum is the norm for all students. • All students have access to the type of curriculum that will prepare them for college. • School reaches out to underrepresented parent and community groups, gathers their views, and uses them. • Postsecondary institutions help to create high expectations and clear pathways to postsecondary education.

GOAL 4. RELATIONSHIPS: Foster relationships that encourage students' academic success

Objective 4.1 PEER NETWORKS: Develop peer networks that encourage college-going aspirations.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>A college-going culture does not exist in the school. Peer groups are not used to assist or encourage students to stay in school, excel academically, or prepare for college.</p>	<p>There is a growing realization of the importance of peer networks on a student's decision to go to college. Steps have been identified for creating a school-wide college-going culture.</p>	<p>An overall college-going culture pervades the school. College access programs target as many students as possible (whole-school model). Peer student supports are in place. Structures have been developed that facilitate supportive relationships for students with caring adults and peers. Sample Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Structures are provided that allow students to know each other well.• Peer connections are developed and fostered through advisory groups, project teams, and student clubs centered around academics and college attendance.• Recent graduates serve on panels that address the importance of preparing for and pursuing postsecondary education.• Peers are used as tutors (college or high school students).• Recent graduates at local colleges give tours to students.

Objective 4.2 PARENT, FAMILY and COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Involve family and the broader community in supporting students' academic pursuits.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Parents are welcome in the building. Notification of events is sent in home language. Parents are involved primarily on “booster” level, but still may not connect to curricular issues or school change process.</p>	<p>Some parents aware of school change plans. Parental involvement extends to governance and limited instructional connections. Parents attend informational events with students.</p>	<p>Parents and community members from all cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, special needs, and socioeconomic backgrounds are involved in all aspects of the school. Parents understand the vision and are active partners in curriculum design, student learning plans, school improvement, and school decisions. School understands and respects the various cultural communities represented in the building and tap into values that support student achievement and college aspirations. Sample Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools seek guidance from families about what information and resources they need in order to support their children’s college aspirations.• Communication plans target parents from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds.• Parents are active and meaningful participants in school governance bodies.• Parent representatives serve in key roles on committees throughout the school and are voting members on school decision making bodies.• Parents partner with students and school staff members to develop student learning plans for all students.• Parents go on college site visits.• Schools actively engage community through forums, town hall meetings, and visits to community organizations and events.• Community groups are used as a method of distributing school information.

Objective 4.3 PERSONALIZATION: Personalize education through school policy and relationships with teachers and counselors.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Some structured attempts at grouping or creating long-term adult contacts may be in place such as advisory programs or limited small learning communities.</p>	<p>Advisories, teaming, and small learning communities provide connections for a majority of students.</p>	<p>Student interests and passions drive learning opportunities. Students from all cultural, racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, linguistic, and special needs backgrounds develop meaningful, long-term connections to peers and adults. Mentors guide students to develop a post-high school plan. Sample Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School staff visits the homes of incoming ninth-grade students to welcome them to the school. • Enrollment limits are used to maintain small size. • Course offerings are based on student interests. • Every student is paired with adult mentor. • Small or personalized learning environments are provided and used. • School staff members, including counselors, are given time to help each students develop an academic program that meets their needs and prepares them to meet postsecondary goals.

GOAL 5. REALITY OF AFFORDABILITY: *Address perceived and real affordability concerns of students and families.*

Objective 5.1 STUDENT AWARENESS: Provide financial aid information to students, families, teachers, and counselors.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>College affordability seen as a significant barrier to attending a postsecondary institution by most students and their families as well as school staff.</p>	<p>There is growing awareness among underrepresented students of the actual cost of attending college and the various methods of paying for it.</p>	<p>Students from all cultural, racial, ethnic, linguistic, special needs, and socioeconomic backgrounds understand the means available to them to pay for postsecondary education. College affordability is not seen as a barrier to attending college. Sample strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• School provides help with college applications, financial aid forms, and applying for loans and grants.• School curriculum addresses college affordability/paying for college• College partners provide information on paying for college.• Staff members work with students to build financial planning skills.• Students understand the cost-benefits of attaining a postsecondary education.

Objective 5.2 PARENT, FAMILY, COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND SUPPORT: Parents, family and community members understand how to pay for college and support students in doing so.

Early Steps	Growing Innovation	New Paradigms
<p>Parents and community are uninformed or misinformed about the cost of college and how to pay for it. Education around paying for college is left to the student or school.</p>	<p>Parents receive information in their home language on paying for college. Parents attend informational sessions with their students.</p>	<p>Parents, family, and community members understand the options available to pay for college and are active participants in helping students plan and pay for college. Parents, family and community members are resources for students and each other. Parents help plan the FAFSA evenings. Sample Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community partners support financial aid nights. • Local college financial aid directors are available to parents and students. • Financial planning is available for parents and students. • Local scholarships are available to students. • Students are supported in creating individual development accounts and other forms of savings. • Bi-lingual scholarship information is readily available early in high school.

Appendix C: Oregon: Background Information

Access to higher education remains a challenge for many students who face barriers to college entry. Low-income students and students who are potentially the first in their family to attend college have lower college enrollment rates than other students (Choy, 2002; NCES, 2008). Although academic preparation accounts for some of these differences, the disparities in college-going rates persist for these groups of students, even when controlling for academic preparation (Ellwood & Kane, 2000; Smith, et al., 1997). College access outcomes have important economic and social consequences: college graduates earn more than those with a high school degree and are more active in their communities (Baum & Ma, 2007; Kane & Rouse, 1995; NCC, 2006; U.S. Census, 2002).

Economy and State Revenue - Implications for Oregon Education

To understand the challenges that Oregon GEAR UP schools face, it is important to understand what is happening throughout the state in terms of the economy and state revenues for education.

Oregon Economy Overview

According to the Oregon Bluebook, Oregon's economy shadowed the national slowdown that began near the end of the decade. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for Oregon bottomed out at 5 percent in the spring of 2007 and climbed during the next two years to a near-record high of 11.6 percent. The national unemployment rate fluctuated around 4.5 percent in the first half of 2007 and then climbed to 10.1 percent near the end of 2009, the highest level seen in decades. Both the Oregon and national unemployment rates have fallen slightly from their peaks, but stay persistently high.

During the past two decades, Oregon attempted to make the transition from a resource-based economy to a more mixed manufacturing and marketing economy, with an emphasis on high technology. Oregon's hard times of the early 1980s signaled basic changes had occurred in traditional resource sectors—timber, fishing and agriculture—and the state worked to develop new economic sectors to replace older ones. Most important, perhaps, was the state's growing high-tech sector, centered in the three counties around Portland. However, rural Oregon counties were generally left out of any shift to a new economy. When the boom of the 1990s collapsed, Oregon was again confronted with high unemployment, widespread hunger, and a diminishing safety net of social services. The state lost about 43,000 payroll jobs from 2000 through 2003—many of them high-tech manufacturing jobs in the Portland area. As with the nation, Oregon's expansion from 2004 through 2007 was fueled by growth in construction and services. The "Great Recession" erased construction's job gains and devastated the economy to

the extent that employment in 2010 was at roughly the same level as in 2000. (Oregon Secretary of State, 2010).

Since 2000, Oregon has experienced two recessions which kept the state from seeing employment growth during the decade. Nearly every industry was hit hard, but a few were able to grow despite the turbulent economy. Employment in some of Oregon's traditional industries did not fare so well during the recessions of the decade. Mining and logging, industries with employment in steady yet slow decline for decades, lost 30 percent of employees. The manufacturing industry shed one quarter of its jobs during the decade. Wood products workers lost the most jobs, followed by computer and electronic workers, and then by transportation equipment workers. Food manufacturing was the only manufacturing sector that was able to add jobs in the midst of the recession. The information industry was hit hard by both recessions of the decade and lost 17 percent of its workers during that period of time.

According to state rankings from the 2000 U.S. Census, Oregon had the 27th lowest percentage of population living with incomes below the federal poverty level. Back then, 11.6 percent of Oregon residents were living in poverty. As the decade came to a close, the poverty rate in Oregon began to rise. Recently, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated Oregon's poverty rate to be 13.4 percent, which is about the same as the national poverty rate of 13.2 percent, ranking Oregon 33rd among the states for lowest poverty rate. Oregonians in 2009 earned \$35,667 per person, which is \$112 less per person than in 2000. (Oregon Secretary of State, 2010). Education Funding in Oregon

Oregon schools have faced huge and painful budget cuts. Education's share of the state budget has declined steadily. Oregon schools have already been cut by more than \$1 billion over the past few years, and the K-12 share of the state budget has declined since 2004 from 45 percent to just 37 percent. According to an Oregon Education Association (OEA) report, districts across the state have been forced to cut school days, lay off educators, increase class sizes, and eliminate valuable courses such as music, art, and physical education. Oregon has already lost more than 9 percent of classroom teachers because of budget cuts. As a result, class size has increased by nearly 12 percent in the elementary grades alone. Increased class sizes mean less individualized attention and less instructional time for all students. (OEA, 2011)

Oregon's Quality Education Model (QEM)

The Quality Education Model (QEM) was initially developed in 1999 to establish an objective and research-based connection between the resources devoted to schools and levels of student achievement and to guide efforts to fund Oregon schools adequately. In 2001, the Legislative Assembly created the Quality Education Commission (QEC) to serve as a permanent body to regularly update and improve the original QEM. The Commission's work in 2010 is linked to the changes and challenges for K-12 schooling associated with the ongoing implementation of the Oregon Diploma. The Best Practices Panel examined successful math programs in Oregon schools, building on an Oregon Department of Education (ODE) analysis of math course-taking patterns in Oregon high schools. The Cost Panel updated the QEM with the most recent data,

evaluated the cost implications of the Best Practices Panel recommendations, and estimated the costs of fully implementing the QEM.

Best Practices. Given that mathematics skills and knowledge are increasingly in demand in higher education and the workplace, ensuring that students have sufficient math preparation by the time they leave high school is an important goal for Oregon schools. Based on the observations and interviews conducted in schools throughout the state, the Best Practices Panel recommends that the following components of successful math programs be reflected in the Quality Education Model:

- 1) Include time for new teacher induction programs and job-embedded professional development that is directly related to the curriculum and building goals. Investing in the development of teachers as effective instructional leaders promotes student success.
- 2) Provide adequate resources and staff so that schools can offer Algebra courses for high school credit in the seventh or eighth grade, with teachers who hold advanced math endorsements. There is evidence that introducing algebra concepts at this stage may foster higher levels of math achievement in high school.
- 3) Include adequate classroom spaces, smaller class sizes, early identification of struggling students, and additional instructional time with licensed math teachers.
- 4) Allocate time and resources for districts to develop frameworks for the articulation of math programs for fourth-grade through high school. Such articulation will help schools to provide continuous instruction that builds skills and knowledge cohesively over time.

Course-Taking. As the phase-in of the Oregon Diploma continues, schools and districts must carefully consider how to best prepare students to meet high school graduation requirements. The ODE analysis of course-taking patterns in Oregon high schools helped the Commission to develop an understanding of how students can be kept on track to meet math graduation requirements throughout the grade levels. The following recommendations can be applied to other subject areas as well:

- 1) Develop a strategic focus on practices that build a solid academic foundation in the early grades. Excellent preparation in the early grades will equip students to achieve the standards established by the Oregon Diploma when they reach high school. If students are not at grade level when they reach high school, they will be unable to take full advantage of the rigorous coursework required to meet the new diploma requirements.
- 2) Align the timing of student course-taking with the timing of state assessments to avoid the problem that many Oregon students currently face—state assessments test them on content that they have not yet learned. The State Board of Education has already taken a critical first step by moving the high school assessments from the 10th to the 11th grade. This will give schools more time to fully prepare students for the state assessments, while still leaving sufficient time for students to earn all the credits required for graduation. (Quality Education Commission, 2010)

Costs. The Commission’s Cost Panel updated the Quality Education Model to include the most current data (school finances, enrollment and other student information, and economic and price information) and for the first time incorporated information about the capital costs associated with providing and maintaining school buildings and facilities. The Cost Panel also carefully evaluated the recommendations of the Best Practices Panel to determine if additional resources were needed in the QEM in order to implement these recommendations. The Cost Panel concluded that the QEM already contains sufficient resources to implement the Best Practices Panel recommendations. Table A-1 shows the Commission’s estimates of state funding levels required to maintain the current service level in Oregon schools (the Baseline) and to fully fund a system of highly effective schools as recommended by the Quality Education Commission—the Fully Implemented Model. (Quality Education Commission, 2010)

*Table C-1
QEM Funding Requirements (Millions of Dollars)*

	2009-2011	2011-2013	2013-2015
Actual State Funding	\$5,783.0	\$5,725.0	
State Funding Requirement for the Baseline	\$5,981.1	\$6,710.9	\$7,410.1
Percent Change from Prior Biennium		12.20%	10.42%
State Funding Requirement for Fully Implemented Model	\$7,879.1	\$8,747.7	\$9,626.5
Percent Change from Prior Biennium		11.02%	10.04%
Funding Gap: Fully Implemented Model minus Baseline	\$1,898.0	\$2,036.8	\$2,216.5
Percent Change from Prior Biennium		7.28%	8.82%

Source: Quality Education Commission, 2010

School Funding Facts

State appropriations over last decade are as follows:

- 2001 biennium: \$5.2 billion, reduced to \$4.75 billion through five special sessions
- 2003 biennium: \$5.2 billion, reduced to \$4.9 billion
- 2005 biennium: \$5.263 billion
- 2007 biennium: \$6.3 billion, reduced to \$6.185 through allotment cuts
- 2009 biennium: \$6 billion, reduced to \$5.783 billion through allotment cuts
- 2011 biennium: \$5.725 billion (\$3 billion below the state's own QEM adequacy mark)

Using the U.S. Inflation Calculator, the 10-year inflation rate (2001–2011) was 28 percent. The amount of \$4.75 billion, the ultimate resting place of the 2001-03 biennial budget after cuts, would inflate to \$6.08 billion for the 2011–2013 biennium. The current budget is not only \$3 billion below QEM target of \$8,747.7 billion, it is \$355 million less than the 2001 recession-level budget, adjusted for inflation.

Public Employee Retirement System (PERS)

An additional cost for school districts was published September 28, 2012. PERS announced that hundreds of millions of dollars in higher pension costs in the budget starting July 1, 2013, is the result of an unfunded liability that has grown to \$16 billion. PERS investment income comes from investment earnings on PERS \$55 billion in holdings and the employer contributions from most of the state and local government agencies within Oregon, including school districts.

PERS assumes an average investment earnings of 8 percent, but last year those earnings came closer to 2 percent, continuing a trend that started when investment earnings began dropping in 2008. To make sure there's enough money to pay the pensions of PERS retirees in the future, PERS is increasing the amount public employers have to contribute. For next year's budget, contributions for all of the PERS employers will increase by a total of \$1 billion -- about \$130 million of that just for the 51,000 employees in the state budget.

This creates an even larger cost for K-12 schools. The \$130 million increased state PERS costs will come from the \$15 billion state General and Lottery fund, which provides a major source of K-12 funding (\$5.8 billion statewide), and the school districts will also directly bear the impact of their own PERS increases. Across the state, employer contributions will increase by five percentage points, from about 16.3 percent of total payroll to about 21.4 percent of payroll. In 2013, school districts will pay more—on average about 26.7 percent of their payroll. (Oregonian, 2012,)

Changes in High School Graduation Requirements: Essential Skills

Starting with the senior class of 2012, it will be tougher to graduate from high school in Oregon. To earn a diploma, students will need to successfully complete the credit requirements, demonstrate proficiency in the Essential Skills (ES), and meet the personalized learning requirements. The Essential Skills (ES) are 21st century skills needed for success in college, the workplace, and civic life. Oregon will be the 27th state to require students to pass a state high school graduation exam. California began requiring students to pass state reading and math exams in 2006. In 2008, Washington graduated its first class of students who were required to pass state reading and writing exams to get a diploma. Oregon will be one of just two states (the other one is New Jersey) to allow students to substitute a locally graded essay or work sample if they choose not to take the state test. Oregon's class of 2012 is the first class required to pass a reading test to graduate. The class of 2013 will be required to pass both a reading and a writing test, and the class of 2014 will need to pass reading, writing, and applied math tests in order to graduate. These new requirements are designed to better prepare each student for success in college, work, and citizenship.

The new Oregon Diploma requirements were adopted by the State Board of Education in 2008, and the roll-out for the requirements was described in terms of a student's high school graduation year (e.g., class of 2012, 2013, etc.). To avoid creating additional requirements for students whose graduation year changed when they decided on a fifth year of high school,

requirements are described in terms of the year the student first entered the high school system. In this way, the diploma requirements are applied to students based on the school year they were first enrolled in grade 9, also referred to as the cohort year.

Table C-2 shows the implementation timeline based on the year first enrolled in grade 9. The State Board has approved three assessment options for students to demonstrate Essential Skill proficiency: (1) OAKS state test, or (2) work samples using official scoring guides, or (3) other approved standardized tests (e.g., SAT, PLAN, ACT, PSAT, Work Keys, Compass, ASSET) (Oregon Department of Education 2010).

*Table C-2
Oregon Department of Education Graduation Requirements, by Students' Cohort Year*

2009–2011	Requirements for students by expected graduation year		
	2012	2013	2014 and beyond
English/LA – 4 credits	English/LA – 4 credits	English/LA – 4 credits	English/LA – 4 credits
Math – 3 credits	Math – 3 credits	Math – 3 credits	Math – 3 credits; content at Algebra I and above 2
Science – 2 credits	Science – 3 credits Scientific inquiry and lab experiences ¹	Science – 3 credits	Science – 3 credits
Social Sciences – 3 credits	Social Sciences – 3 credits	Social Sciences – 3 credits	Social Sciences – 3 credits
PE – 1 credit	PE – 1 credit	PE – 1 credit	PE – 1 credit
Health – 1 credit	Health – 1 credit	Health – 1 credit	Health – 1 credit
CTE/Arts/2nd Lang. – 1 credit	CTE/Arts/2nd Lang.– 3 credits	CTE/Arts/2nd Lang.– 3 credits	CTE/Arts/2nd Lang.– 3 credits
Electives – 9 credits	Electives – 6 credits	Electives – 6 credits	Electives – 6 credits
24 Credits	24 Credits	24 Credits	24 Credits
NA	Essential Skills Reading	Essential Skills Reading Writing	Essential Skills Reading Writing Applied Math
Personalized Learning Requirements	Personalized Learning Requirements	Personalized Learning Requirements	Personalized Learning Requirements

Source: Oregon Department of Education, 2010

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Another challenge Oregon schools face in the near future is K–12 curriculum alignment changes and the resulting adjustment to instructional materials. Adopted by 45 states in the U.S., the Common Core State Standards are a set of shared K-12 learning expectations for students in English-language arts and mathematics. These two new sets of content standards replace

Oregon's current standards in English language arts and mathematics. While the new standards are similar in ways to Oregon's current standards, some content has been shifted and the level of rigor has increased to ensure college and career readiness at the end of high school.

For English Language Arts, the CCSS expect students to independently read and understand texts that are more challenging than traditionally used in the classroom. College reading material has maintained or increased its complexity; reading materials in K–12 have become less complex and easier to read. The reading difficulty level of workplace material is also often greater than that required of grade 12 students.

The CCSS includes standards written at grade levels 9/10 and 11/12. The CCSS include standards at grades 6–12 for literacy across subject areas. Reading a science text requires different skills than reading a novel. In CCSS, literacy is a shared responsibility within the school across all subjects. The literacy standards are designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to be able to read and write effectively in all of their classes.

For over a decade, international achievement comparisons, such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), have shown the United States to have mediocre achievement in mathematics. Research also indicates that high performing countries organize math content around fewer concepts. CCSS was modeled after international standards, which allows for a shift away from the “mile-wide, inch-deep” curriculum, and prepares students with the skills they need to be competitive in the global marketplace. This content focus at each grade allows for in-depth study. The CCSS for mathematics also provides a balanced combination of math skills and understanding.

The 6–8 mathematics content standards are organized by grade level, but are designed more like high school standards with a primary emphasis on algebra, geometry, and statistics. The high school content standards are organized by Conceptual Categories rather than grade level, with the goal of preparing all students for advanced mathematics.

With these new standards comes a new assessment system that will replace Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) in 2014-15. Oregon is a member of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced), a state-led consortium working to develop next-generation assessments that accurately measure student progress toward college- and career-readiness. Smarter Balanced is one of two multistate consortia awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education in 2010 to develop an assessment system aligned to the [Common Core State Standards \(CCSS\)](#) by the 2014-15 school year.