



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

Oregon GEAR UP 2013–14 Evaluation Report
The Ford Family Foundation

November 2014

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About Education Northwest

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

Education Northwest conducted this external evaluation of GEAR UP services funded by The Family Ford Foundation at the request of Oregon GEAR UP program administrators. The intent of the evaluation is to support implementation of GEAR UP in rural middle and high schools in Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties.

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Executive Summary

For more than a decade, Oregon GEAR UP has provided college and career readiness supports 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 aspirational "40-40-20" goal and can be sustained after funding ends.

In the 2011-12 school year, The Ford Family Foundation and Oregon GEAR UP formed a unique partnership to provide GEAR UP services to rural districts in Douglas, Curry, and Coos counties. The GEAR UP funding is focused on supporting the 2017 graduating class as they progress from seventh grade to high school graduation, while maintaining services for lower 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.

The Oregon GEAR UP model has five dimensions: Rigor, Relevance to Career, Right Classes, Relationships, and Raising Awareness. The Five "R's" 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 postsecondary success.

Education Northwest collaborated with the Oregon GEAR UP team to design an external evaluation plan of the six-year GEAR UP program funded by The Family Ford Foundation. The findings reported in this annual report reflect Oregon GEAR UP operations during the 2011-2014 school years that targeted services to students in grades 7-9.

Principals and coordinators expressed high praise for the professionalism of the Oregon GEAR UP staff members and the quality of services the team provided. They said the resources, tool kits, and professional development activities were essential to implementation of GEAR UP in their rural schools. Because of GEAR UP, the schools were able to offer a wider range of college preparation courses, start college and career planning with students earlier, and build stronger partnerships with postsecondary education institutions and community members. Moreover, Oregon GEAR UP helped establish school-based teams and networks among principals and coordinators that focused on helping students better prepare for their transition to postsecondary education.

Despite the challenges of the economy and the rising costs of postsecondary education, there were several indicators of positive change in GEAR UP schools. The percentage of students completing scholarship and financial aid applications increased and remained higher than the

statewide average during the project. Students and parents raised their aspirations from enrolling in college to obtaining a postsecondary degree or certificate. The percentage of educators who expected and believed that their students would enroll in postsecondary education increased across the project years, but consistently remained lower than the expectations of students and their parents. Over three quarters of the educators said they expected their students to attend college, but less than half expected their students to obtain a college degree. Further study is needed to determine if these expectations are influenced by the educators' perception of the students' abilities or other factors such as financial or family concerns.

Increasing the rigor of academic courses was a strong focus of Oregon GEAR UP schools. During the project, the percentage of educators and students who said their school provided more challenging courses increased over time. The participating schools also increased the opportunities for students to take dual credit courses. Compared to the statewide average, a higher percentage of GEAR UP students enrolled in dual credit courses between 2008 and 2012, and their overall rate of increased participation outpaced the rest of the state. The success of the intentional efforts to include low-income, rural students in dual credit courses is evident among the GEAR UP schools. For the class of 2008, 85 percent of the students who enrolled in dual credit courses enrolled in college.

The primary reasons that seniors decided not to enroll in postsecondary education were the high cost of college and their need or desire to work. The lowest percentage identified poor grades, lack of interest, or family responsibilities as reasons for not attending college. There was a substantial increase in the percentage of middle school students who said someone from school had talked to them about college and financial aid increased. The percentage of seniors who said someone had discussed financial aid with them increased from 51 to 71 percent.

The seniors' perceptions of adult expectations, their own postsecondary aspirations, and the level of support they received about postsecondary options differed based on their perceived academic ability, gender, and race/ethnicity. A higher percentage of seniors who said they were "A" or "B" students or were female agreed that they expected to get a degree and that they had teacher support to achieve their postsecondary goal. The majority of all seniors, regardless of race or ethnicity, said their parents expected them to go to college. Although the majority of seniors in each racial/ethnic group said they received support and expected to get a degree, the percentages varied. Compared to American Indian or White seniors, a higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino seniors agreed that they received help from school and adults expected them to get a college degree. However, the percentage of seniors who said someone from school talked to them about challenging courses and that their parents were actively involved in their learning was highest for White students.

Clearly, Oregon GEAR UP schools made progress toward building a college-going culture for students. There was a large increase in the percentage of educators who participated in college and career awareness activities in both middle and high school grades. In particular, educators

became more actively involved in giving students information on financial aid, scholarships, and college choices. Below are recommendations from students, principals, and coordinators on next steps for the program.

- Provide high quality support and guidance to schools that are planning for or in the early stages of implementing GEAR UP in schools.
- Continue outreach and technical assistance to engage principals and district administrators in GEAR UP.
- Ensure that sufficient time is allocated for management of the school-based GEAR UP program.
- Differentiate services to address the unique needs of students who are male, as well as students who view themselves as average or below average students. Increase educators' capacity to provide culturally responsive instruction for students from different race/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Strengthen efforts to help educators increase their expectations and involvement in preparing students to enter and succeed in postsecondary education.

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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, 2012). 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.

Access to higher education remains a challenge for many students who face barriers to college entry and persistence. Low-income students and students who would be 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.

The Ford Family Foundation

The Ford Family Foundation is committed to providing resources that will build individuals’ capacity to become *successful citizens* and, in turn, their ability to contribute to the *vitality* of their community. Through its long-standing Ford Scholars program, the Foundation provides scholarships for high school seniors with limited financial resources to attend college. The

Foundation also helps community college graduates go on to 4-year higher education institutions. In the 2011–12 school year, The Ford Family Foundation partnered with Oregon GEAR UP to expand GEAR UP in 10 rural districts in Douglas, Coos, and Curry counties. Through a competitive process, the school districts applied for a six and one-half year matching grant to increase the college-going rates of their students. Oregon GEAR UP at Oregon State University is the fiscal agent and administrator of the program.

Oregon GEAR UP

Oregon GEAR UP believes that postsecondary education is possible for every student regardless of economic background, and strives to empower each student 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 Oregon GEAR UP's activities align with the essential features of effective backbone organizations and collective impact initiatives: guiding vision and strategy, supporting aligned activities, establishing shared measurement practices, building public will, and mobilizing funding (Turner, Merchant, Kania, & Martin, 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 to provide educational opportunities for students. The program addresses academic rigor, links educational and career choices to course-taking behaviors, provides opportunities for students to explore career interests, supports family and community engagement, and provides information about applying to and paying for college. Oregon GEAR UP 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.

Support Implementation of the Five “R’s” Model for Change

The Oregon GEAR UP model has five dimensions: Rigor, Right Classes, Relevance to Career, Relationships, and Raising Awareness (Figure 1). The model aligns with research-based recommendations on college readiness (Tierney, Bailey, Constantine et al., 2009).

The Five “R’s” also align with the state’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. A description and suggested strategies for each “R” are summarized in Table 1.

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

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, families, 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 with program resources. Program participants also receive a weekly news bulletin focused on grant management that shares information about events, research, resources, and program expectations. Table 2 provides examples of research briefs and toolkits that program participants and the general public can access on the GEAR UP website (<http://gearup.ous.edu>).

Figure 1
Oregon GEAR UP’s Five “R’s”: A Model for Change

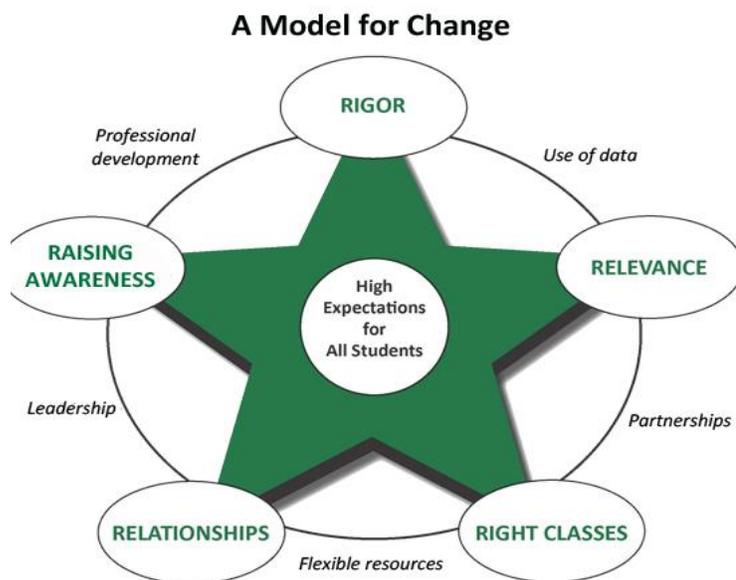


Table 1
Five “R’s”: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies

“R”	Action Steps and Implementation Strategies
RIGOR	<p>Provide appropriately rigorous courses for all students as well as necessary academic support programs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a curriculum that prepares all students for college and includes opportunities for college-level work for advanced students • Identify existing assessments, standards, and data available to provide an estimate of college readiness • Utilize performance data to identify and inform students about their academic proficiency and college readiness • Create an individualized plan for students who are not on track
RELEVANCE	<p>Link students’ career aspirations with their educational goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide hands-on opportunities for students to explore different careers, and assist them in aligning postsecondary plans with their career aspirations • Provide students with opportunities to explore their career interests and engage business and community partners in the process
RIGHT CLASSES	<p>Ensure that all students understand early in their school careers what curriculum is necessary to prepare them for college-level work and future careers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a 4-year course trajectory with each ninth-grader that leads to fulfilling a college-ready curriculum • Ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum
RELATIONSHIPS	<p>Foster relationships that encourage students’ academic success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide mentoring for students by recent high school graduates who enrolled in college or other college-educated adults • Facilitate student relationships with peers who plan to attend college through a structured program of extracurricular activities
RAISING AWARENESS	<p>Promote awareness of college selection, admissions, financial aid, and other critical steps for college entry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure students prepare for, and take, the appropriate college entrance or admissions exam early • Assist students in their college search • Coordinate college visits • Assist students in completing college applications • Organize workshops for parents and students to inform them prior to 12th grade about college affordability, scholarship and aid sources, and financial aid processes • Help students and parents complete financial aid forms prior to eligibility deadlines • Provide financial aid information to students, families, teachers, and counselors • Ensure that parents, families, and community members understand how to pay for college and provide support for students in doing so

Note: Oregon GEAR UP’s Five “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, Constantine, et al., 2009).

State and National Events

Oregon GEAR UP organizes two statewide meetings for program participants: (1) the SUCCESS Retreat, attended by school or district teams, and (2) 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 for educators, parents, and students to participate in 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.

Table 2
Oregon GEAR UP Website Resources

Selected List of Research Briefs	Toolkits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Knowledge: What Latino Parents Need to Know and Why They Don't Know It • Creating College Readiness: Profiles of 38 Schools That Know How • Creating Schools That Support Success for English Language Learners • Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society • Getting There—and Beyond: Building a Culture of College-going in High Schools • High Expectations: A Key to Success for All • High School Students as Mentors • How Youth Learn: Mindsets • Latino Youth and the Pathway to College • Making the Grade in College Prep: A Guide for Improving College Preparation Programs • Parent and Community Involvement in a College/Career-Ready Culture • Peer Tutoring and Mentoring Services for Disadvantaged Secondary School Students • Preparing Students for College and Career • Preparing Students for College: What High Schools Are Doing and How Their Actions Influence Ninth Graders' College Attitudes, Aspirations, and Plans • The Education Trust Publications for Educators • Reclaiming the American Dream • Redefining College Readiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy—Building Partnerships by Telling Your GEAR UP Story • Campus Visits for Younger Students Toolkit • Career and College Day Toolkit • College and Career Center Toolkit • College Preparation: Timeline and Resources for School Leaders • College Visits Toolkit • Community Engagement Toolkit • Creating a SUCCESS Team • GEAR UP Brochure • 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 • Student Guide to Job Shadow Parent Engagement Toolkit • Posters: The ABC's of College • Posters: The Benefits of College • The Transition to College Toolkit • The Transition to High School Toolkit • 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.edu/)

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 coordinates 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 2).

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. This 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 receive technical assistance on strategies to increase community engagement in GEAR UP. The school specialist provides consultation on how to plan and conduct events and/or communication campaigns to tell parents and community members about the program and to encourage their active support. Business and community members support 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 the averages of GEAR UP Ford 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 from the Oregon GEAR UP student, parent, and educator survey data that provide 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 (OSAC), 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, a GEAR UP team member 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 three 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. In September 2014, Oregon GEAR UP received notification of its third seven-year federal grant that will provide schools in 21 rural communities with college readiness services from 2014 to 2021.

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 design of Oregon GEAR UP includes fundamental features of “backbone organizations” that support collaborative and collective impact efforts (Turner, Merchant, Kania, & Martin, 2012). As the statewide administrator of GEAR UP, the program team provides oversight and technical assistance to 13 schools located in 10 rural communities funded through The Ford Family Foundation.

Equally important, Oregon GEAR UP organizes opportunities for school teams to use research and their own data to plan and review program implementation. Schools also have opportunities to network with other schools to share their successes and innovative strategies, and brainstorm solutions to common challenges.

The remaining chapters present the findings of the evaluation. Chapter 2 reports how school principals viewed GEAR UP and Chapter 3 provides the perspectives of GEAR UP coordinators. Chapter 4 reports the baseline trends of the program's long-term outcomes and Chapters 5 through 7, organized by the Five "R's," include a summary of the interventions implemented by the 10 clusters and relevant findings from participant surveys. The final chapter reports senior survey data disaggregated by student group, including perceived academic ability, gender, and race/ethnicity. The intent of this report is to provide information about the benefits of Oregon GEAR UP and to inform program-improvement decisions.

Chapter 2

GEAR UP From the Principal's Perspective

Creating a College-going Culture

Principals credited GEAR UP with providing crucial technical assistance and financial resources to build a college-going culture. They described GEAR UP as “really supportive and helpful” and said that “it’s been a big change for us.” As two principals explained,

I can't imagine our school without GEAR UP. It's been an incredible experience. Honestly, I thought it was going to be one of those where-can-I-find-the-time-for-another-meeting things, but it hasn't. (Principal)

We're just excited to have the opportunity. [GEAR UP] allowed us to do things that needed to be done, at a time when budgets weren't strong [and we] couldn't have done them otherwise. (Principal)

This chapter describes GEAR UP and its benefits for schools from the principal's perspective. We gathered the information for this chapter through interviews with nine principals of GEAR UP schools from the 2011–2017 cohort. The principals' experience varied from being in the first year as principal to having been principal for over twenty years, and they came from a range of school types: two middle schools, three high schools, three schools that combined grades 7–12, and one K–12 school.

The interview protocol included questions about the benefits of the program to the school and to students, partnerships with other education institutions and local businesses, specific strategies and activities that GEAR UP funded, the extent to which these strategies supported the development of a college-going culture, barriers and challenges to implementing GEAR UP or creating a college-going culture, and the Oregon GEAR UP services that were most helpful. A more detailed description of the evaluation methods is in Appendix A and the interview protocol is in Appendix B. The following sections summarize the main ideas that emerged from these interviews, breaking out the findings by Oregon GEAR UP services, the

Key findings

Oregon GEAR UP ...

- Helped build a college-going culture in the school
- Increased opportunities to collaborate with other principals of rural schools
- Provided timely, high quality support services
- Expanded the school's dual credit and college-preparation curriculum
- Increased family and community partnerships

Five “R’s,” challenges, and sustainability. We close the chapter with lessons learned from principals in the 2011–2017 cohort.

Oregon GEAR UP Services

Principals were most enthusiastic about opportunities for collaboration—the chance to learn from peer administrators and to have time to talk and plan with their own staff.

Principals appreciated the personal connection and support provided by Jerry Lynch and John Lenssen, consultants retained by Oregon GEAR UP to increase principal engagement and support. Principals enjoyed the chance to talk and brainstorm with them and appreciated the materials they provided—books that they described as “amazing” and “just what I needed” and research briefs that were “fantastic.” For example, one principal commented that the briefs “are well put together and, for those targeted to where we’re at, very helpful.” The principal planned to keep and refer to the briefs during the coming year. While seven of the nine interviewees had positive things to say about the consultants, one principal reported concern about his limited personal contact with the consultant, saying “it hasn’t lived up to what I understood the support would be.”

Principals also valued the chance to connect with other GEAR UP principals and with their own school teams. As one interviewee explained, it can be “pretty isolating to be the only administrator” at a school, and that GEAR UP administrator meetings provided a chance for collegial talk about what was happening in each of their schools and across the state. Principals shared their successes and challenges and said that “it’s nice to know you’re not alone in your day-to-day struggles.” Principals also said that the inspirational presenters and team planning time the SUCCESS Retreat provided had been “really beneficial.”

Other supports that principals found helpful were the newsletter, direct support from the OUS GEAR UP team, and the GEAR UP surveys. Four principals said that the newsletter was helpful, at least sometimes, and was important for keeping GEAR UP issues in front of them. While the newsletter was useful for providing information to staff members, some found its relevance to be “hit and miss.” Three principals said they were grateful for the team’s direct support, particularly the technical assistance visits and ongoing support for their coordinators. Finally, one principal said that the student and staff surveys were “tremendously helpful,” but explained that it was difficult to track and compare the responses since the surveys were not administered at consistent times across school years.

Reaching Higher and Rigor

Campus Visits Inspire College Aspirations

One of the primary ways that GEAR UP helped schools to create and foster a college-going culture was by encouraging students to reach higher. Through GEAR UP, schools worked to

help students see their own potential and develop self-confidence about their ability to be successful in the postsecondary paths they chose to pursue. As one principal explained,

Around the same time that GEAR UP came in—and connected to GEAR UP—we started talking to kids about an open mind, a mindset. Kids' potential is not limited. When they haven't done something, they just 'haven't done it yet, haven't got there yet.' [It's the] idea that you can move forward with whatever they want to do. (Principal)

Principals explained that college visits were an important way that schools helped students feel connected to college, “to see themselves going there,” and to learn about all of the options beyond 4-year bachelor’s degree programs. Though many schools also offered career exploration activities (e.g., classroom assignments for career planning that used the online Oregon Career Information System) or brought in community speakers to teach students about different careers, principals most frequently credited college visits as key opportunities to expose students to their postsecondary options and to inspire students to pursue postsecondary education by helping them to find a program that matched their individual interests. Principals said that college visits helped students to “see that that world and those opportunities are very tangible” and that for students from rural areas it is “seriously a culture shock for them.” Three principals also mentioned sending students to summer programs on college campuses (e.g., leadership conferences and science camps).

Some schools took a systemic approach to structuring their college visit schedule to inspire younger students about college and to provide opportunities for students to learn about a variety of postsecondary programs. Three principals mentioned following a planned college visit sequence for bringing students in different grade levels to different types of colleges. By staggering college visits across grade levels and exposing students to different types of colleges and postsecondary programs, schools helped students start to think about college from an early age and to see postsecondary planning as something important. Visiting a range of program types (including, for example, culinary training) also helps students find a path that better aligns with their interests. One principal emphasized that even for younger students, these trips are meaningful for learning about the college experience:

I know the sixth-grade college visits aren't just about going to see the gyms and walking into a classroom; [our kids are] talking to students and staff about how that education works [and learning about the students' and staff's] own experiences. Instructors talk about the skills needed to access this learning. [Our kids come] out with a pretty real experience of what was expected. (Principal)

Students Are Taking More Rigorous Courses

The majority of principals said that they focused their GEAR UP funds on strengthening course rigor. As one principal explained, the downside of focusing GEAR UP funds on rigor is that it does not leave much money for activities like college visits, but the academic piece is crucial: “If kids aren’t prepared to complete high school, they won’t be able to do any kind of

postsecondary program.” One principal said that this focus on academic readiness is already creating a culture shift among students and that “kids are understanding that they need these essential skills to graduate.”

Schools also increased rigor by supporting alignment with the Common Core State Standards. For example, two schools used GEAR UP funds for development time that allowed staff members to work together on aligning their curricula with the standards, and another school purchased manipulatives and CDs with course materials for their new math curriculum. Other schools focused on aligning the curriculum across middle and high schools or across high schools and postsecondary. One middle school principal explained that GEAR UP “allowed us to coordinate and align curriculum with the high school in ways that we’d never been able to do previously.” Those middle and high schools have worked closely to ensure that as they align to new standards and address critical skills for postsecondary, no gaps occur where the staff from one school assumes that the other school will cover something. Another school has worked with its local community college to identify specifically what students need to be able to do to succeed in postsecondary—for example, the college told the school that incoming students sometimes struggle with reading non-fiction and stressed the importance of teaching students to read informational texts and source documents. Other examples of supporting course rigor include offering Advanced Placement courses and augmenting courses to provide additional support in preparing students for specific careers (e.g., purchasing a biomedical computer program to help anatomy/physiology students prepare for employment in the medical field).

Another primary means through which schools increased rigor was by partnering with local postsecondary institutions to offer dual credit/dual enrollment opportunities. Some schools offered dual credit classes at the high school and other schools provided opportunities for students to attain dual credit through courses held at the community college. These courses included core classes like writing and math as well as electives and Career and Technical Education classes relating to agriculture, business, and health occupations. Principals noted that GEAR UP emphasized the importance of college and encouraged students to take advantage of these opportunities to earn college credit during high school. As one principal explained,

Our goal is to make sure every student has college credit before high school graduation. This is an official goal through GEAR UP. College-bound kids are easy; it's harder to motivate the kids who intend to start working right away. They don't understand that any postsecondary training is 'college.' They're starting to get it now, though, and that's only because of GEAR UP. (Principal)

Table 3 shows the postsecondary institutions that the nine principals mentioned as sites for campus visits or as partners for dual credit or dual enrollment programs.

*Table 3
Principals' Reports of their Partnerships With Postsecondary Institutions*

Institution	College Visits	Dual Credit/Dual Enrollment
4-year Colleges or Universities		
Oregon State University	2	0
Southern Oregon University	1	0
University of Oregon	4	0
Western Oregon University	1	0
<i>4-year college total</i>	8	0
2-year Community Colleges		
Linn Benton Community College	0	1
Southwestern Oregon Community College	4	2
Umpqua Community College	3	2
<i>2-year college total</i>	7	5
Overall total	15	5

Note: The table summarizes information collected during interviews with principals and may not include partnerships with all postsecondary institutions.

Relevance, Relationships, and Raising Awareness

Schools Help Students to Plan for Postsecondary From an Early Age

GEAR UP also shaped schools' culture by increasing the focus on, and planning for, postsecondary education and career options. GEAR UP encouraged conversations about college, and principals observed that students and staff members are now talking about postsecondary more frequently. One principal said that the "main benefit" of GEAR UP was that "we actually talk about college!" Another principal explained how these conversations are helping students learn that there are many possible routes to postsecondary success:

[We] focus on 'it's a journey.' Staff bring in banners and t-shirts from their own colleges and talk to kids about their postsecondary experiences. [They] emphasize that not all went straight to college and that people can take different paths to get to your goal. Kids are really surprised by their teachers' different paths. (Principal)

Principals explained that their school cultures have shifted so that college is now part of students' dialogue in a way that it never used to be and that students in GEAR UP are "much more knowledgeable" than students in previous years about different colleges, programs, and degree options. This new focus on postsecondary through GEAR UP has helped students to buy into the postsecondary planning and preparation process—such as helping students see the value of earning college credit before leaving high school. One principal went on to explain that this focus on, and support for, postsecondary planning has been particularly important for students from poor families and for those whose parents did not finish high school themselves,

since these students and families are less familiar with the range of postsecondary options and the processes for pursuing them.

While some of this culture shift can be attributed to visibility campaigns, such as designating days for wearing college or GEAR UP t-shirts or decorating hallways with college posters, schools also focused on creating structured processes for helping students to plan for postsecondary. One principal explained how the school leveraged the Education Plan and Profile, a statewide requirement for high school graduation, and used this requirement as an opportunity to emphasize the value of planning for postsecondary education and career goals:

[The] biggest area [that GEAR UP has impacted] is that it's given us a postsecondary focus. Before, our focus was literally to get the diploma and then it's out of our hands. GEAR UP has totally changed our way of thinking. Now [the focus is] postsecondary. We know they'll get the diploma. What's the goal after? It's helped the staff focus too and be really careful. Even before GEAR UP, we had six-year plans, but stopped at senior year. Now we talk to seniors and sketch that out into their future beyond high school. [GEAR UP has] given staff (myself included) better focus on where we want students to be. (Principal)

Other ways that schools helped students to plan for postsecondary were through structured career exploration and planning activities. Five principals described how career speakers (either at a regional career fair or at the school site for career fairs or lunchtime discussions) helped students to learn about different career options and the steps needed to follow these paths. Speakers included professionals from the community and representatives from postsecondary institutions (e.g., the Northwest Culinary Institute) who talked to students about the skills and training that they themselves have or that they look for in students or new employees. One principal said that they also recruit recent high school alumni who have gone on to graduate with different types of postsecondary credentials (e.g., dental assistant, welding certificate) because GEAR UP students can relate better to these young alumni. Similarly, two principals said that they invite recent high school alumni who are now college students to come back to share their experiences and what they wish they had known before starting college. As one principal explained, the testimonies from these near peers are “powerful because they just graduated last year” and that having the advice come from recent graduates makes it more real for the GEAR UP students.

Three principals described using the online Oregon Career Information System (CIS) for career exploration, either in a GEAR UP class, advisory period, or core academic class. For example, at one school, students do a career research assignment in their seventh-grade English language arts class to fulfill the district's writing sample requirement. The students use CIS to do a self-assessment inventory to identify their own skills, explore how those skills connect to career opportunities, and learn about the types of training they would need to pursue those careers.

Finally, two principals said that they started GEAR UP classes to help students plan for postsecondary. At one school, the GEAR UP class is for seventh- and eighth-grade students and addresses study skills and financial literacy in addition to career exploration. In another cluster, the seventh-grade GEAR UP class is followed by a ninth-grade class which provides an opportunity for students to revisit and reassess their career goals.

GEAR UP Bolsters Staff Buy-in and Supports Community Partnerships

Five of the nine principals reported that staff buy-in and staff expectations for students have improved through participation in GEAR UP. They explained that “people are starting to ask more questions” and that staff members are starting to have more conversations with students about college-going. By going on college visits through GEAR UP, staff members are starting to take on an informal mentoring role, using these trips as opportunities to tell the students about their own college experiences and to gain a better understanding of what it is like to be a college student today. Principals also noted improvements in staff expectations about whether students will go to college. As one principal explained, “staff have had kids go through GEAR UP classes and now kids are getting an idea of what they need to do to be successful beyond school, so staff are getting behind it more.”

While postsecondary institutions were the primary outside partners that principals described, some schools also worked with local businesses and other programs that support college and career readiness. Two of the nine principals mentioned business and community partners, including working closely with the Rotary Club for career fairs; having business leaders come to the school to do mock job interviews with students; and winning an apprenticeship grant from the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries to support students taking courses in welding, fabrication, and road construction. One of these schools also partnered with a local hospital to write a grant to create a new program—“On Track”—for matching high school upperclassmen with ninth-grade students for tutoring and paying these tutors with scholarships.

Three principals reported participating in ASPIRE and one more hopes to partner with ASPIRE in the future. One of the ASPIRE principals explained that GEAR UP and ASPIRE complement each other well—the school uses GEAR UP funds to host a financial night and then ASPIRE mentors help the students to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form. Similarly, GEAR UP supports college visits and ASPIRE mentors help the students to process the visits once they get back to school and to fill out their college applications. Four schools participate in Talent Search, a federal TRIO program, which helps students with scholarship applications, financial aid, and some college visits.

Schools Support Students Applying For College

Four principals described how GEAR UP helped support students submitting college applications, financial aid forms, and scholarship applications. Two principals reported hosting FAFSA nights to give parents and students information about financial aid. Principals also described having the GEAR UP coordinator meet with seniors individually to provide extra

help, hosting evening events to help parents understand what to expect and what is needed for upcoming deadlines, and making plans to host a college application week over summer vacation to help students with their essays and other application materials.

Challenges to Developing a College-Going Culture

Although principals noted that staff members are starting to improve, the primary challenge for developing a college-going culture (reported by seven of the nine principals interviewed) was the difficulty in cultivating staff buy-in and high staff expectations for the students. Principals explained that “people think GEAR UP is just one more thing to do,” and that while staff members do not necessarily discourage college aspirations, it is “not part of their vernacular” to facilitate these conversations and provide these supports for students. As one principal explained,

The biggest challenge was getting buy-in from the beginning—staff, not students. In education, we see so many things thrown at us. But GEAR UP is different [because it is] meaningful for students [and provides] opportunities we couldn't afford to give them otherwise. [It was] not hard once they saw the fruit, but [it was] hard when we were planting the seeds. (Principal)

Principals struggle to make sure that staff members have high expectations for their students and that the staff is conveying the message of postsecondary for all. In some cases this stems from staff members' ideas about postsecondary success including only academic, rather than career or technical, programs. One principal also noted that, in a small school, a teacher may teach an individual student across several grades and that it can be hard to shake early impressions. Another principal explained,

[There has been a] paradigm shift, but some older staff are stuck in their ways ... They're going in the right direction, but I catch them saying things like 'this kid can't do that.' It's our job to encourage the kids and show them how to do it. (Principal)

The second most commonly reported challenge for creating a college-going culture was the limitation of living in a small, rural community. In such areas, without many local businesses that require postsecondary training, schools struggle to find professionals to be speakers or mentors for the students and have difficulty overcoming the “lack of a college-going culture in the community.” As one principal explained, “people don't see the need to send their kids to college or trade school. That's a separate fight. That's huge.” Another principal echoed this challenge:

In a small community, the expectation is 'I grew up here, so it's good enough for my kids.' A lot has to do with the family pull. Kids stay here because they don't know anything else. With GEAR UP, kids see other possibilities and start thinking outside, but

the families still pull them back. Sometimes the kids say they're going to go to college, but we're pretty isolated and this is all they've known. (Principal)

Another difficulty for rural communities is that students' experience in isolated towns and small schools where they receive a lot of personal attention is so different from what they will experience when they go off to college. One principal explained that while some students opt to remain at home and take online courses—thereby limiting themselves to the options available through these types of programs as well as missing out on the campus experience—others try going off to college but do not last long:

Sometimes kids get to college, feel like they don't have a lot of support, then they're not as successful in a college setting, and end up coming back... Kids are also used to having a lot of one-on-one attention in a small high school. [They are] not used to being just a number, and may have trouble asking for help from professors they don't know well or who have limited time for office hours. It's not that they're not getting a rigorous high school curriculum—we have some of highest English and writing scores in Oregon!—it's that going off to college is so different from this small high school and town. (Principal)

Finally, some challenges relate to the logistics of GEAR UP reporting and staffing. Two principals said that GEAR UP reporting has been a challenge and that the paperwork can be overwhelming. Two principals also said that over the first three years of the grant, they struggled to figure out how best to structure and support the coordinator role to accomplish their schools' goals. One explained that there was tension about how best to allocate GEAR UP funds—either to free up time during the school day for the coordinator to work with students and to coordinate GEAR UP activities and events, or to focus the funds on activities and task all teachers with advising responsibilities instead of providing time for the coordinator to fill this role. The other explained that it took until this year to structure and to fill the coordinator position successfully:

What is the role of the coordinator? How as a district do we set up that employee successfully? Now we're in Year 3 and I feel like I now have someone in place who is capable of maintaining the grant organizationally and conceptually... We hired a full time counselor and GEAR UP is part of the job description. (Principal)

Other challenges, each mentioned by one principal, included the following:

- The difficulty of helping students in poverty to see postsecondary education as a possibility—especially given the price—and to help them plan for the future when “survival is where they're at.”
- A lack of understanding by students and parents about how important it is to be academically prepared in middle school for success in high school, and how future postsecondary success hinges on finishing high school.
- A lack of clarity about the specific skills that schools should help students acquire in preparation for Career and Technical Education postsecondary programs.

- Limited staff time for connecting with students and parents at a time, and through a channel, that will allow families to be most receptive to support about planning for postsecondary.

Lessons Learned

- Principals need a system of support that actively engages them as leaders and recognizes their specific needs. GEAR UP provides this through facilitated networks, opportunities for peer learning, and support from project management.
- Principals should be actively involved in the planning and implementation of college-going supports at their schools. Principals have deep knowledge and experience that can help support the planning process. By working closely with school staff members about these activities, principals will also be better able to articulate the school's successes and the value of these supports in outreach to the school board and community and better positioned to advocate for additional support (e.g., through district funds or government grants).
- Schools need to be intentional about cultivating buy-in for creating a college-going culture and for setting high expectations for their students. It is important that students, school staff members, families, and the community share this vision.
- There is a need for resources tailored to rural schools. These schools face additional challenges to creating a college-going culture in communities with high poverty and/or low historical college attendance.
- Schools need to integrate college-going supports into their school culture, practices, and budgets for sustainability. This includes, for example, staff time for planning and delivering activities and for advising students.

Summary

Principals see GEAR UP as a powerful resource for building a college-going culture at their schools. They appreciate the opportunities that GEAR UP provides to learn from principals in rural schools and to engage with their own staff, and they see great value in the direct support provided by the Oregon GEAR UP team. Principals view the program as a vehicle for exposing their students to college campuses, improving course rigor and expanding dual credit and dual enrollment opportunities, and helping students plan for postsecondary from an early age. Principals agree that the program helped bolster staff buy-in and community partnerships, although they admit that some challenges remain in trying to encourage a “college for all” mindset among school staff members and in the broader community. Finally, principals identify the resource constraints inherent in smaller rural communities as key barriers to establishing a college-going culture and helping students to achieve postsecondary success, indicating a need for additional resources tailored to supporting rural schools around these common challenges.

Chapter 3

GEAR UP Coordinators

The GEAR UP coordinator at each school plays a critical role in the planning and implementation of the program. This position is responsible for coordinating the site-based team that develops the site’s annual GEAR UP plan. The coordinator also manages all GEAR UP activities; submits annual plans and evaluations; monitors participation of students, parents, and educators; and reports project data. In essence, the coordinator is the “hub” of all GEAR UP activities in the schools and community—a challenging job by any standard.

Backgrounds of GEAR UP Coordinators

Coordinators are part-time employees of the school district who know the community and the needs of rural students. Many are teachers or retired educators, and others are individuals who have strong relationships with the community and experience working with students. The coordinators’ experience with GEAR UP ranged from being in their first year in the position to having been a coordinator for the entire GEAR UP grant.

Key findings

Oregon GEAR UP ...

- Established networking opportunities among schools, families, and communities
- Created linkages between middle school, high school, and postsecondary education
- Expanded college and career activities at younger grades
- Engaged schoolwide support for preparing students for postsecondary education

The coordinator’s focus group protocol included questions about the benefits of the program to the school and to students, partnerships with other education institutions and local businesses, specific strategies and activities that GEAR UP funded, challenges to implementing GEAR UP, and coordinator satisfaction with Oregon GEAR UP services. The participants of the focus group included 23 coordinators of GEAR UP schools funded through The Ford Family Foundation or the U.S. Department of Education. A more detailed description of the methods is in Appendix A and the focus group protocol is in Appendix B. The following sections summarize the main ideas that emerged from the focus group, breaking out the findings by Oregon GEAR UP services, benefits of program services, challenges, and sustainability. We close the chapter with a summary of recommendations from the coordinators who participated in the focus group.

Oregon GEAR UP Services

Coordinators expressed deep appreciation for the support and resources that the Oregon GEAR UP team provided throughout the year. The state team provided college and career resources, toolkits, activity ideas, and research briefs that were essential to coordinators' work. The coordinators said these resources made it possible for them to plan, communicate with parents and community members, and organize activities efficiently. One coordinator explained the value of these resources in this way, "*It's a Plan* – I love it. One of my bibles, *College Visits*, I lived off that this year ... Everything got done every single month. It was fabulous."

Coordinators strongly agreed that Oregon GEAR UP provided technical assistance that was a critical support for their role as coordinator and for the quality implementation of the program. The technical assistance included regularly scheduled face-to-face meetings with program consultants who specialized in college and career planning, curriculum, FAFSA/OSAC, community outreach, communication, and program management. In addition to the resources described above, coordinators could ask for hands-on help to conduct a Career Photo Booth at their career fairs, launch college application week, or provide information on GEAR UP at a school staff meeting.

Coordinators praised Oregon GEAR UP team members for answering all requests for help "immediately" regardless of size or urgency. Coordinators characterized services as "supportive, flexible, and understanding" and always "pointed them in the right direction." They reported a high level of satisfaction with Oregon GEAR UP services because of the consistency across the state team, the nurturing approach to service provision, and the personalized services they receive. The state team also "ran interference" if the coordinators encountered difficulties with their administrators, district managers, college admissions contacts, or other partners. Last, but not least, the GEAR UP team listened to their suggestions on improving the program and making their jobs easier. One coordinator summed up the group's appreciation for Oregon GEAR UP in this way:

I feel appreciated by them for what I do. I really get the sense that they are our partners instead of our bosses—or our coaches. They are accessible and our partners. They are the best support system to make coordinators not feel overwhelmed. (Coordinator)

College-Going Culture

GEAR UP elevated the importance of planning for transition to postsecondary education among students, parents, and educators. The coordinators unanimously agreed that GEAR UP "generated conversations" on college readiness that had historically been limited to academic counselors. GEAR UP has increased "buy-in" from staff members and helped many to focus more on college readiness in their courses and conversations with students. According to coordinators, GEAR UP has allowed more students to participate in planning for their postsecondary education:

Before GEAR UP, there was a certain amount of students that got into the [college readiness] program. Now all the kids have been touched with information and programs when it comes to college. Before GEAR UP, the elite group had that experience – the rest of the students just got a high school diploma. We have reached them all throughout the year. (Coordinator)

The increased focus on preparing students for college encouraged active involvement from teachers and other educators that went beyond the requirements of the annual plan. For example, a coach opened a morning study hall program to help his athletes achieve the letter grades and coursework necessary for college. In another school, athletes who failed to maintain adequate grades were not allowed to practice, received bench time, and had to attend study sessions until their grades improved.

Networking and Partnerships

The staff involvement in postsecondary awareness and planning activities ranged from “100 percent staff buy-in” to heavy involvement of just the school-based GEAR UP team. Factors that influenced staff involvement in GEAR UP included the relationships between the coordinator and school colleagues, the coordinator’s experience working in schools, and the extent to which the coordinator had time and willingness to organize work teams. Nearly all coordinators agreed that, when asked, teachers stepped up to help. GEAR UP activities that increased staff involvement included door decoration competitions, designated days that teachers wore their college T-shirts, college application week, and career fairs.

GEAR UP expanded the scope and reach of college readiness programs. GEAR UP opened conversations about college in seventh grade instead of eleventh grade and, in one district, the program started conversations beginning in third grade. Because of the program, families and students are “hearing about FAFSA in middle school and not just during the junior and senior years.” The GEAR UP “brand name” also helped to open doors at higher education. One coordinator said she “starts all emails with our ‘our GEAR UP schools.’ GEAR UP is now a name—before it was a thought.” More colleges are willing to reach out to younger students by sending speakers to middle school events and sponsoring college visits.

GEAR UP changed the environment in the school. Kids are proud they are talking about college and are saying, ‘I can go to college!’ It is changing the teachers’ perspective too. (Coordinator)

One of the most meaningful benefits of GEAR UP was the establishment of a support network among coordinators. The annual SUCCESS retreat, statewide meeting, communication materials, and informal communication systems have established a sense of community among GEAR UP schools. Oregon GEAR UP has not only linked schools within clusters, but has also facilitated meaningful connections among schools from different communities. Coordinators now have “resources that they can access if they have a question. It [GEAR UP] has opened

communication.” In addition to regularly exchanging ideas and resources, coordinators from several clusters jointly planned and sponsored annual career fairs and other events.

Five “R’s”

Implementation of each cluster’s GEAR UP program was guided by the cluster’s annual plan. As mentioned earlier, each plan organizes activities by the Oregon GEAR UP Five “R’s” framework. Because of the importance of the Five “R’s” framework, evaluators asked coordinators to describe the benefits and challenges associated with implementation of GEAR UP activities for each “R.”

Rigor

In 2014, more Oregon GEAR UP resources supported activities to increase the rigor of the school’s curriculum than supported the other four “R’s.” A substantial amount of GEAR UP resources supported professional development opportunities by paying for tuition, the costs of professional learning events or technical assistance, and/or providing funds for staff release time. Districts used program resources to support vertical and horizontal alignment of core academic curricula. GEAR UP funded



professional development events on a number of topics including poverty, writing alignment, proficiency-based instruction, project-based learning, college scholarships, college preparation, and career awareness. Districts also used GEAR UP funds to purchase classroom technology such as Smart Boards, notebooks, and other equipment. Finally, several schools purchased direct services or staff time to increase academic instruction for students. The instruction ranged from increasing dual credit opportunities to remedial tutoring for struggling students.

A few clusters used GEAR UP resources to pilot innovations that the school “knew” would be helpful but lacked the data needed to secure district support. For example, the “Math Lab” program at La Pine High School was developed through GEAR UP funds. The “Math Lab” program was viewed as a successful intervention that raised the district’s state test scores in math. The district plans to continue Math Lab after grant funding ends.

Relevance and Right Classes

GEAR UP increased opportunities for students to learn about college entrance requirements and explore potential career options. Participating schools became more intentional about including college readiness information for families and students during the critical transition between middle and high school. Oregon GEAR UP also provided funds for college-going clubs or classes. One coordinator explained the importance of the GEAR UP classes in this way:

GEAR UP helped to fill gaps. Teachers are so stressed about passing state testing. GEAR UP classes are teaching things that would be considered little things—study skills, tutoring—and are providing support that students are not getting in class. (Coordinator)

Oregon GEAR UP also provided students with opportunities to participate in camps that focused on leadership or specific careers such as engineering, natural resources, or science. The camps were a “big deal” because students stayed on college campuses and this was “the only time they [students] get away from home.”

Relationships

GEAR UP has built support for college and career readiness among families, businesses, and postsecondary institutions in Oregon’s rural communities. The program has strengthened relationships with the community by organizing student lunches with professionals, job shadowing opportunities, and career presentations.

Increasing family involvement in college preparation activities was a constant challenge for GEAR UP programs. Despite this, coordinators reported many successes related to family involvement. Parents went on field trips and campus visits, many visiting colleges for the first time. Coordinators believe GEAR UP helped parents to “believe in their kids and the possibility of college.” GEAR UP activities have increased parents’ excitement about college and even prompted some parents to enroll in postsecondary education themselves. Because of GEAR UP, the school’s communications with parents did not focus solely on academic or behavior problems. Instead, schools “contacted parents more often about other things and opened a line of communication to all parents—not just parents of ‘bad students’—that is not based on bad news.” Coordinators shared several creative ideas for organizing successful parent events including using non-school locations, using informal family networks to communicate important dates, and involving students.

Raising Awareness

GEAR UP has “opened the students’ eyes” to the possibility of college. All clusters have established or expanded their college visitation programs. Some include parents and other educators on college visits to enlist their help in supporting the students’ college aspirations and planning. Coordinators identify “fear of college” as a primary barrier for choosing and persisting in college. For students who have never been out of their rural home town, the

More students are going to college. During our first year, I had a student in my class who said, ‘I am going to be janitor at McDonalds.’ After a college visit, the student said, ‘I am going to get a business degree, and then I am going to own a McDonalds.’

(Coordinator)

fear may go beyond just college. One coordinator noted that “before GEAR UP, we used to have

first-time students at UCC freaking out, and changing their aspirations because they did not know about college.” College visits removed this barrier.

I did the pre-survey of a college visit. When we came back, all the students said they were not going to college after the college visit due to fear. We went on more college visits and this helped familiarize them with college. Fear of college is no longer a barrier.
(Coordinator)

Recommendations

Cultural shifts are difficult and often require the collective efforts of many stakeholders to achieve. Coordinators identified common challenges and lessons learned to help Oregon GEAR UP refine future program services.

- Continue the strong focus on customer service and networking. Coordinators appreciated the multiple professional development opportunities and resources that Oregon GEAR UP provided to school teams. They said the support and networking opportunities provided by the program were essential to quality implementation of GEAR UP at their schools.
- Continue outreach and technical assistance to principals. Coordinators viewed the intentional networking opportunities to sustain engagement of principals and district administrators as an essential support for their position.
- Allocate time for coordination of the GEAR UP program. Administrators and newly hired coordinators were often unaware of the amount of time required to complete the coordinator’s responsibilities. The coordinators recommended that Oregon GEAR UP require districts to allocate at least “10 hours per week” for this position, with more hours for larger districts.
- Provide assistance related to reporting requirements. Coordinators identified data collection, invoicing, and reporting as challenging. The coordinators said assistance from the Oregon GEAR UP team on explaining the reporting requirements to principals and/or the business office was helpful. Coordinators said requiring districts to submit quarterly invoices could increase program efficiency.
- Provide supports to reduce staff turnover. The high turnover in coordinators has been frustrating and contributed to inconsistency in program quality. Communications from the state GEAR UP team on the importance of staff consistency to program implementation could help. Additionally, increasing the hours allocated to this position and ensuring the salary base for the position is appropriate could improve staff retention.

Summary

Coordinators play a critical role in establishing a college-going culture in their schools, districts, and communities. The coordinators described their work as deeply satisfying and challenging. They said GEAR UP benefited students and their school in many ways. GEAR UP

expanded the range and scope of college readiness activities by increasing staff involvement, extending opportunities to students in younger grades, and including students from low-income families. The program also strengthened linkages between middle and high school, expanded partnerships with postsecondary institutions, and created relationships with the community. Coordinators described the services provide by the Oregon GEAR UP team as an important support for their position and essential to the program’s success. Their recommendations for program improvement included maintaining the high quality customer services and networking supports currently in place. Coordinators said stronger guidance from Oregon GEAR UP around the hours, specific work duties, and district responsibilities related to GEAR UP program management would be helpful.

Chapter 4

Creating a College-Going Culture

Establishing a school culture that will increase the number of low-income students that enroll in postsecondary education is the mission of the Ford GEAR UP schools. Transformation of a school's culture requires schoolwide involvement of educators in GEAR UP activities. It demands the provision of professional development opportunities to help educators learn how they can promote students' interest and knowledge about postsecondary education. Building and sustaining a college-going culture also requires a shared commitment and belief in the GEAR UP mission and the state's 40-40-20 goal among educators, parents, and students (McDonough, 2004).

Oregon GEAR UP uses a modified cohort model to guide program implementation of services for the 2017 graduating class as they progress 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 2017 graduating class. In Year 1, funds were used to support students in grade 7 only. In Year 2, funds supported grades 7 and 8. In Year 3, allocation of GEAR UP services expanded to include ninth-grade students.

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 rates of dropout, graduation, OSAC scholarship applications, and college enrollment for participating schools.

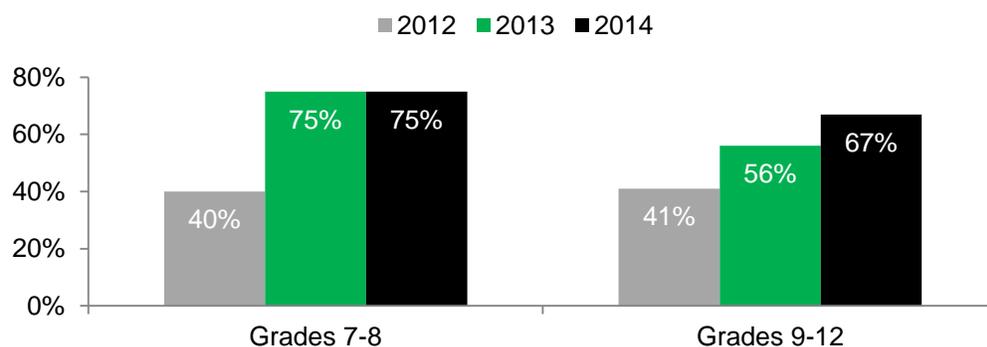
Educators Increased Their Participation in GEAR UP

The percentage of educators who said they spent one or more hours on GEAR UP activities each month increased for both middle school and high school educators (Figure 2). Between 2012 and 2013, the percentage of middle school educators who said they spent at least one hour on college and career readiness activities each month increased from 40 percent to 75 percent—an 88 percent increase. In 2014, three quarters of middle school educators reported continued involvement in GEAR UP activities despite expansion of services to ninth-grade students.

In high school, there was a 63 percent increase in the percentage of educators who spent one or more hours on GEAR UP activities each month. In 2012, 41 percent of the high school educators said they spent time on GEAR UP and 67 percent said the same in 2014.

Figure 2

Percentage of Educators Who Were Involved in GEAR UP Activities Each Month, 2012–2014



Between 2012 and 2014, the percentage of educators who said they participated “sometimes” or “often” increased (Table 4). This was particularly true for middle school educators. In middle school, the activities that showed the highest percent change were familiarizing students with college environments and providing information on college choices, postsecondary options, admissions requirements, and financial aid. In high school, a higher percentage of educators than in the previous year said they provided information on postsecondary options and, to a lesser degree, familiarizing students with college environments.

Table 4

Educators’ Who Reported Involvement “Sometimes” or “Often” In College and Career Readiness Activities, 2012 and 2014

	Middle School Grades 7–8			High School Grades 9–12		
	2012 (n=60)	2014 (n=78)	Percent Change ^a	2012 (n=108)	2014 (n=172)	Percent Change ^a
Familiarizing students with college environments	33%	68%	106%	54%	59%	9%
Providing information and counseling about college choices	28%	55%	96%	57%	57%	0%
Providing information about postsecondary work, training, and educational opportunities	42%	70%	67%	60%	73%	22%
Informing students of admissions requirements for various institutions of higher education	38%	62%	63%	62%	65%	5%
Providing information on financial aid and scholarships	30%	51%	70%	53%	55%	4%
Providing direction and extra instruction for at-risk students	82%	87%	6%	87%	80%	–8%
Counseling students to take more rigorous courses	62%	64%	3%	81%	75%	–7%

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

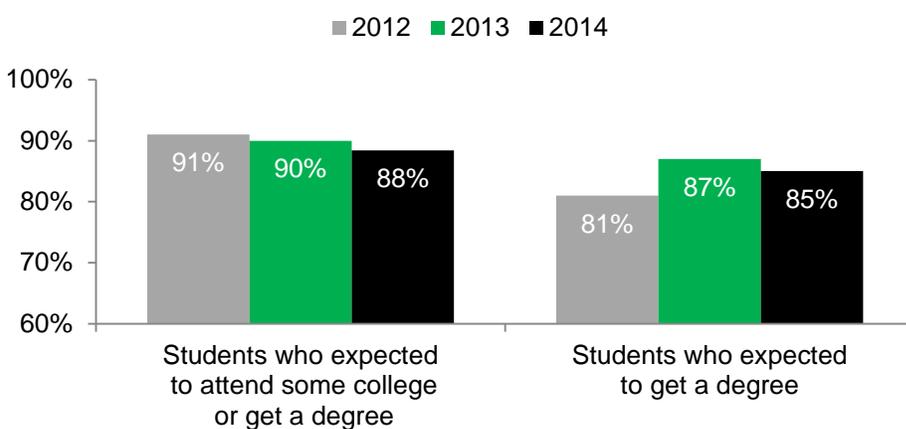
Source: GEAR UP Educator Survey, 2012 and 2014

College Expectations: Students, Parents, and Educators

Students' Expectations

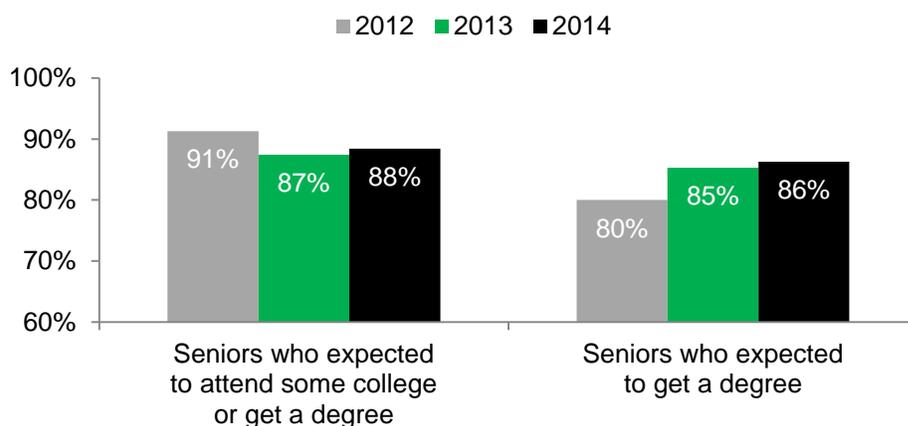
Students and parents had higher postsecondary goals for students than teachers and school staff members. The percentage of middle school students who expected to attend some college ranged between 88 and 91 percent across the three project years (Figure 3). Between 2012 and 2014, the percentage of students who expected to get a 2- or 4-year college degree increased from 81 percent to 85 percent.

Figure 3
Percentage of Middle School Students Who Expected to Attend Some College or Get a Degree and Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2012–2014



Although the focus of GEAR UP services targeted lower grade levels, differences in the expectations of seniors were also evident (Figure 4). There was a slight decrease in the percentage of students who planned to attend college, but the percentage of students who planned to attend college and get a degree increased from 80 to 86 percent.

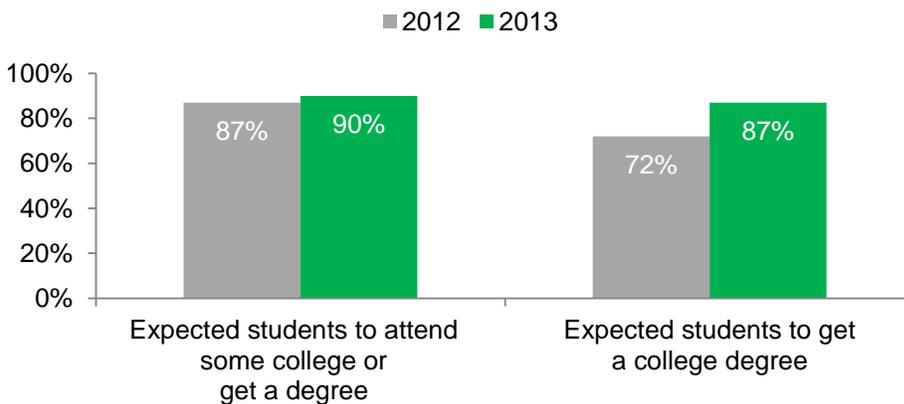
Figure 4
Percentage of Seniors Who Expected to Attend Some College or Get a College Degree, and Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2012–2014



Parents' Expectations

About 90 percent of parents who completed a survey expected students to attend at least some college (Figure 5). Similar to students, the percentage of parents who expected students to get a 2- or 4-year college degree increased across the project years. In 2012, 72 percent of the parents said they expected students to get a college degree, and 87 percent had these expectations in 2013.

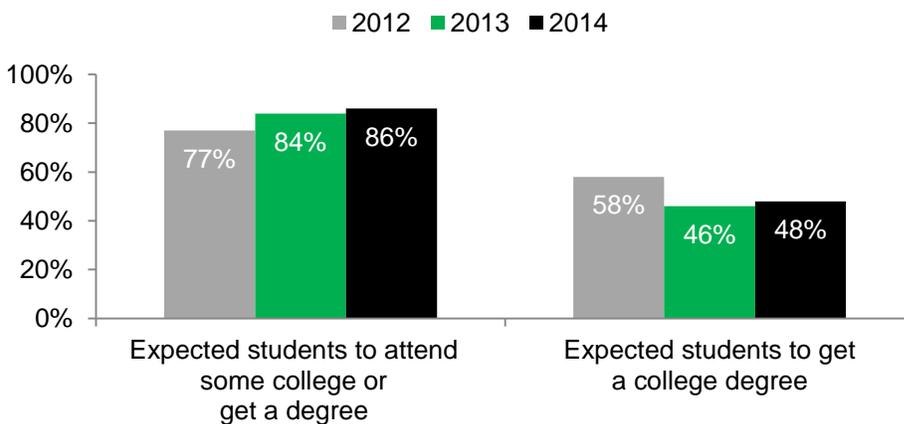
Figure 5
Percentage of Parents Who Expected Students to Attend Some College or Get a College Degree, and Who Expected Students to Get a College Degree, 2012 and 2013



Educators' Expectations

In 2012, at the start of GEAR UP services, 77 percent of the educators said they expected students to enroll in college (Figure 6). In 2014, 86 percent said they expected their students to enroll in college. Across the program years, the percentage of educators who said they expected their students to get a college degree decreased from 58 percent to 48 percent.

Figure 6
Percentage of Educators Who Expected Students to Attend Some College or Get a College Degree, and the Percentage of Educators Who Expected Students to Get a College Degree, 2012–2014



The percentage of educators who said their students were capable of completing a college preparatory curriculum remained about the same across project years (Table 5). Nearly three quarters of the educators said at least half of their students were capable of completing a college preparatory curriculum and about a third said at least 80 percent of their students could reach this goal.

Table 5
Percentage of Educators Who Believed At Least 80 Percent of Their Students Could Complete a College Preparatory Curriculum or Go to College, 2012–2014

According to educators, the percent of students who are	Percentage of educators who agreed or strongly agreed			Percent change from 2012 and 2014 ^a
	2012 (N=157)	2013 (N=180)	2014 (N=216)	
Capable of completing a college preparation curriculum				
At least 50 percent	72%	73%	73%	1%
At least 80 percent	33%	27%	32%	–3%
Will go to college				
At least 50 percent	50%	51%	59%	18%
At least 80 percent	*	*	9%	*

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

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

Source: GEAR UP Educator Survey, 2012, 2013, 2014

The educators’ expectations about whether their students would attend college have improved since implementation of GEAR UP services, but still fall short of the state’s 40-40-20 goal. During the past three years, the percentage of high school graduates who enrolled in college has been 50 percent or higher for GEAR UP schools. Yet, in 2014, just 59 percent of the educators agreed that half of their students would go on to college. The number of educators who said at least 80 percent of their students would attend college was 9 percent, an increase from previous years.

College Enrollment and Readiness Indicators

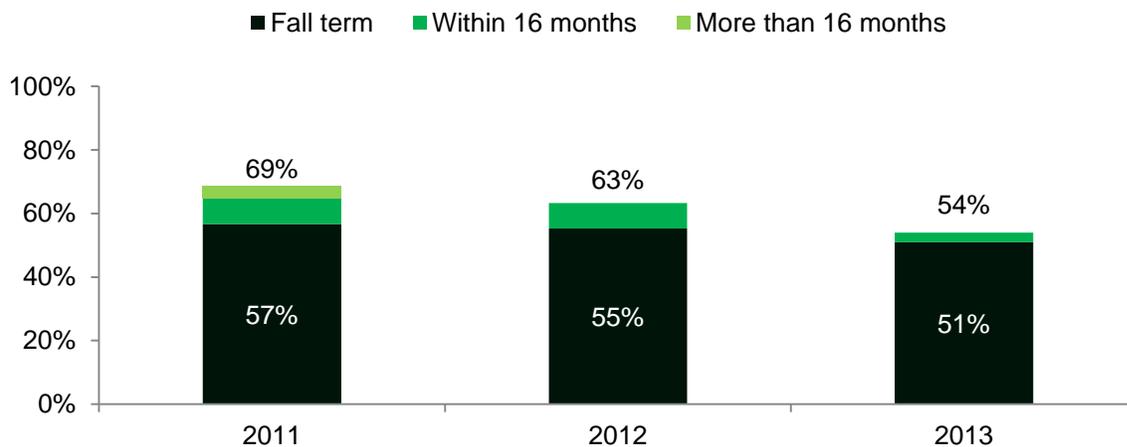
The Oregon GEAR UP team summarizes and disseminates college enrollment and college readiness indicators to schools annually to assist them in team planning. These data are derived from a number of state and national data sources including the Oregon Department of Education graduation and dropout data and data collections from the National Student Clearinghouse, College Board, OSAC application, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Figures 7–11 display these data for Oregon GEAR UP students and, when possible, for students statewide. A more detailed summary of these data are in Appendix C.

Because the student data for the 2017 graduating class (the student cohort who received GEAR UP services from grade 7 to grade 12) will not be available until 2018, the student outcome data should be interpreted with caution and can, at best, be viewed as progress indicators.

College Enrollment

The goal of Oregon GEAR UP is to increase the number of low-income, rural students who enroll in college. Because the first year that the association between the 2017 GEAR UP cohort and college enrollment can be analyzed is 2018, Figure 7 shows the baseline trend of college enrollment for Ford GEAR UP schools. Between 2011 and 2013, the fall college enrollment baseline data for GEAR UP schools ranged from 51 percent to 57 percent (Figure 7).

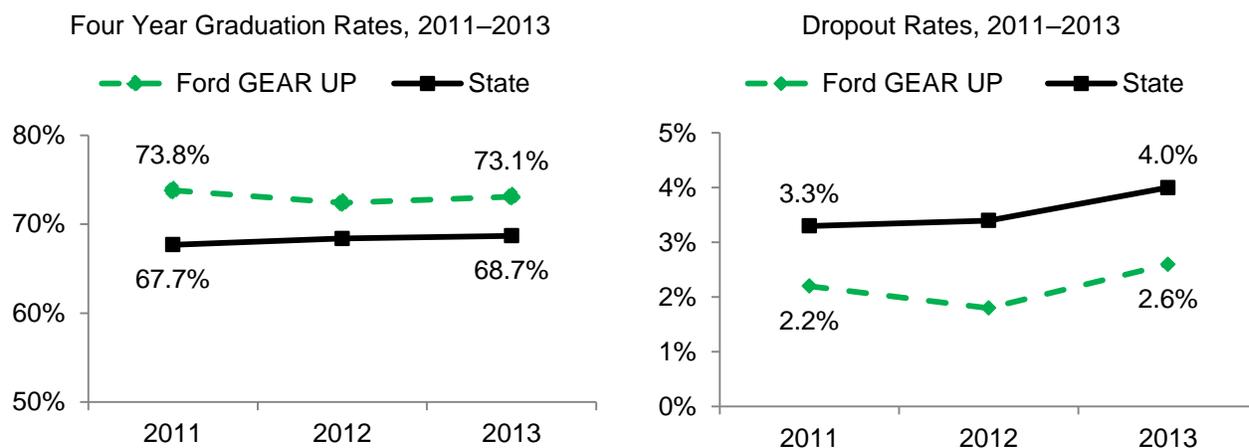
Figure 7
Percentage of High School Graduates Who Enrolled in College, 2011–2013



High School Graduation and Dropout Rates

The average 4-year graduation rate for GEAR UP Ford schools was higher than the statewide average, and the dropout rate was lower (Figure 8). In 2013, the average graduation rate for Ford schools was 73.1 percent and the statewide average was 68.7 percent. In 2011, the dropout rate for GEAR UP schools—at 2.6 percent—was below the state average. Following implementation of services, GEAR UP schools continued to have better graduation and dropout outcomes than the statewide average.

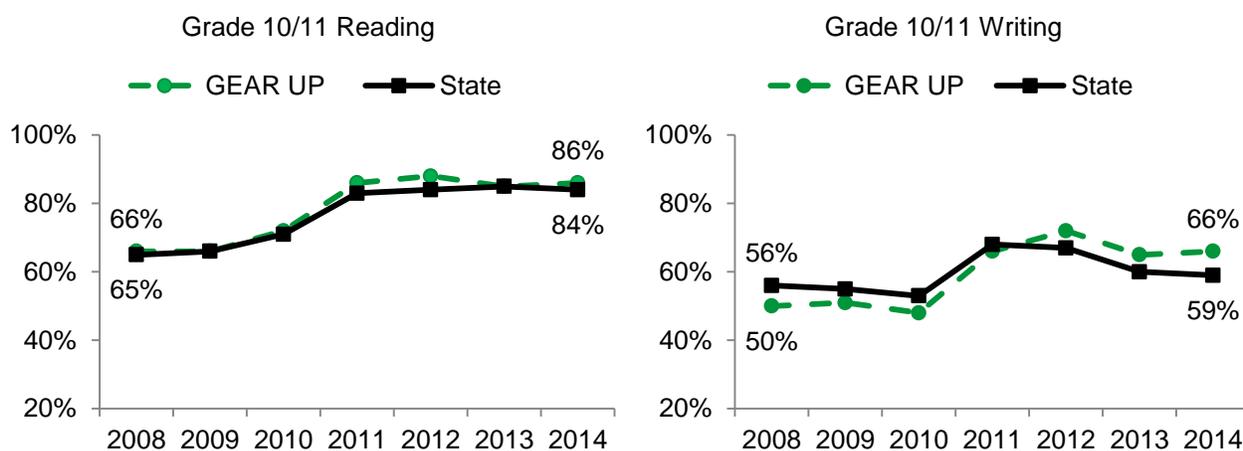
Figure 8
High School Graduation and Dropout Rates, 2011–2013



Statewide Academic Achievement Test Data

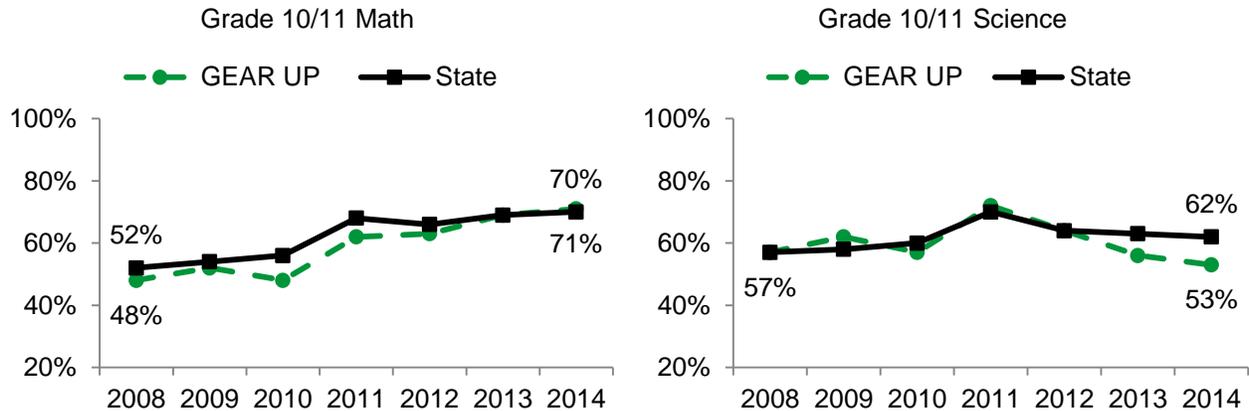
Reading and Writing. The Oregon Achievement and Knowledge (OAKS) state test data for grade 10/11 reading and writing are displayed in Figure 9. In both content areas, the percentages of students who met or exceeded standards increased statewide and for GEAR UP schools. While the increases in reading scores were similar between GEAR UP and the state, the writing scores in GEAR UP schools surpassed the state. Between 2008 and 2014, the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards on writing increased 19 percentage points for GEAR UP schools.

Figure 9
OAKS Grade 10/11 Reading and Writing Scores, 2008–2014



Math and Science. The percentage of students who met or exceeded standards on grade 10/11 math state achievement tests increased statewide and for GEAR UP schools (Figure 10). In math, the percentage of GEAR UP students increased from 48 percent to 71 percent—a 23 percentage point increase—for GEAR UP schools. Between 2008 and 2014, the percentage of students who met or exceeded standards increased from 57 percent to 62 percent statewide, but declined for GEAR UP schools.

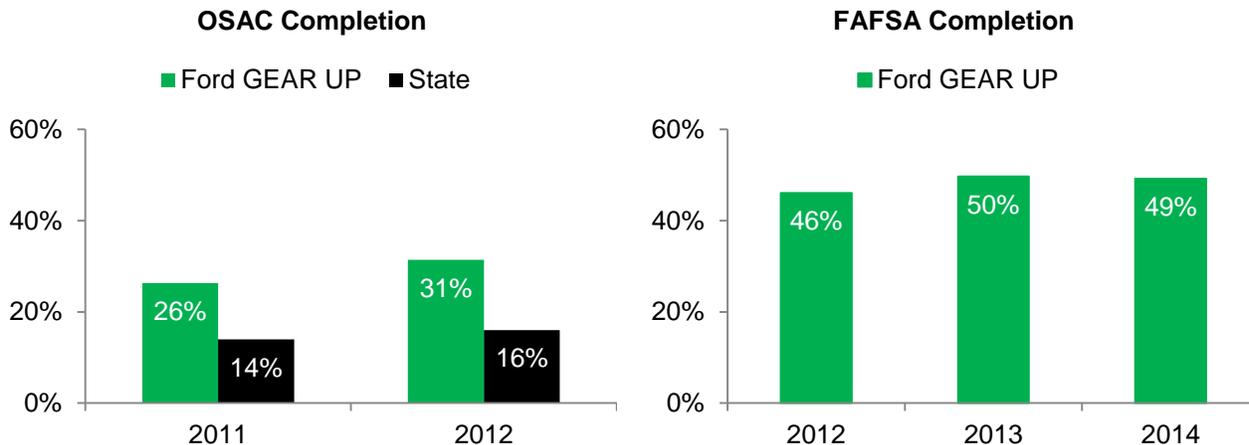
Figure 10
OAKS Grade 10/11 Math and Science Scores, 2008–2014



Scholarship and Financial Aid

The percent of GEAR UP seniors who completed the OSAC application was 26 percent in 2011. Following implementation of services, the percentage of GEAR UP seniors who completed an OSAC scholarship application increased to 31 percent (Figure 11). The completion rates of Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA) applications were first available in 2012. The percentage of GEAR UP seniors who completed applications was 46 percent in 2012 and 49 percent in 2014 (Figure 11).

Figure 11
Oregon State Access and Completion (OSAC) Application Completion. 2011–2012; FAFSA Completion 2012–2014



Summary

High expectations are a well-researched characteristic of successful educational programs for students regardless of their background or ability level (Roderick, Coca, & Nagaoka, 2011). Achieving the 40–40–20 goal will require educators to believe that the goal is attainable. During the past three years, students and parents shifted their postsecondary aspirations from enrolling in college to achieving a degree. The percentage of educators who expected and believed that their students would enroll in college also increased, but consistently remained lower than the expectations of students and their parents. Less than a third believed that 80 percent of their students could complete a college preparatory curriculum and even fewer said 80 percent of their students would go on to college. Few educators reported expectations that were consistent with the state’s 40–40–20 goal and, even when provided college enrollment data, many continued to underestimate the number of their students who enrolled in college. Further investigation is needed to determine if these changes in expectations are based on the educators’ perception of the students’ academic ability, lack of persistence or other non-cognitive skills, problems adjusting to the culture of college or larger communities, or concerns about the ability of students to afford college.

Despite their low expectations about students’ college enrollment, educators did increase their participation in college and career activities. During the past two years, three quarters of the middle school educators said they spent one or more hours on GEAR UP activities each month. In particular, educators increasingly reported involvement in familiarizing students with college environments and providing information on college choices, postsecondary options, admissions requirements, and financial aid. In 2014, two thirds of the high school educators also said they were involved in GEAR UP activities even though this was the first year that GEAR UP officially targeted high school students. In high school, educators increasingly said they provided information on postsecondary options and, to a lesser degree, information about college environments, admission requirements, and financial support options.

Overall, student outcomes associated with college enrollment have shown positive gains during the course of the GEAR UP grant. While graduation rates have declined slightly and dropout rates have increased slightly since 2011, the Ford GEAR UP schools have continued to have better outcomes than the state average. The OSAC and FAFSA rates have increased and OSAC rates remain higher than the statewide average. GEAR UP schools also improved student outcomes on the OAKS tenth grade reading, writing, and math scores at a rate that was consistent with or outpaced statewide averages. The GEAR UP science scores, however, were lower than the statewide average in 2013.

Clearly, the GEAR UP clusters have made progress in changing beliefs and behaviors of educators, parents, and students. The schools have also demonstrated improvements in student achievement and increased student involvement in college readiness activities, including completing OSAC and FAFSA applications.

Chapter 5

Academic “Rigor”

Academic rigor of high school courses and grade point average are key factors for the postsecondary enrollment of rural students (Byun, Irvin, & Meece, 2012). In 2007, Oregon’s State Board of Education voted to increase the academic course requirements required for high school graduation. The changes in the diploma were phased in over several years with full implementation required this past year. Below are the requirements for Oregon’s high school diploma:

- **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’s” framework that guides implementation of GEAR UP services aligns with the state’s new diploma requirements. Table 6 describes the action steps and implementation strategies that could help schools increase the rigor of math, writing, and reading instruction. The remaining sections of this chapter describe the strategies that clusters implemented and progress indicators for increasing opportunities for students to take rigorous courses.

Table 6
Rigor: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies

Rigor: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies
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

Note: Oregon GEAR UP’s Five “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

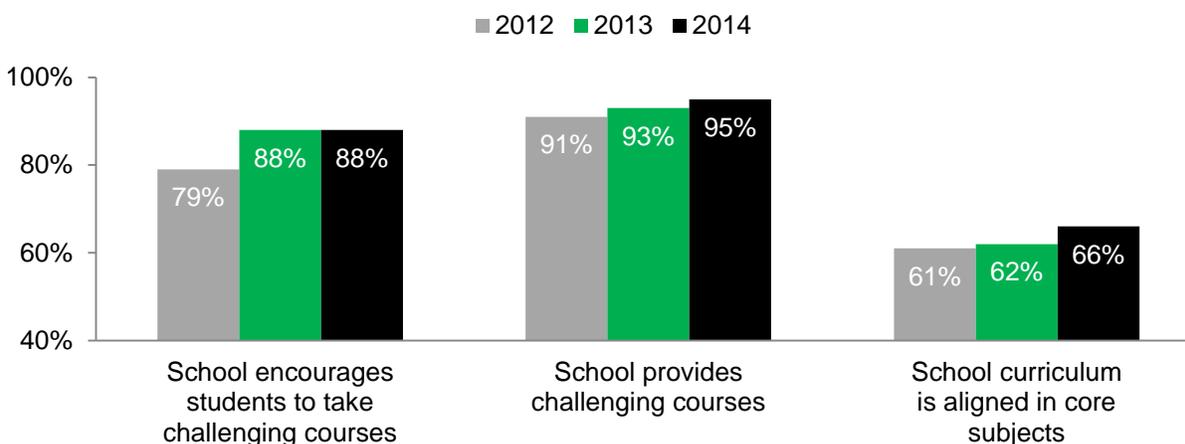
Oregon GEAR UP schools have implemented a range of strategies to ensure all students have access to rigorous curriculum that will prepare them for life beyond high school. In 2014, GEAR UP schools recorded 1,657 service events, including strategies to increase the rigor of the course offerings, computer-assisted lab support, and tutoring or homework assistance for students. Additionally, GEAR UP schools 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. Below is a list of strategies that GEAR UP schools used to increase rigor:

- **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 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 and individualized tutoring.
- **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 and creating professional learning communities.
- **Online and Accelerated Learning options.** Several clusters expanded their course offerings through online courses and dual credit options 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.

Educators' Perceptions of Rigor

The percentage of educators who encouraged students to take challenging courses increased since implementation of GEAR UP services (Figure 12). The percentage of educators who said their school encouraged students to take challenging classes increased from 79 percent to 88 percent. To a lesser degree, the percentage of educators who said their school provided challenging classes and that their curriculum was aligned in core subjects also increased. The percentage of educators who said the middle and high school curriculum was “moderately” to “very” aligned was similar across the project years. In 2012, 61 percent of the educators agreed their curriculum was aligned, and 66 percent agreed in 2014.

Figure 12
Percentage of Educators Who Said Their Schools Provided Challenging Courses and Encouraged Students To Take Them or Believed That Middle and High School Curriculum Was Aligned, 2012–2014



Student Survey Findings

Rigor: Student Comments

On the 2014 GEAR UP Senior Survey, students were asked to comment about how GEAR UP or their school helped them to prepare for transition to postsecondary education and/or their career pathway. Of the 442 returned surveys, 47 seniors (11%) wrote comments about how their school helped them to learn about and/or plan for postsecondary education and/or their career pathway. Students appreciated:

- Rigorous academic courses

Many teachers encouraged me to take advanced classes, leading to me taking 3 years of CP English, AP US History, and AP German. (Student)

- The opportunity to take college-level courses for college credit

I've been able to take college courses during high school. (Student)

- Career and technical education electives

We have shop classes that I am very interested in and that are really hands-on work, and it is a great way to learn about a career you are interested in. (Student)

Sixteen seniors (4%) said that their schools could have offered more challenging courses to help prepare students for entering college or a career. They asked for more rigorous classes that would “give an idea of the environment” in college. The students also wanted teachers to hold students to college-like standards (e.g., not accepting assignments turned in late). They also asked that the school “have more challenging classes available for students.” As one senior

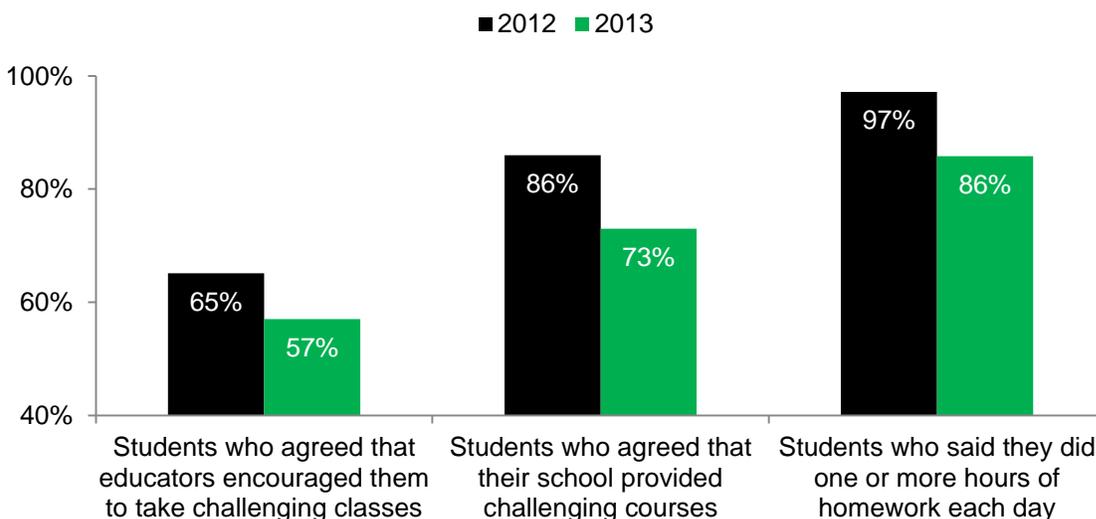
explained, even students who are planning to go to college have limited access to advanced courses:

Our school needs to try and [incorporate] more AP/CC or IB level courses. It's great that our school focuses on trying to get everyone to graduate but the kids that are going to college and need challenging courses aren't getting them. (Student)

Students' Perceptions of Their Courses, Teachers' Encouragement, and Homework Completion

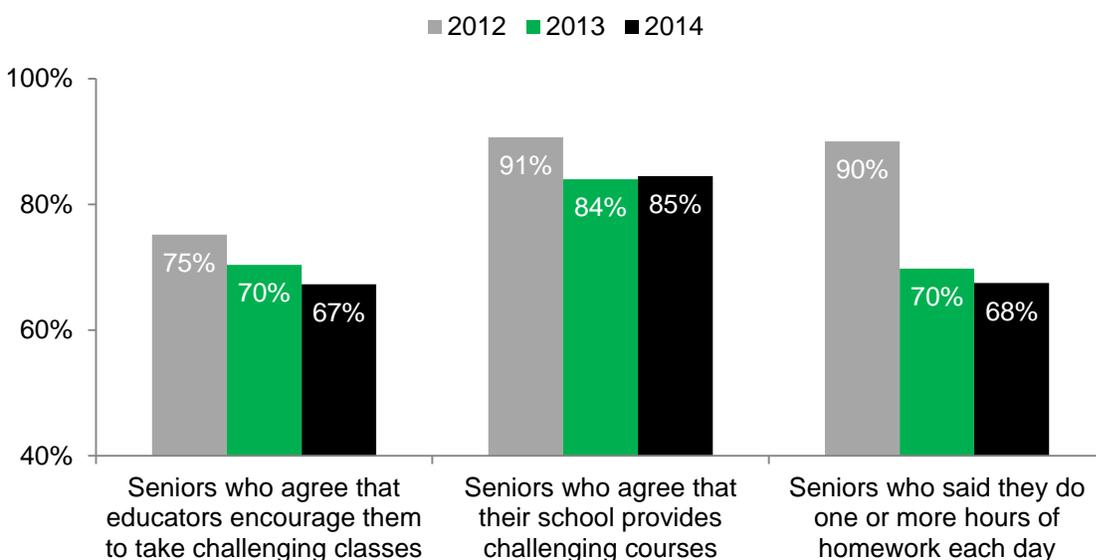
The percentage of students who said their school provided challenging courses and the percentage of students who were encouraged to take challenging courses decreased in 2013 (Figure 13). Nearly three quarters of the middle school students agreed that their school provided challenging courses in 2013, a 13 percentage point decrease from 2012. The percentage of middle school students who said they did at least one hour of daily homework also declined in 2013.

Figure 13
Percentage of Middle School Students Who Said Their Schools Provided Challenging Courses and Encouraged Them to Take Them, and Said They Did Daily Homework, 2012–2013



Since 2012, there has been a downward trend in the percentage of seniors who agree that their teachers encouraged them to take challenging courses (Figure 14). The percentage of seniors who agreed that the school provides challenging courses and that they do daily homework has also decreased between 2012 and 2014. Because GEAR UP services for seniors will not officially start until 2017, these data should be considered baseline data and used for planning purposes only.

Figure 14
Percentage of Seniors Who Said Their Schools Provided Challenging Courses and Encouraged Them to Take Them, and Said They Did Daily Homework, 2012–2014



Dual Credit

GEAR UP schools view accelerated college credit as a key strategy to improve the high school-to-college transition and academic preparedness of Oregon students (Lerner & Brand, 2006).

There are many types of accelerated college credit options in Oregon. Available student-level data for this evaluation were limited to student participation in dual credit articulated by community colleges only. The types and working definitions of accelerated college credit options available in Oregon, and the type of accelerated college credit examined in this report, are summarized in Table 7.

Characteristics of Dual Credit Students

The dual credit analysis includes students in the graduating classes of 2008 to 2012 at the 10 Ford-funded GEAR UP high schools (N=4,167). The dataset includes data on students who attended a public high school in Oregon from 2004/05 to 2011/12. Dual credit data are most complete starting in 2006/07 so only the last two cohorts of students who were seniors in 2010/11 and 2011/12 have four full years of dual credit data. Because the majority of dual credit participation occurred during the students' junior and senior years, we examined dual credit participation in the last two years of high school for each cohort beginning with the 2007/08 cohort.

*Table 7
Accelerated College Credit Options in Oregon Schools*

Name	Definition	In study?
Dual credit	Courses articulated with an Oregon community college, offered in a high school during regular school hours, and taught by approved high school instructors for the purpose of secondary and postsecondary credit	Yes
Dual credit	Courses articulated with an Oregon university, offered in a high school during regular school hours, and taught by approved high school instructors for the purpose of secondary and postsecondary credit	No
Expanded options (including Early or Middle College programs)	Courses offered at an eligible postsecondary institution for high school students to complete high school diploma and earn college credits with costs paid for by the local school district	No
Credit-by-proficiency courses	Courses that employ collaboratively-developed learning outcome assessments to award college credit to high school students, offered in a high school during regular school hours and taught by high school instructors	No
Formalized programs	Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses where students receive college credit or alternative placement based on exam results	No

- a. Courses may include lower division collegiate (LDC) college courses, sometimes called College Now; Career Technical Education (CTE) college courses, sometimes called "Tech Prep" or "Two Plus Two"; and online courses.

Note: Definitions are adapted from "Enhancing Accelerated Learning Options in Oregon" by the Accelerated Learning Committee, with input from Lisa Reynolds, Education Specialist at the Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. The Accelerated Learning Committee was established by Senate Bill 222. The seven-member task force is charged with examining methods to encourage and enable Oregon students to obtain college credits while still in high school.

Characteristics of students who took dual credit versus students who did not take dual credit reveal key demographic and academic differences between these two student groups (Table 8). For example, dual credit participants are more likely than students who did not take dual credit to be female and White. Additionally, a much higher percentage of dual credit participants than students who did not take dual credit met or exceeded the achievement standard on the grade 10 Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (OAKS) in math and reading and graduated from high school. Finally, dual credit participants are more economically advantaged than students who did not take dual credit. About 40 percent of the dual credit students received free and reduced-price lunch compared to nearly 60 percent of non-dual credit participants who did so.



Table 8
Characteristics of Students at GEAR UP Schools, Class of 2008–2012

	Did Take Dual Credit (N=1,093)	Did Not Take Dual Credit (N=3,074)
Gender		
Female	58%	45%
Male	42%	55%
Race/ethnicity		
Black	0%	0%
Asian	3%	2%
Latino	6%	6%
American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN)	3%	5%
White	86%	83%
Other (multi-ethnic, unknown)	2%	4%
High school experiences		
Free and reduced-price lunch	40%	59%
Individualized Education Program	5%	19%
English language learner status	1%	1%
Average number of absences in senior year	12	15
Grade 10 Math OAKS performance level^a		
No rating	3%	18%
Low/very low	9%	30%
Nearly meets	12%	18%
Meets	45%	28%
Exceeds	31%	6%
Grade 10 Reading OAKS performance level^a		
No rating	3%	18%
Low/very low	4%	19%
Nearly meets	7%	16%
Meets	61%	42%
Exceeds	25%	6%
HS graduation status		
Graduated	97%	71%
Dropped out	0%	8%
Withdrawal status unknown ^b	3%	22%

a. In each subject, ODE designates the OAKS score that indicates the student has met the achievement standard in that subject. They also designate score ranges that indicate the student is “very low from,” “low from,” “nearly meets,” “meets,” or “exceeds” the achievement standard. The categories of “very low” and “low” performance levels were combined.

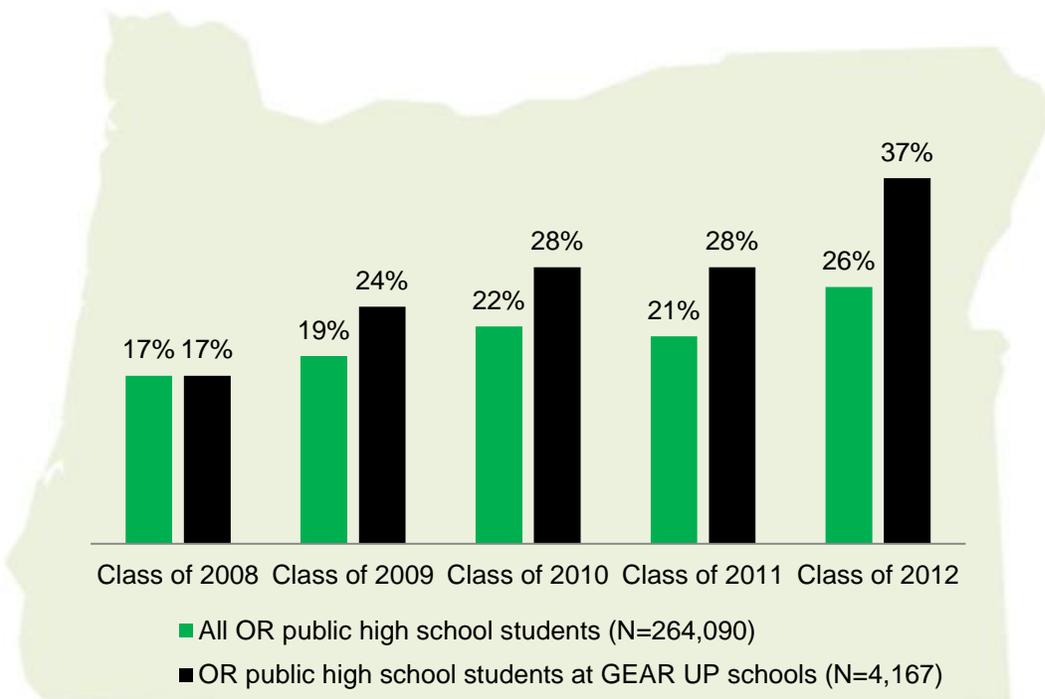
b. Student may have dropped out or moved out of state.

These differences in characteristics are important to consider when examining data on dual credit, particularly differences in that postsecondary outcomes of students who took dual credit versus those who did not. On average, dual credit students are probably some of the highest-achievers at their high schools and may be college-bound regardless of their dual credit participation. However, as discussed in the subsequent section, increasing opportunities to take dual credit may result in a larger number of students from traditionally underrepresented groups taking dual credit and earning college credits in high school.

Dual Credit Participation Over Time

Overall, dual credit participation has increased in the state of Oregon by nine percentage points for the classes of 2008 to 2012 (Figure 15). The increase has been higher for GEAR UP schools: 17 percent of the 2008 class and 37 percent of the 2012 class took a dual credit course, representing a 20 percentage point increase.

*Figure 15
Proportion of Students Who Took Dual Credit in Junior and/or Senior Year*



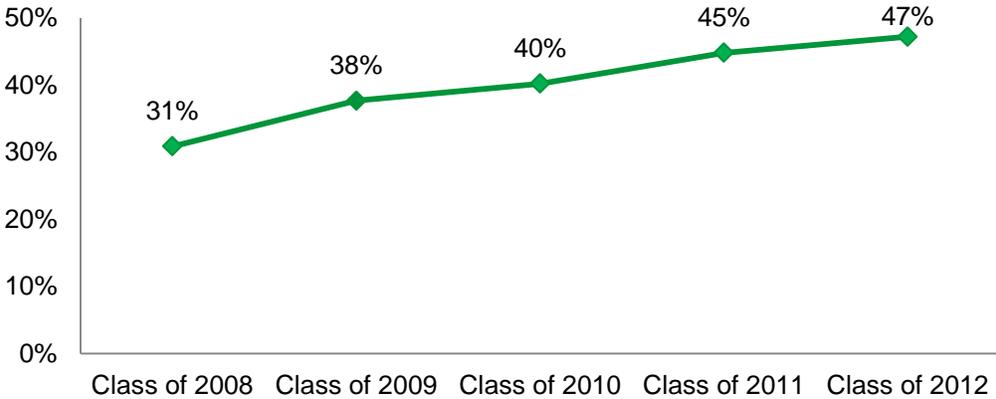
The average participation rates across GEAR UP schools masks quite a bit of variation in dual credit participation at each high school. Table 9 outlines, by high school, the participation rate across all classes, the participation rates for the classes of 2008 and 2012, and the percentage point change in participation between the class of 2008 and 2012. All schools experienced an increase in the proportion of students taking dual credit.

Table 9
Proportion of Students Who Took Dual Credit in Junior and/or Senior Year, by GEAR UP School

GEAR UP School	Number of students in Classes of 2008-2012	Dual Credit Participants			Percentage Point Change Classes of 2008 to 2012
		Classes of 2008-2012	Class of 2008	Class of 2012	
Pacific High School	182	48%	31%	76%	45%
North Douglas High School	166	10%	0%	30%	30%
Camas Valley	60	7%	0%	27%	27%
Yoncalla High School	174	7%	0%	25%	25%
Roseburg High School	2,334	30%	17%	41%	24%
Coquille High School	429	37%	30%	48%	18%
Myrtle Point High School	331	11%	10%	25%	15%
Powers High School	62	13%	0%	13%	13%
Reedsport Community Charter School	356	19%	10%	16%	6%
Elkton Charter School	73	18%	21%	27%	6%

For each graduating class, a greater proportion of students who received free and reduced-price lunch took dual credit (Figure 16). Increases in access to, and participation in, dual credit among low-income students represents an important achievement for GEAR UP high schools.

Figure 16
Proportion of Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Students at GEAR UP Schools Who Took Dual Credit in Junior and/or Senior Year



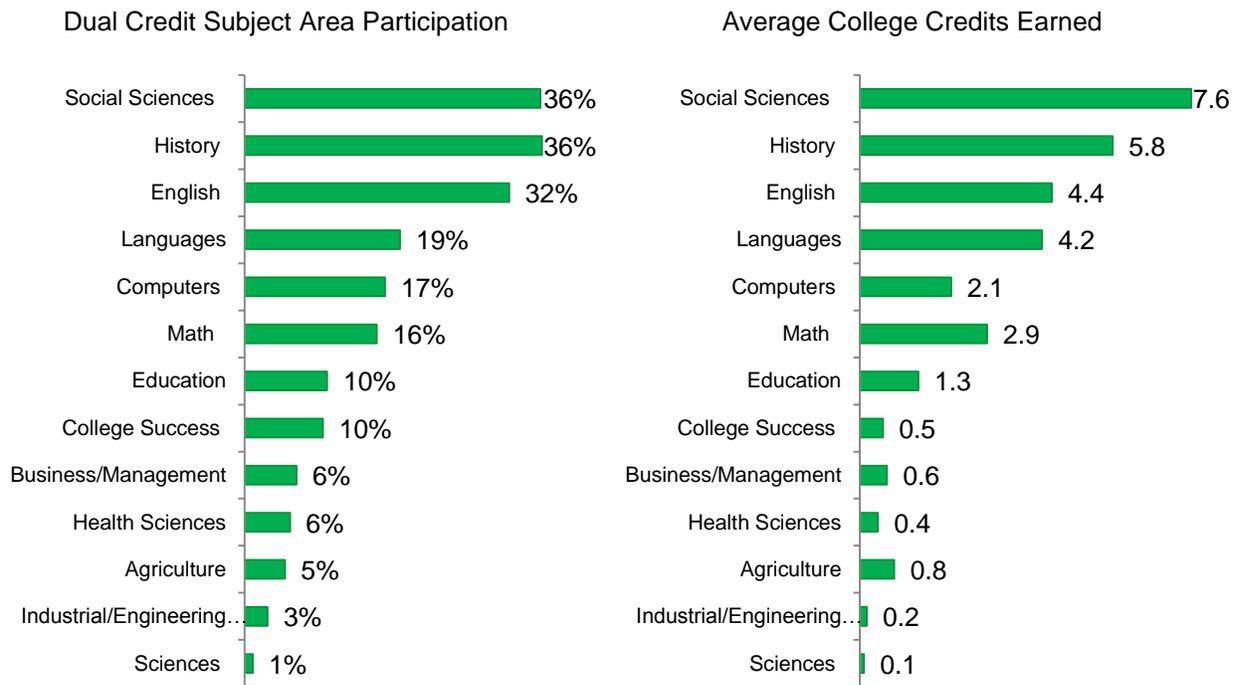
Dual Credit Outcomes

Course outcomes

Across the state, the most common dual credit courses include college English courses, such as English Composition (121 and 122), and college math, such as College Algebra (111) and Trigonometry (112). However, at GEAR UP schools, the most common subject areas in which dual credit participants took courses and earned college credit included History and Social

Sciences. More than one third of the GEAR UP students took a dual credit Social Sciences and/or History course, earning an average of 7.6 college credits in Social Sciences and 5.8 college credits in History (Figure 17). The most common courses in History were a series of U.S. History classes. The most common courses in Social Sciences include Introduction to Economics (115) and a series of Political Sciences courses about American government and politics. Table C-4 in Appendix C outlines the most popular courses in all 16 dual credit subject areas.

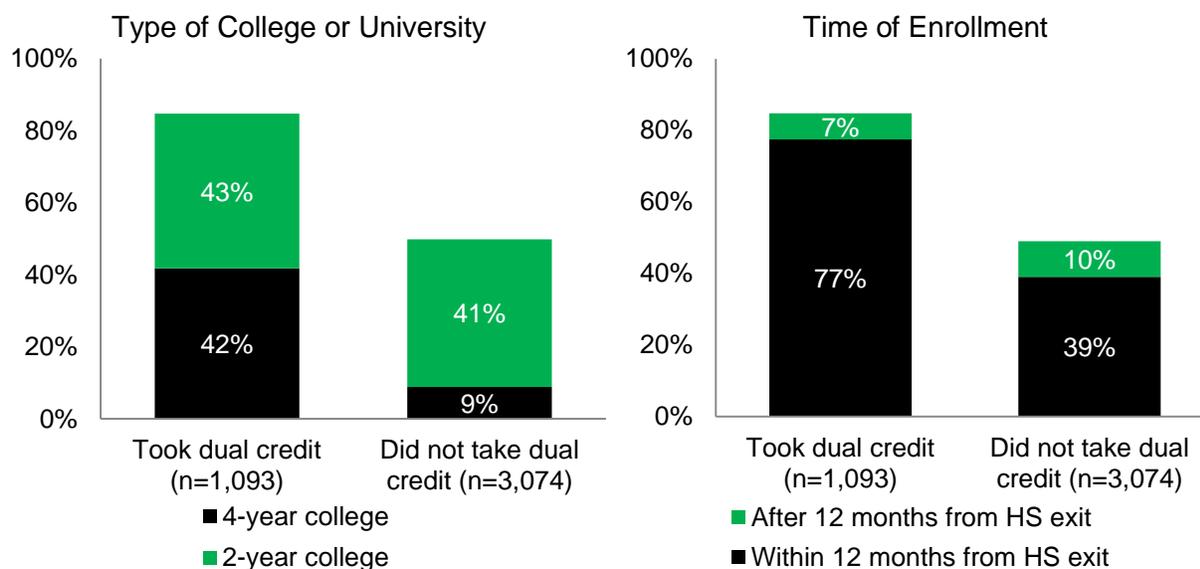
*Figure 17
By Subject Area, Proportion of Dual Credit GEAR UP Students Who Took a Course and Average College Credits They Earned, Class of 2008-2012*



Postsecondary outcomes

Eighty-five percent of students who took dual credit in the classes of 2008 to 2011 enrolled in college, and 77 percent enrolled in the academic year following high school (Figure 18). A much lower proportion of students who did not take dual credit enrolled in college.

Figure 18
Proportion of Students at GEAR UP Schools Who Enrolled in College by First College Type and Enrollment Time, Class of 2008–2011



Community College and High School Partnerships

A central principle and focus of GEAR UP is relationships and, in particular, collaboration among K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions. Dual credit represents one way in which GEAR UP schools partnered with institutions of higher education to improve the college preparation of their students. At most GEAR UP schools, students were able to take college courses that were articulated with Southern Oregon Community College or Umpqua Community College (Table 10). However, a number of high schools had additional community college partners. For example, students at Roseburg High School earned college credit from seven different community colleges.

*Table 10
GEAR UP and Community College Partnerships That Offered Dual Credit Options to Students
in Classes of 2008–2012*

GEAR UP School	Community College Partners	
	Primary Community College Partner	Additional Community College Partners
Coquille High School	Southern Oregon CC	Clackamas CC Lane CC
Elkton Charter School	Southern Oregon CC	
Myrtle Point High School	Southern Oregon CC	
Pacific High School	Southern Oregon CC	
Powers High School	Southern Oregon CC	
Reedsport Community Charter School	Southern Oregon CC	Lane CC
Camas Valley High School	Umpqua CC	Rogue CC
North Douglas High School	Umpqua CC	Lane CC Rogue CC
Roseburg High School	Umpqua CC	Clackamas CC Klamath CC Lane CC Portland CC Rogue CC Southern Oregon CC
Yoncalla High School	Umpqua CC	Blue Mountain CC Lane CC

Note: Primary community college refers to the institution that awarded the highest number of articulated college credit to students enrolled in the GEAR UP school

Summary

Increasing opportunities for students to participate in rigorous academic courses that better prepare them for college is a strong focus of Oregon GEAR UP schools. The percentage of students who said the school provided challenging courses decreased for middle school students and for seniors. In contrast, there was an increase in the percentage of educators who said the school provided challenging courses and that students received encouragement to take challenging courses. The percentage of students who did daily homework also decreased from the beginning of the project, most notably for seniors.

The findings of the student survey suggest the need to examine the rigor of course offerings to students, especially at the high school level. Seniors identified the need for more rigorous classes and a wider range of course offerings, including CTE classes. Seniors also said expanding the opportunities to earn dual credit would be helpful.

The activities that schools used to increase rigor varied widely in the type of intervention, targeted student populations, and subject areas. Some schools implemented tutoring programs or additional instructional time that targeted struggling students. Others developed schoolwide approaches to strengthen instruction in core subject areas for all students. Many clusters provided professional development to increase quality teaching and/or curriculum alignment in math, writing, and other core subjects. The most common approach offered by all schools to increase equitable access to rigorous courses was expanding accelerated credit options for students. The success of the intentional efforts to include low-income, rural students in dual credit courses is evident among the GEAR UP schools. For the class of 2008, 85 percent of the students who enrolled in dual credit courses enrolled in college.

Chapter 6

Relevance and Right Classes

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 11 describes the action steps and implementation strategies for these three components. The remaining sections of this chapter describe the strategies that clusters implemented and findings about “Relevance” and “Right Classes.”

*Table 11
Relevance and Right Classes: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies*

Oregon “R”	Five “R’s”: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies
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 4-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 GEAR UP’s Five “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).

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. In 2014, GEAR UP schools recorded 157 service events including job site visits, job shadowing, academic counseling, and career planning to increase the relevance of the students’ K–12 experience to their postsecondary college and career goals. Below is a list of strategies that clusters used to help 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.
- **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 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 recent alumni who had moved on to college.
- **Career Information System (CIS).** 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.



Student Survey Findings

Relevance: Student Comments

On the 2014 GEAR UP Senior Survey, 35 seniors (8%) said that their school helped them to learn about and/or plan their career pathway by providing opportunities to learn about careers and identify their passions. An additional 12 students (3%) said more generally that the school helped them to be aware of their options and provided “helpful information about opportunities after high school.” Examples of career planning supports included career exploration opportunities in the classroom (e.g., activities using CIS) and learning about what it takes to pursue a given profession (e.g., by listening to career speakers with different education and work experience backgrounds). One student gave the example of how useful it was to have a class focused on career planning: “Our class called careers is really helpful towards college and pursuing a career if you're open to learn and go through the steps of completing the process correctly and efficiently.” Another reported receiving help to “pinpoint the career that suits my need and expectations, and if it weren't for my school I would've [probably] never found it.”

Not everyone felt that the career exploration activities provided at school were sufficient, however. Fifty-one seniors (12%) said that the school could have done more to help them to prepare for entering college or a career by providing a wider variety of course options. Students said they wished that their schools “had more classes that are electives that could help people figure out their career.”

They specifically asked for career and technical classes that align with students’ chosen postsecondary interests (e.g., auto shop) and for “a list of classes for each occupation ... [that would] get the student ready for college classes for that occupation.”



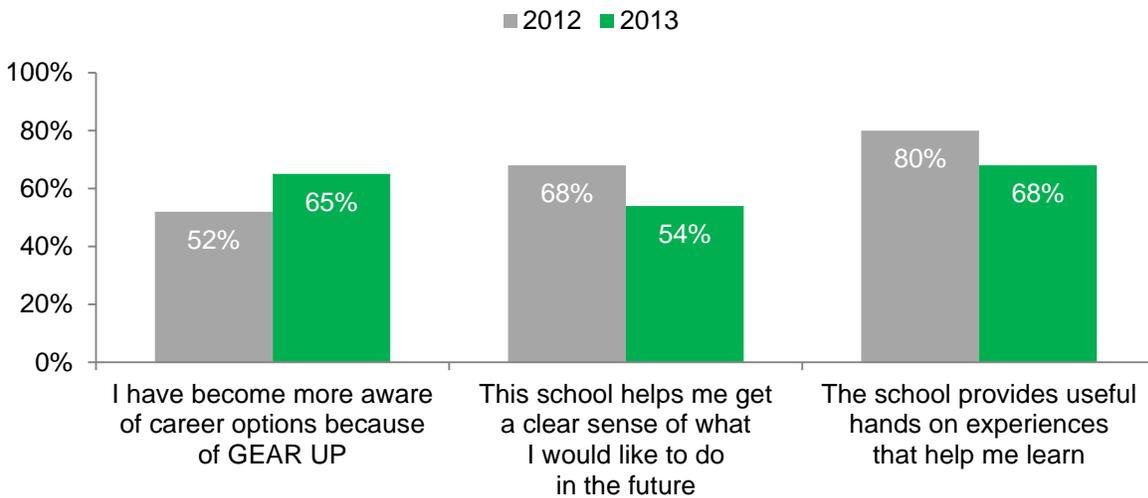
Seniors also requested instruction on more general life skills, additional career information, and help connecting to opportunities for hands-on learning. Twenty-eight seniors (6%) said that

“schools need to teach more about real life and how to succeed.” Examples included requests for instruction on job interviews and resumes, taxes, personal finances, and saving money. Twenty-three seniors (5%) requested a stronger focus on providing career information to students, for example, through career fairs or career-focused days at school. As one senior put it, students need to identify their career interests first because “you can't really get a fitting degree if you don't know what it's for.” Students also asked for career speakers, help identifying possible career options (e.g., through aptitude tests), and for teachers to “expand on job [opportunities] that apply to the class being attended.” Finally, thirteen seniors (3%) asked for help finding hands-on learning opportunities, such as job shadowing. For example, one student requested “more opportunities to get hands-on experience such as promoting and/or providing work experience, volunteer opportunities, field trips or guest speakers.” Another asked for “more opportunities to volunteer in the community using the skills I would need for my future job. For instance an intern program through the hospital.”

Students’ Perceptions—Relevance

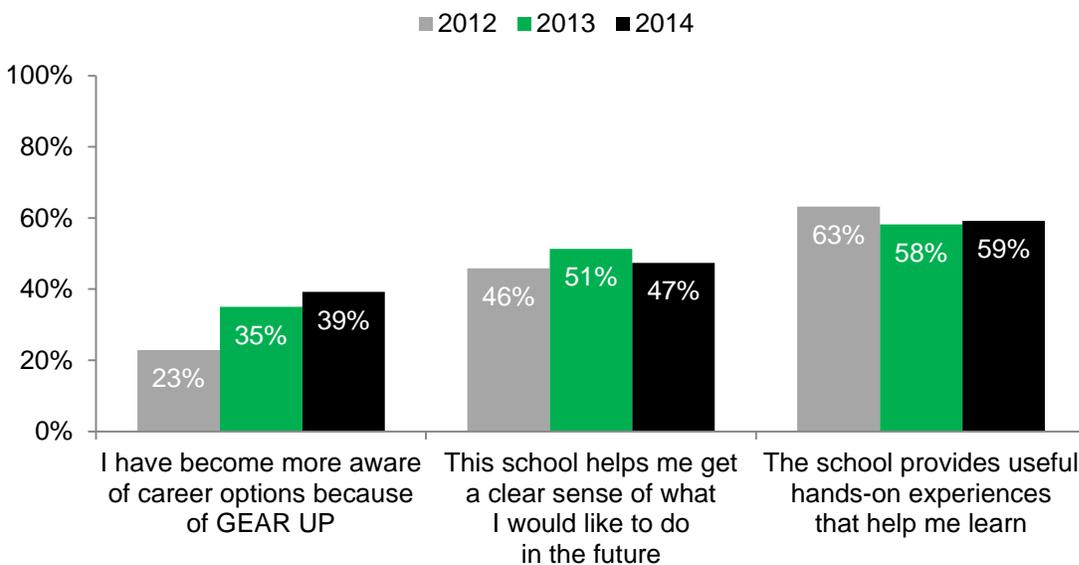
Between 2012 and 2013, the percentage of middle school students who said GEAR UP improved their awareness of career options increased from 52 to 65 percent (Figure 19). In 2013, just over half of the middle school students said their school helped them identify a clear direction for the future and two thirds said the school provided hands on learning experiences.

Figure 19
Percentage of Students Who Said GEAR UP Helped Them Learn About Career Options, Think About the Future, and Have Hands-on Experiences, 2012 and 2013, Grades 7–8



The percentage of seniors that said they have become more aware of career options has increased from 23 to 39 percent even though seniors have not been targeted directly for GEAR UP services (Figure 20). In 2014, a slight majority of the seniors said the school provided them with hands-on experiences that helped them learn, but less than half said the school helped them get a clear sense of what they wanted to do in the future.

Figure 20
Percentage of Seniors Who Said GEAR UP Helped Them Learn About Career Options, Think About the Future, and Have Hands-on Experiences, 2012–2014



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 should continue until grade 12, with regular reviews and updates. The process should allow students the flexibility to adjust their education plan as their career interests change or evolve. Below is a list of strategies that clusters used to support the “Right Classes” component of Oregon’s model:

- **Meetings and events to support transition from middle to high school.** Several clusters held orientations for middle school students and their parents. The purpose of these meetings and events was to emphasize the benefits of postsecondary education. The orientations 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 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.
- **Online courses.** Some clusters provided students with expanded course offerings by subscribing to online courses. The online options also provided students with opportunities to enroll in higher education courses.

Student Survey Findings

Right Classes: Student Comments

Of the 442 returned surveys, 43 seniors (10%) wrote comments about how their school helped them to learn about and/or plan for college or a career by providing encouragement, motivation, and goal-setting and planning supports around postsecondary education. One student explained that “all the confrontations I’ve had about future education/career plans has been encouragement to go to college. Education past high school wasn’t an option in my mind, it was a requirement.” Another student explained that the school supported a culture of college goal-setting:

I think the more close it got to senior year, college became a topic very popular among the graduating class. The only reason this topic came up was because the school is there, always reminding us that there is more education after High School. In this way, the school did get us thinking about college, and our further education. (Student)

Twenty-six seniors (6%) made general statements about how the school helped with planning for college or career without mentioning specific examples of these supports. Students said that the school has “talked to me about it” and has “told me what I need to know and given me the basic skills necessary to get there.”

Others said that the school could have better prepared them for entering college or a career by providing more information about postsecondary education options or more help preparing for college requirements. Nineteen seniors (4%) said that they would have liked more general information about colleges and postsecondary education options. One student explained that “having a list of the best schools for certain degrees ... [would] help students make their college campus choices.” Another student said that dedicated class time for college research would be helpful:

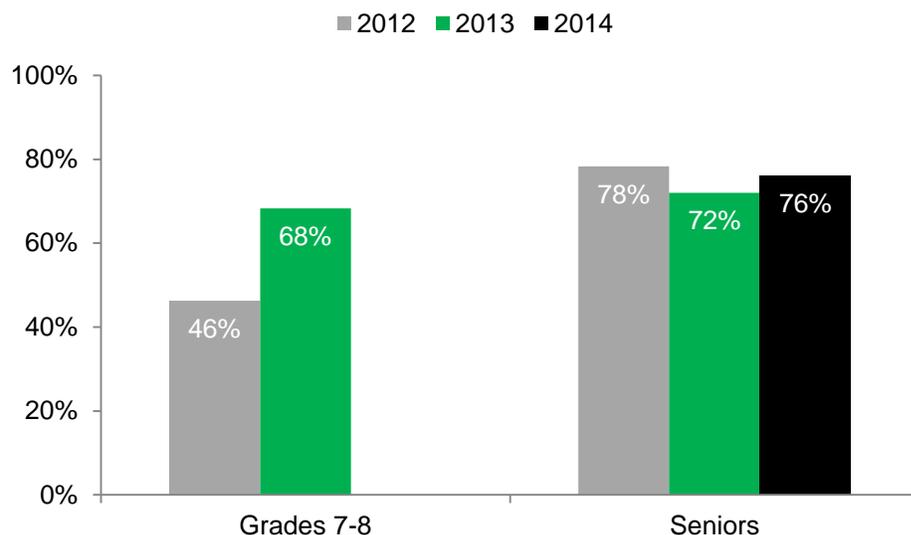
More info on specific colleges, especially out of state. Information on prices of Ivy League schools. More emphasis on also taking the ACT in addition to the SAT. More time to research colleges – too much homework and emphasis on extracurricular activities leaves zero time for research. I could use a class if there were room in my schedule. (Student)

Sixteen seniors (4%) requested additional help for identifying college requirements and developing specific plans to stay on track for satisfying these. Students said that the school could have “spent one-on-one time with me and asked what I wanted to do and tell me what I needed to do to get there. They could of helped make a plan and decide what classes would benefit me.” Others asked for help finding colleges that they like and for “help to set up realistic goals” for the grades and classes needed to get to those schools.

Student Perceptions—Right Classes

In grades 7–8, the percentage of students who talked with someone from school about college increased across the project years (Figure 21). Between 2012 and 2013, the percentage of middle school students who said they discussed college with someone from school increased 22 percentage points. The percentage of seniors who said they had talked with someone from school about college decreased slightly from 78 to 76 percent between 2012 and 2014.

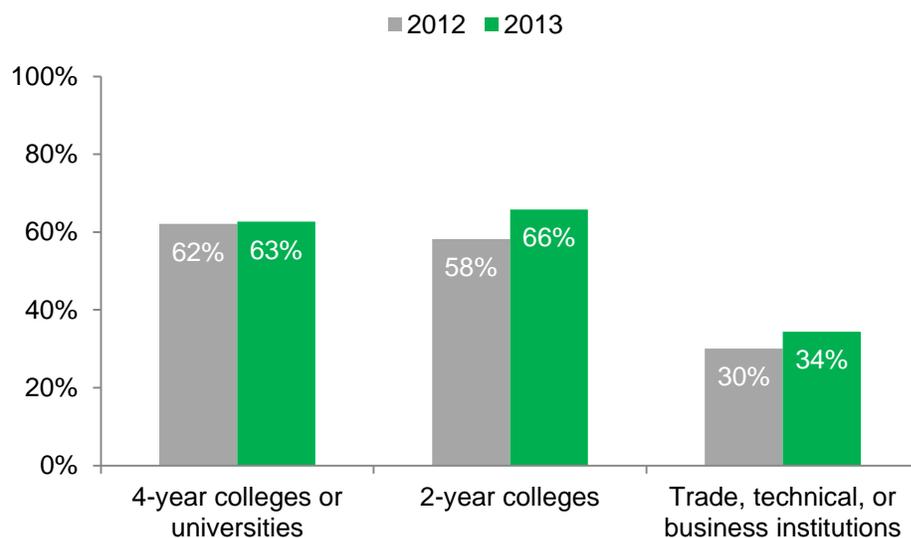
Figure 21
Percentage of Students Who Talked With Someone From School About College, 2012–2014



Students’ Awareness of Postsecondary Options

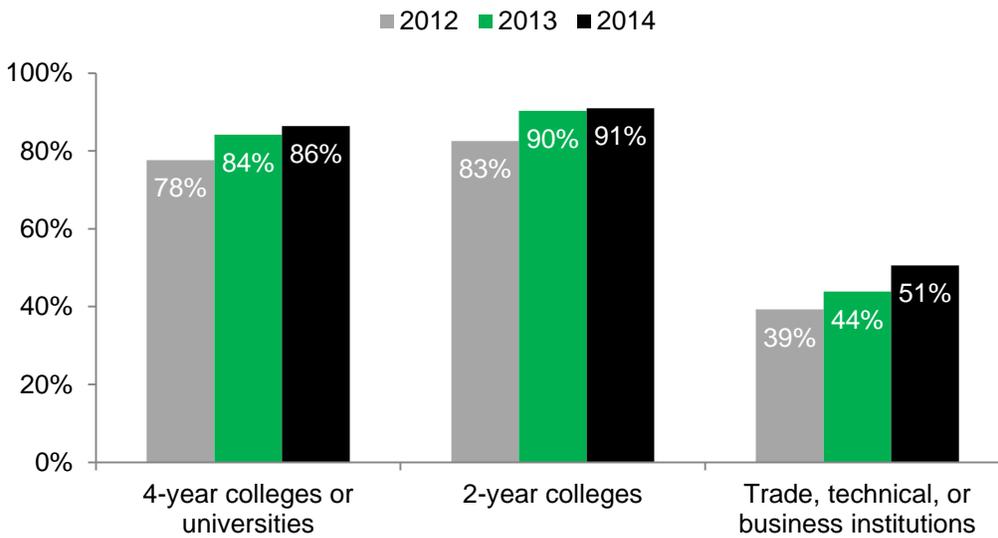
The percentage of middle school students who said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of postsecondary options increased slightly between 2012 and 2013 (Figure 22). Sixty-three percent of the students said they were familiar with 4-year institutions and two-thirds said they were familiar with 2-year colleges. The lowest percentage of middle school students (34%) said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of technical, trade, or business institutions.

Figure 22
Percentage of Students Who Said They Were Familiar with the Entrance Requirements of Postsecondary Education, 2012 and 2013, Grades 7–8



Since implementation of GEAR UP services, the percentage of seniors who said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of postsecondary education options increased (Figure 23). In 2014, 86 percent of the seniors said they “know what it takes” to get into 4-year universities and 91 percent said they know about the requirements of 2-year colleges. About half of the seniors said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of trade, technical, and business institutions, a 12 percentage point increase from the first year of the grant.

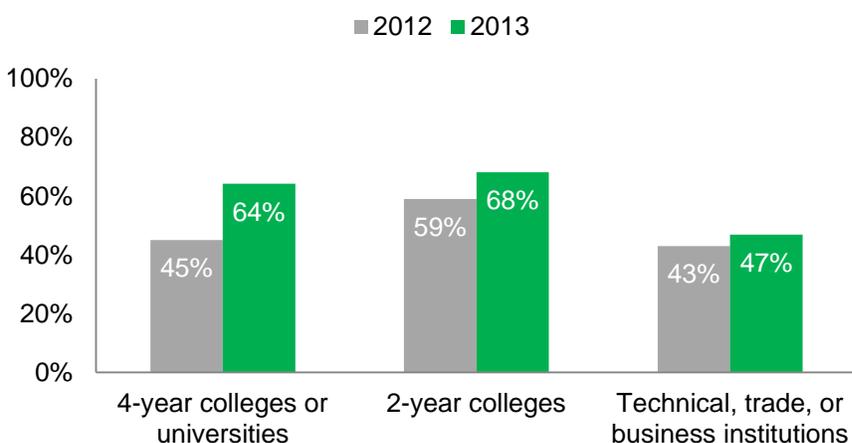
Figure 23
The Percentage of Seniors Who Said They Were Familiar with the Entrance Requirements of Postsecondary Education, 2012–2014



Parents’ Awareness of Postsecondary Options

In 2012, 45 percent of parents said they knew about the entrance requirements of 4-year colleges or universities (Figure 24). In 2013, the percentage increased to 64 percent. The percentage of parents who said they were familiar with the requirements of 2-year colleges was highest across the three postsecondary options. This percentage increased from 59 percent in 2012 to 68 percent in 2013. Similar to students, the lowest percentage of parents said they knew about technical, trade, or business institutions. Between 2012 and 2013, the percentage increased from 43 percent to 47 percent.

Figure 24
Percentage of Parents Who Said They Were Familiar with the Entrance Requirements of Postsecondary Education, 2012 and 2013



Summary

A core value of GEAR UP programs is to increase college and career awareness among students and their parents or adults at home. Among students in grades 7–8, the percentage of students who said someone from school talked to them about college increased substantially and remained about the same for seniors. In the 2013 survey, almost two thirds of the middle school students said they were more aware of career options because of GEAR UP. In 2014, 39 percent of the seniors said the same. This was an increase compared to 2012. In contrast, the percentage of students who said their school helped them identify a clear direction for their future and provided hands-on learning experiences decreased.

Well over 80 percent of the seniors said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of 2- and 4-year colleges. Among middle school students and parents, about two thirds said they were familiar with 4-year colleges or universities and 2-year colleges. Although gains have been made, the lowest percentage of students and parents said they were familiar with the entrance requirements of trade, technical, and business schools.

GEAR UP seniors suggested several ways that schools could improve the program. Many of their suggestions centered on providing information about a broader range of career options, expanding course options, and offering hands-on learning opportunities. Others said learning about the career choices that different college majors or postsecondary degrees provide would have been helpful. Finally, some seniors simply wanted more information about budgeting, job applications, and other skills to “help them succeed in the real world.”

Chapter 7

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 prepare for 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 12). The remaining sections of this chapter describe the strategies that clusters implemented and progress indicators for “Relationships” and “Raising Awareness.”

Table 12
Relationships and Raising Awareness: Action Steps and Implementation Strategies

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

Note: Oregon GEAR UP’s Five “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 2- or 4-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). Below is a list of strategies that aim to promote relationships that support students as they plan and prepare for postsecondary education:

- **Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone (ASPIRE).** Four clusters participate in ASPIRE, 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 and by educating students and families about the scholarship application process and other options for paying for postsecondary education. ASPIRE also provides and encouragement to help students access education and training beyond high school.
- **Contact with recent alumni.** Three clusters hosted events for current college students to return to the high school to share their experiences, and one cluster displayed posters of alumni labeled with their colleges and the degrees they are completing. Another cluster matched freshman college students with seventh- and eighth-grade classes for their "Adopt a Grad" program. These classes maintain regular contact with the college students through correspondence, care packages, and monthly Skype calls.
- **Peer mentoring.** Two clusters implement peer mentoring that matches high achieving high school students with middle school students. The high school mentors provide tutoring and support to help the middle school students prepare for high school.
- **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 participated in the summer leadership camp conducted by Oregon GEAR UP.
- **Communication with parents and community members.** Clusters implemented creative ways to communicate college information to families and community members. In one cluster, the GEAR UP coordinator periodically presents GEAR UP news at school staff meetings and district board meetings. One cluster planned to create a GEAR UP website

with information about school activities, scholarships, and college entrance requirements. Another cluster created a “communications intern” position for a 12th-grade student to assist the GEAR UP coordinator. This intern will help to update the school’s website with GEAR UP information, write articles about GEAR UP for the school and local newspapers, and help to manage communication with families and the community.

Student Survey Findings

Raising Awareness: Student Comments

Of the 442 returned surveys, 39 seniors (9%) said that their school helped them to learn about and/or plan for college by providing basic information about colleges and the options available. As one student explained, events like college fairs were particularly helpful for learning about various postsecondary education opportunities:

*My school has given me the opportunity to meet/speak with college [representatives] and applying for scholarships. Transitioning to UCC is easy. The annual college fair has been helpful for finding out the [requirements] and [opportunities] at many universities.
(Student)*

Specific college-going supports that seniors described included help with financial aid and opportunities to visit college campuses. Twenty-three seniors (5%) reported receiving general information about financial aid options, help with scholarships, and guidance about the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In some cases, “the Career Center ... [provided] resources that inform [students] of available scholarships,” whereas at other schools, students accessed “a weekly list of scholarships available and a class on how to organize them.”

Sixteen seniors (4%) mentioned college visits as a key means through which they learned about college options and different majors and were inspired to pursue postsecondary education. For example, one student explained that “seeing the college campuses we did I saw how cool it would be to go there.” Another student noted, though, that “some college awareness and information trips/activities kicked in around our junior/senior year, but by then it was either not helpful enough or too late.”

A larger share of seniors, however, said that the school had not helped them with planning for postsecondary (107 seniors, 24%). Students said it “wasn’t talked or thought about” and that the “school didn’t focus on career and college.” Some said that “they haven’t helped at all” whereas others said that “they only care about college” and that the school did not provide support for students planning to enter the military, for example. As one student explained, the lack of support was exacerbated by the fact that “this place is very small and [there are] not a lot of experiences” to help students decide what they want to do. Twenty-three seniors (5%) said that they had to take college and career planning into their own hands because the school did not offer enough support. As one student explained, “I received no help from my school and was

faced to spend hours researching when it could have been very easily relayed w/school resources.”

When asked what other things the school could have done to help prepare students for entering college or a career, 16 seniors (4%) replied “nothing” (or similar) and 17 seniors (4%) said that the school had provided adequate supports and they felt prepared. These students said the school “covered everything I needed to know” and that “my school has done all that it can to help me and my postsecondary education plans with what they have.”

Twenty-seven seniors (6%) said that the school could have done more but did not provide specifics. The most common supports that other students requested were:

- Information about the cost of college and financial aid options (32 seniors)
I just don't have enough knowledge about how much college really costs, nobody in my family has gone to college and I am VERY unfamiliar with this topic... More help would have been nice. (Student)
- Earlier help with planning for postsecondary so students will have more time to prepare (29 seniors)
Start talking about college much sooner. Career/study aptitude tests. Individualized approach. Make college planning/scholarship education/career knowledge a mandatory class, not just a last-minute requirement. Emphasize the importance of secondary education, ESPECIALLY in rural towns such as ours. (Student)
- More opportunities to visit college campuses (25 seniors)
I kind of know facts about college, but not really. I would like tours to different colleges, to experience them by my own hand. (Student)
- A class about college information and career planning (24 seniors)
Have a class that is dedicated to just helping seniors with college and careers. (Student)
- Help with college application logistics and essays (13 seniors)
They could have provided opportunities to learn more about the application process or helped write application essays. (Student)

Students' Perceptions: Relationships

Although the majority of students said their school was safe and they had positive relationships with teachers, the percentage of students who agreed with these statements generally decreased during the three project years (Table 13). The highest percentage of middle school students and seniors agreed with the statement about feeling safe in school. In 2014, the percentage of seniors who reported positive relationships with their teachers ranged from 73 percent to 84 percent.

Table 13
Percentage of Students Who Felt Safe in School and Had Positive Relationships With Teachers, 2012–2014

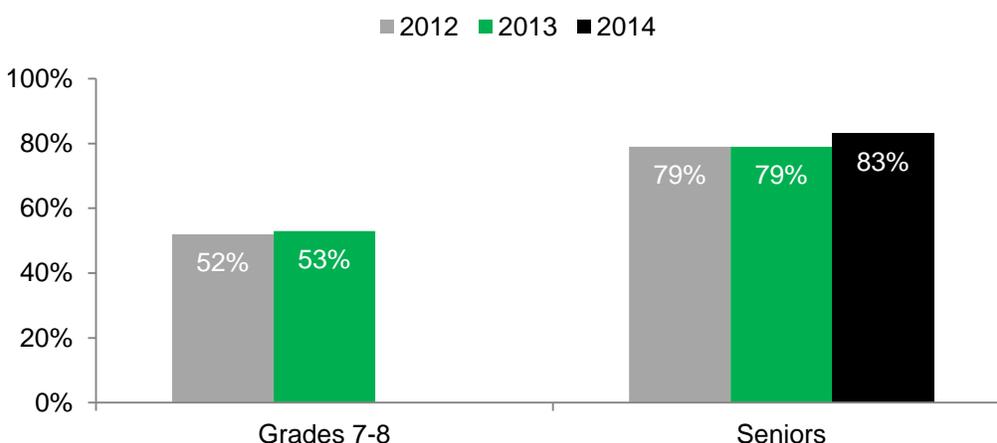
	Grades 7–8			Seniors		
	2012 (n=818)	2013 (n=1,153)	Percent change ^a	2012 (n=2,139)	2014 (n=1,993)	Percent change ^a
I feel safe in the school	91%	84%	-7.7%	94%	93%	-1.1%
I feel respected by my teachers	89%	79%	-11.2%	89%	84%	-5.6%
My teachers are truly interested in my learning	88%	80%	-9.1%	79%	73%	-7.6%
I feel comfortable talking with my teachers	76%	63%	-17.1%	80%	81%	1.3%
I have received the help I need from my teachers	87%	81%	-6.9%	85%	81%	-4.7%

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

Source: GEAR UP Student Survey, 2012–2014

Slightly more than half of the middle school students and 83 percent of the seniors said they talked with friends about college, at least sometimes, during the last school year (Figure 25).

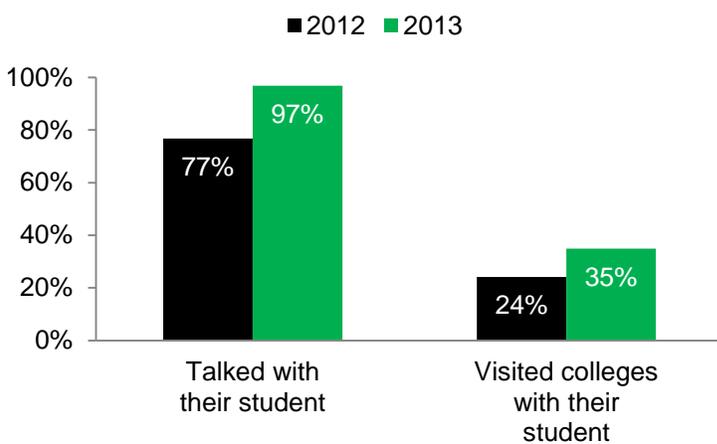
Figure 25
Percentage of Students Who Talked With Friends About College, 2012–2014



Parents' Perceptions

Nearly all parents said they talked with their students about college, but only about one third of parents reported visiting colleges with their students (Figure 26). The percentage of parent survey respondents who had talked to their students about college increased from 77 percent to 97 percent. The percentage of parents who said they had visited a college with their student also increased, from 24 percent to 35 percent.

Figure 26
Percentage of Parents Who Talked With Their Students About College or Visited Colleges With Them, 2012 and 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 counselors 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. Each cluster implemented one or more of the following 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 4-year colleges, 2-year colleges, and trade schools for both middle and high school students. In addition to helping students learn more about career opportunities, site visits provide students with information about financial aid and other funding support. The institutions that students visited included:
 - **Colleges and universities.** Oregon State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon, and Western Oregon University.
 - **Community colleges.** Lane Community College, Rogue Community College, Southern Oregon Community College, Southwestern Oregon Community College, and Umpqua Community College.

- *Trade, technical, and business schools.* Digipen Institute and Oregon Institute of Technology.
- **College preparation classes.** Some clusters developed and implemented classes or special events to provide students with instruction and support to prepare for postsecondary education. The classes required students to participate in 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. Some clusters partnered with local businesses, credit unions, or community organizations to share information about college savings plans, Dream\$avers, and organizations that help families develop financial plans for college.

Student Survey Findings

Student Comments

Of the 442 returned surveys, 14 seniors (3%) said that “teachers encouraged me to pursue my interests” and that school staff members’ “advice and encouragement throughout my years in school” helped them to learn about and/or plan for college or careers. Some cited broad support and encouragement from teachers and counselors across the school, while others said that “a few select teachers who are very passionate in what they do ... have [passed] the passion on to me.” As one senior explained, staff members empowered students to learn about their postsecondary options and developed personal relationships with their students that support college-going:

They have provided the resources and knowledge for me to do the research on what I might be interested in. School has also given me the resources to find financial aid and have great relationships with the teachers that may someday write a [letter] of recommendation for me. (Student)

More seniors (24 students, 5%) said that the school could have provided more staff support for helping students prepare to enter college or a career, however. Some said that “more teachers should inform their students about college and encourage them to go” or asked the school to “SUPPORT ME.” Others specifically asked that staff members “talk one-on-one with all the students” and focus more on individuals, for example, by “allow[ing] more and scheduled meetings with our counselors” or “call[ing] seniors down to the career center.” One student explained that counselor turnover and a lack of general staff support hampered students’ postsecondary planning:

My school could have taken the care to inform me of how my high school credits stacked up. If they hadn't hired a new counselor every year, my problems may not exist. The

majority of the staff in this school are uninspired about teaching and helping young adults move forward in their lives. (Student)

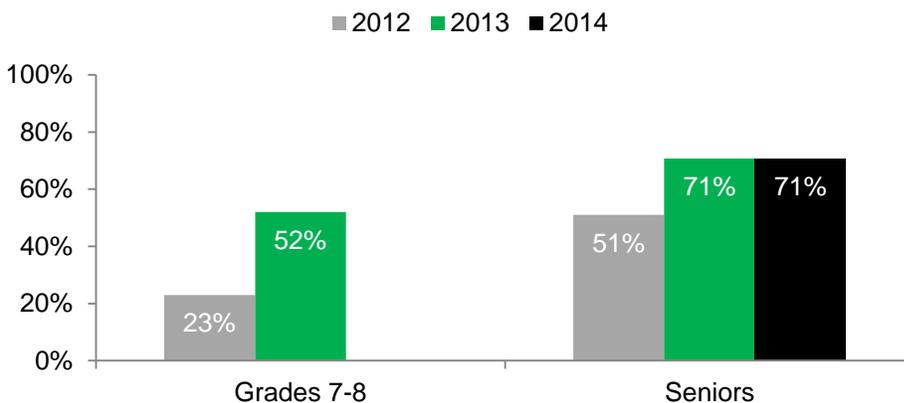
In related requests, nineteen students (4%) said that the school could improve communication about college and career. This included increasing the general clarity and visibility of the advice provided as well as taking more time to help students better understand the postsecondary planning process. One senior said that “they could have took the time and help and explain things better and not in such a rush cause we were short on time.” Another student asked that the staff be more patient and allow students to ask clarifying questions:

They could have made us more aware of the opportunities we had and how to make the most out of them instead of getting frustrated and angry at us all the time. We never got the chance to ask questions if we weren't sure of something. (Student)

Students Perceptions: Raising Awareness

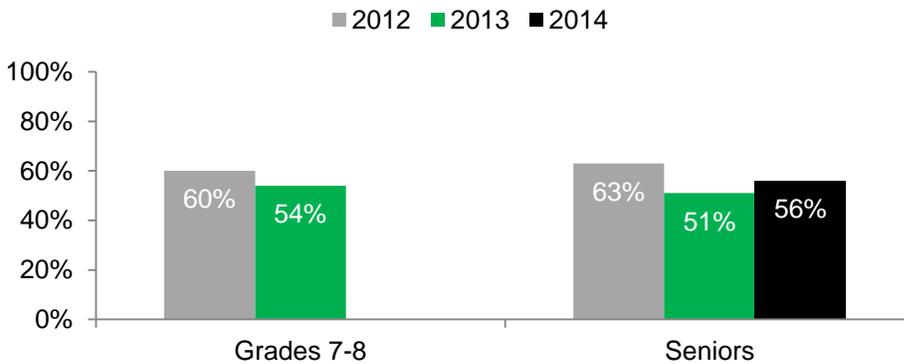
The percentage of students who said someone had spoken with them about financial aid increased for middle school students and seniors (Figure 27). In 2013, over half of the middle school students and 71 percent of the seniors said someone from school had discussed financial aid with them.

Figure 27
Percentage of Students Who Said Someone Had Talked to Them About Financial Aid, 2012–2014



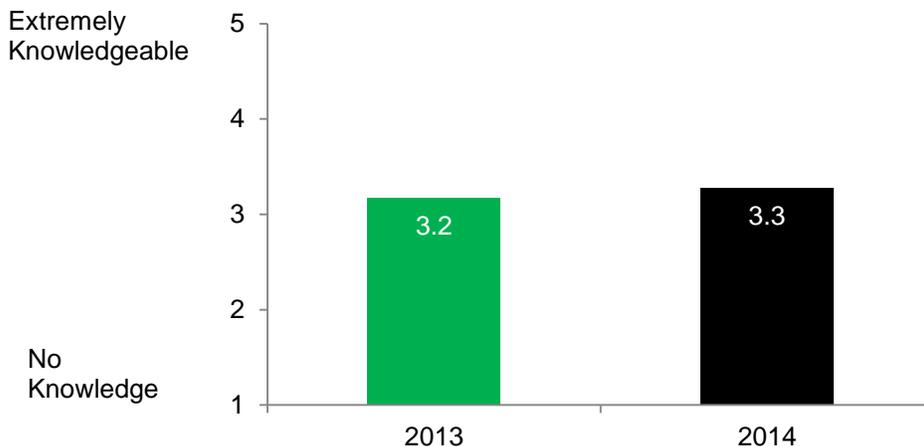
The percentage of middle school students and seniors who said that college was probably or definitely affordable with financial aid, scholarships, and family resources decreased between 2012 and 2013 (Figure 28). In 2013, the percentage of students who said college was probably or definitely affordable was just over half for both groups.

Figure 28
Percentage of Students Who Said College Was Definitely or Probably Affordable With Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Family Resources, 2012–2014



On a scale of 1 to 5, seniors 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.” Seniors rated themselves as moderately knowledgeable about financial aid in 2012 and 2013 (Figure 31).

Figure 31
Level of Knowledge That Seniors Reported About Financial Aid, 2013–2014



Seniors' Enrollment Decisions

The reasons that seniors decided not to continue their education related mostly to cost and the desire or need to work, regardless of how they ranked themselves academically (Table 14). The lowest percentage of seniors said they were not planning to attend college due to poor grades, lack of interest, or family responsibilities.

Table 14
Reasons Seniors Decided Not to Enroll in College, 2014

Reasons for deciding not to attend college	Seniors (N=442)
I am definitely going to college	56%
It costs too much	7%
I need to work to support myself	7%
My grades are not good enough, I need to take care of my family, or some other reason	6%
I want to work	5%
I want to join the military	4%
I am not interested	2%
Missing	12%

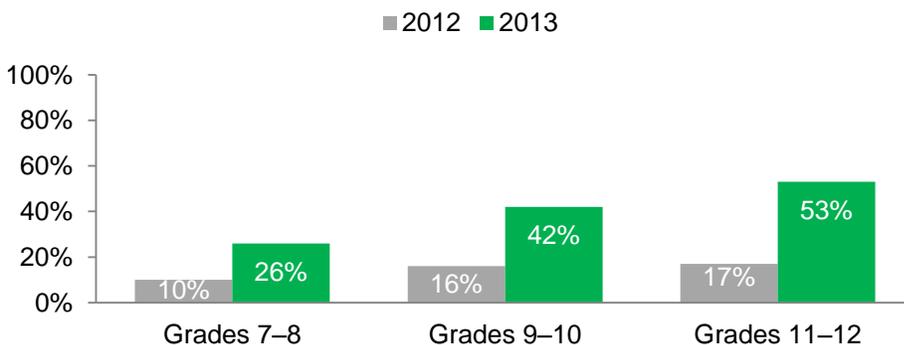
Source: 2014 Oregon GEAR UP Senior Survey.

Parent Survey

Parents' Perceptions: Raising Awareness

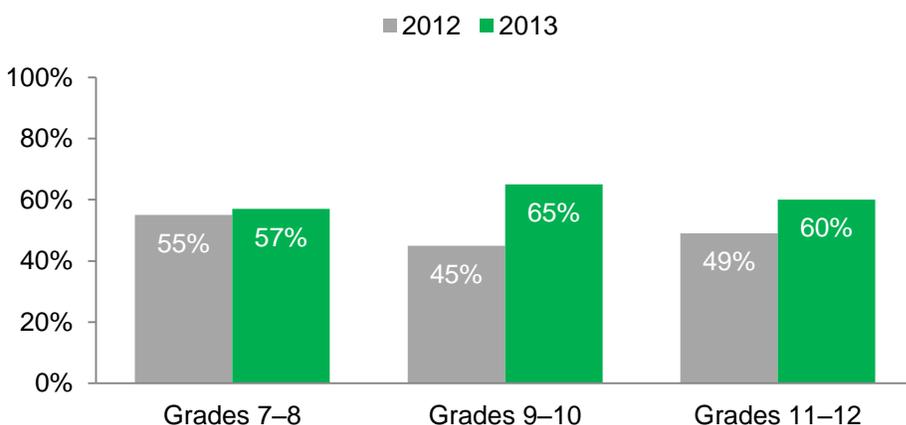
Between 2012 and 2013, the percentage of parents who discussed financial aid with someone from school increased, especially in upper grade levels (Figure 29). In 2013, about a quarter of the parents of middle school students said someone had talked to them about financial aid. Over half of the parents of juniors and seniors said they had discussed financial aid with someone from school.

Figure 29
Percentage of Parents Who Said Someone Had Talked to Them About Financial Aid, 2012 and 2013



The percentage of parents who said a 4-year college was affordable for their family with financial aid, scholarships, and their family resources increased for all grade level groups (Figure 30). In 2013, the percentage of parents who agreed that college was probably or definitely affordable with financial aid, scholarships, and their family resources ranged from 57 percent to 65 percent.

Figure 30
Percentage of Parents Who Said College Was Affordable with Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Their Family's Resources, 2012 and 2013



Summary

Principals and coordinators credit Oregon GEAR UP with raising awareness and increasing relationships that promote planning for postsecondary education. GEAR UP schools increased the number and scope of partnerships with community organizations, higher education, and business leaders. The clusters also sponsored financial aid nights, college visits, college application weeks, and other events to increase knowledge and awareness about college readiness and planning. The survey findings indicate that these GEAR UP-sponsored events increased the number of students who received college and career readiness services. However, some seniors said that they wished the school had provided more encouragement, support, and hands-on help to plan and prepare for their transition to postsecondary education.

Students generally reported positive feelings about their school and teachers. Over three quarters or more of the middle school students and seniors felt safe in school, respected by their teachers, and believed they received the help they needed. Almost two thirds of middle school students said they felt comfortable talking with their teachers. For most of these statements, however, the percentage of students who agreed with the statement decreased during the project years.

The percentage of middle school students and seniors who said someone from school had discussed financial aid with them also increased after GEAR UP implementation. The importance of these discussions is underscored by two factors. The main reasons that seniors said they were not attending college were its high cost and their need or desire to work. Second, only about half of the seniors said attending a 4-year college was affordable with financial aid, scholarships, and their family's resources.

The clusters have begun, and are in various stages of, developing a 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—special parent or family events, transition activities, college prep nights, and/or financial aid nights. They also provided college and career awareness information at regularly scheduled events including ninth-grade orientation or elementary school carnivals.

Chapter 8

Who Needs More Support

Education leaders in Oregon emphasize the need for strategic use of resources to produce maximum returns 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 background 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

Seniors 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?” In 2014, 78 percent of the seniors rated themselves as an “A” or “B” student.

Student Survey Comments

Over half of the “A” and “B” seniors (52%) said that their school helped them to learn about and/or plan for college or the career they wanted to pursue. Less than one third of the “C” or below seniors (30%) said the same. Table 15 gives examples of the college and career supports that seniors said they received at school.

Table 15
Postsecondary Planning Supports That Seniors Received, by Perceived Ability Level, 2014

“A” and “B” Seniors	“C” or Below Seniors
Rigorous academic classes, CTE classes, and college-level courses	School did not help me to learn about or plan for college or careers
College visits	
Staff support	
Basics about college options	

Note: The table summarizes the content analysis results of the students’ responses to open-ended questions on the 2014 Oregon GEAR UP Senior Survey

Source: Senior Student Survey, 2014

Seniors in the “A” and “B” group also said their school stressed the importance of postsecondary education and that parent involvement and encouragement helped them to

prepare for postsecondary, whereas none of the “C” or below seniors mentioned either of those things.

While more “A” and “B” seniors said that their schools provided college and career supports than did the “C” or below group, more of the higher-achieving students also said that their schools could have done more to help them prepare. Seventy percent of the “A” and “B” seniors said that their school could have done more to help them, whereas 58 percent of the “C” or below seniors said the same. Table 16 provides examples of the differences in what the “A” and “B” group and the “C” or below seniors described as additional needed supports.

Table 16
College and Career Readiness Support Students Wanted to Receive, by Perceived Ability Level, 2014

“A” and “B” Seniors	“C” or Below Seniors
Supports about financial aid, scholarships, and FAFSA Rigorous, college-like classes Instruction on general life skills (e.g., taxes, personal finance) A dedicated class about college and career planning Help with college applications and related exams	College visits

Note: The table summarizes the content analysis results of the students’ responses to open-ended questions on the 2014 Oregon GEAR UP Senior Survey

Source: Senior Student Survey, 2014

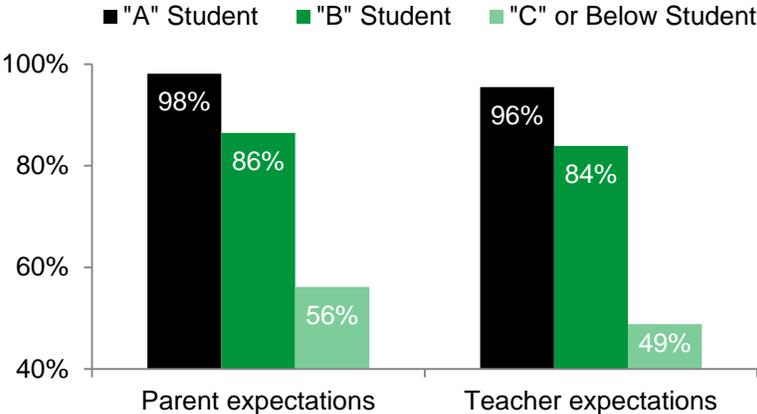
Examples of additional supports requested by the “A” and “B” seniors, but not by the “C” or below seniors included:

- Information about the cost of college
- General information about postsecondary opportunities
- College classes/credit
- Emphasis on the importance of postsecondary education and the benefits of college
- Additional help for seniors as they go through the process of finalizing their postsecondary plans

Adult Expectations, Support, and College Aspirations

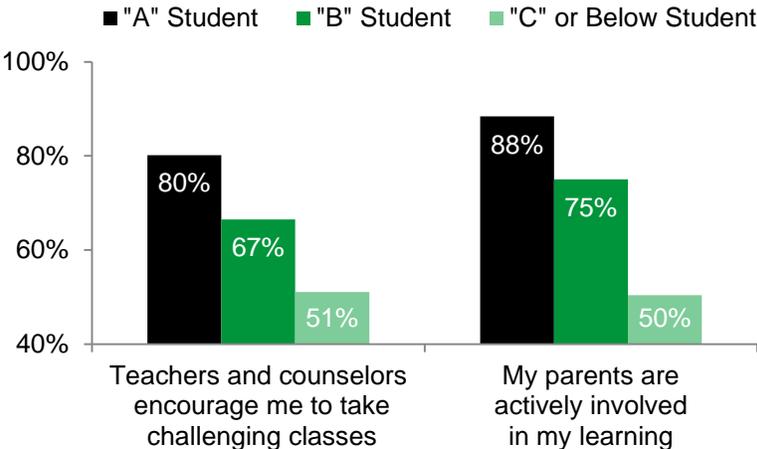
Across all groups, the percentage of students who said their parents expected them to attend college was higher than the percentage of students who said their teachers expected them to go on to college (Figure 32). The percentage of seniors who said their teachers and parents expected them to attend college was highest for the “A” group and lowest for the “C” or below group.

Figure 32
Percentage of Seniors, by Perceived Academic Ability, Who Agreed Their Parents and Teachers Expected Them to Attend College, 2014



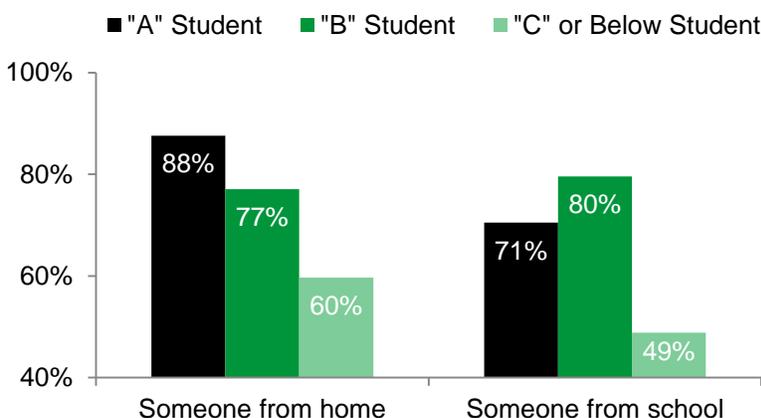
The majority of seniors said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging classes and their parents were involved in their learning (Figure 33). However, similar to other survey results, the percentage of students who agreed that parents and educators supported their learning increased with the students’ perceived academic ability.

Figure 33
Percentage of Seniors, by Perceived Academic Ability, Who Agreed Their Teachers, Counselors, and Parents Encouraged Their Learning, 2014



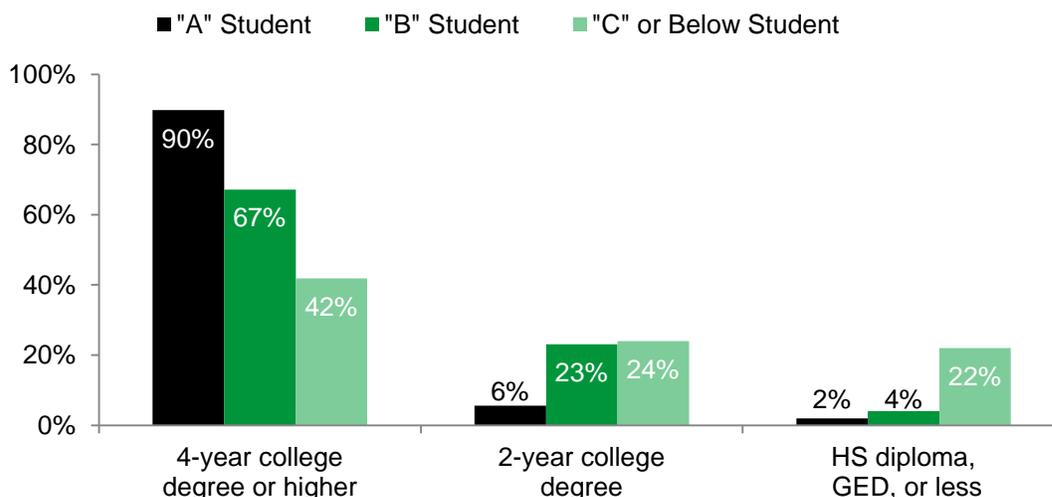
The percentage of seniors who said someone had talked with them about college entrance requirements also increased with the students’ perceived academic ability (Figure 34).

Figure 34
Percentage of Seniors, by Perceived Academic Ability, Who Talked About College Entrance Requirements with an Adult at School or Home, 2014



The percentage of “A” and “B” students who expected to get a 4-year college degree was higher than the percentage of “C” or below students (Figure 35). Conversely, the percentage of students who expected to get a 2-year college degree or a high school diploma or less was highest for the “C” or below group.

Figure 35
Percentage of Seniors, By Perceived Academic Ability, Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2014



Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 percent because data on students who said they expected to attend a one-year trade school or attend some college are not reported due to the small number of responses.

The reasons that students decided not to continue their education related mostly to cost and the desire or need to work, regardless of how they ranked themselves academically (Table 17). Across all groups, the lowest percentage of students said they were not planning to attend college due to poor grades, lack of interest, or family responsibilities.

*Table 17
Reasons Seniors Decided Not to Enroll in College, by Their Perceived Ability Level, 2014*

Reasons for deciding not to attend college	How students ranked themselves academically		
	"A" Student (n=139)	"B" Student (n=164)	"C" or Below (n=82)
I am definitely going to college	84%	60%	38%
It costs too much	*	9%	*
I need to work to support myself	*	9%	13%
My grades are not good enough or I am not interested	0%	*	*
I need to take care of my family	0%	*	*
I want to work, join the military, or some other reason	*	*	*

* Indicates data are not reported because the number of students was less than 10.

Source: 2014 Oregon GEAR UP Senior Survey.

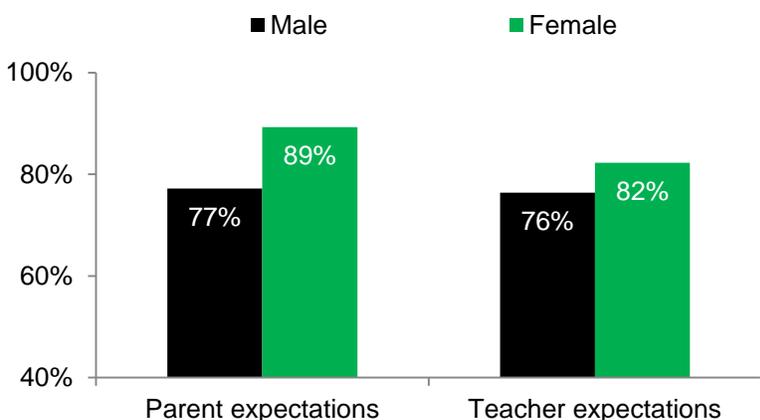
Gender

The disparity in college enrollment among males and females has raised concerns about equity. In 2012, 48 percent of undergraduate enrollment in 4-year universities were male and 52 percent were female (Oregon University System, 2013). This section will report the 2014 Senior Survey results by gender. 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.

Adult Expectations, Support, and College Aspirations

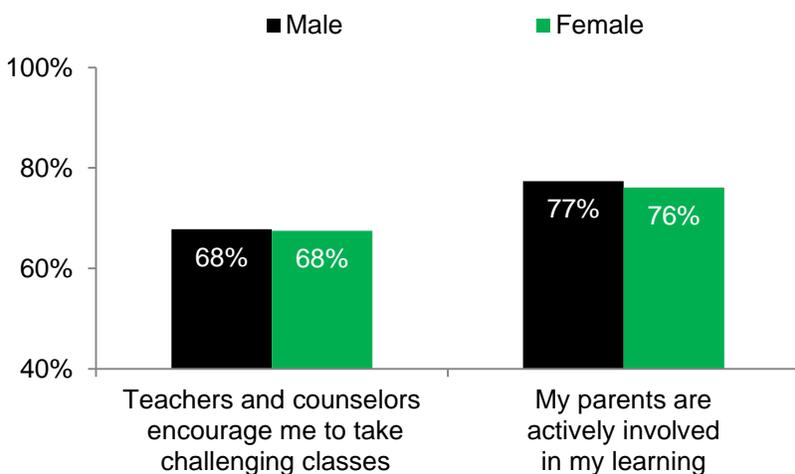
More female students than male students reported that adults expected them to attend college. Eighty-nine percent of the female students said their parents expected them to attend college and 82 percent said the same about their teachers (Figure 36). The percentage of male students who said their parents and teachers expected them to go to college was 77 and 76 percent, respectively.

Figure 36
Percentage of Seniors, by Gender, Who Agreed Their Parents and Teachers Expected Them to Go to College, 2014



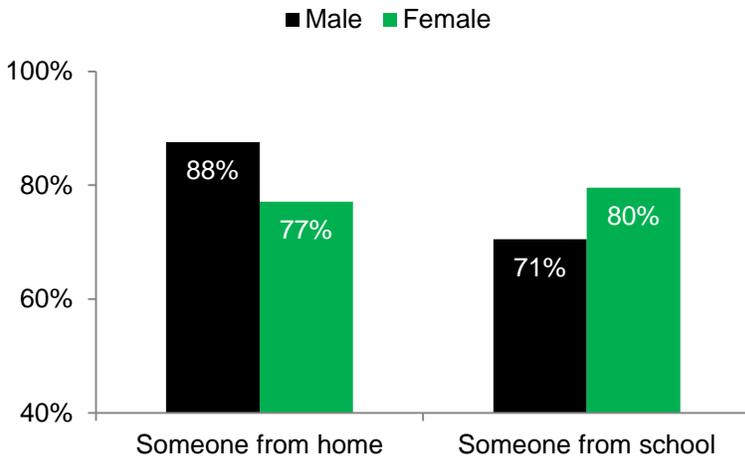
The percentages of male and female students who said they received support from teachers, school counselors, and parents or other caretaking adults were similar (Figure 37). About two thirds of the students said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging courses, and about three quarters said their parents were actively involved in their learning.

Figure 37
Percentage of Seniors, by Gender, Who Agreed Their Teachers, Counselors, and Parents Encouraged Their Learning, 2014



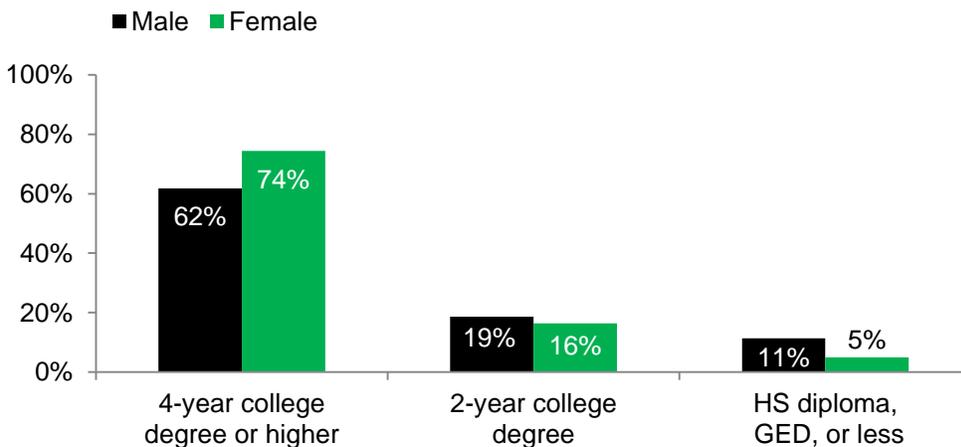
The percentage of seniors who said that someone from school had talked to them about college entrance requirements was higher for females (80%) than for male students (71%) (Figure 38). The percentage of seniors who talked with someone at home was higher for male students (88%) than for female students (77%).

Figure 38
Percentage of Seniors, By Gender, Who Talked About College With Someone From Home or School, 2014



Ninety percent of the female students said they expected to get either a 4-year or 2-year college degree, and 81 percent of the male students said the same (Figure 39). The percentage of male students who said they expected to get a high school degree or less was 11 percent for male students and 5 percent for female students.

Figure 39
Percentage of Seniors, by Gender, Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2014



Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 percent because data on students who said they expected to attend a one-year trade school or attend some college are not reported due to the small number of responses.

The main reasons that male and female students were not going to college was due to cost and the need to work (Table 18). Just over 15 percent of the female students and 17 percent of the male students said they would not attend college for these reasons. Another 16 percent of the male students said they were not going to college because of the desire to join the military or some other reason. For both genders, the lowest percentage of students said they were not planning to attend college due to poor grades, lack of interest, or need to care for their family.

*Table 18
Reasons Seniors Decided Not to Enroll in College, by Gender, 2014*

Reasons for deciding not to attend college	Male (n=171)	Female (n=214)
I am definitely going to college	53%	73%
It costs too much	7%	9%
I need to work to support myself	10%	7%
I want to work	6%	*
I want to join the military or some other reason	16%	*
My grades are not good enough, not interested, or need to take care of my family	*	*

* Indicates data are not reported because the number of students was less than 10.

Source: 2014 Oregon GEAR UP Senior Survey.

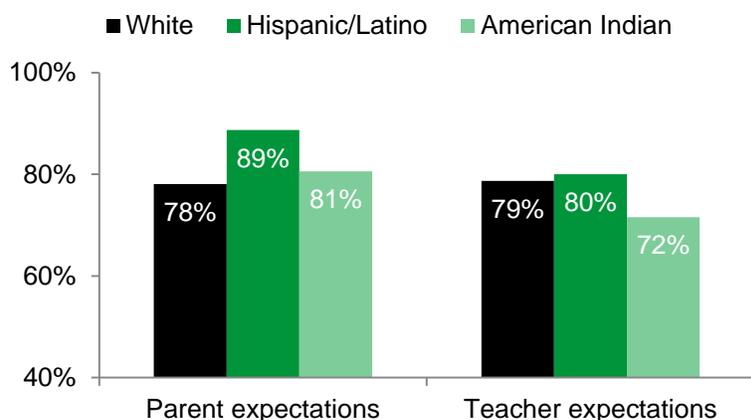
Race/Ethnicity

Although the disparity in college enrollment rates for students of color remains a concern, the gap has narrowed steadily since 2002 (Oregon University System, 2013). Figures 40 to 43 report, by race/ethnicity, the percentages of students who said their teachers and parents expected them to go to college, who had conversations with adults about college entrancement requirements, and who expected to complete college. Because of low sample size for some race/ethnic groups, the survey findings are reported for White, Hispanic, and American Indian students only.

Adult Expectations, Support, and College Aspirations

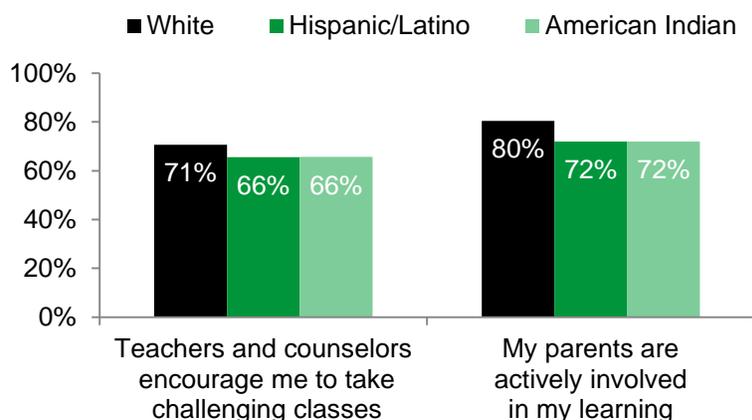
The percentage of Hispanic/Latino and American Indian students who said their parents expected them to go to college was higher than the percentage of White students (Figure 40). Across the three racial/ethnic groups, the percentage of students who said their teachers expected them to go to college ranged from 72 percent for American Indian students to about 80 percent for White and Hispanic/Latino students.

Figure 40
Percentage of Seniors, by Race/Ethnicity, Who Said Their Parents and Teachers Expected Them to Attend College, 2014



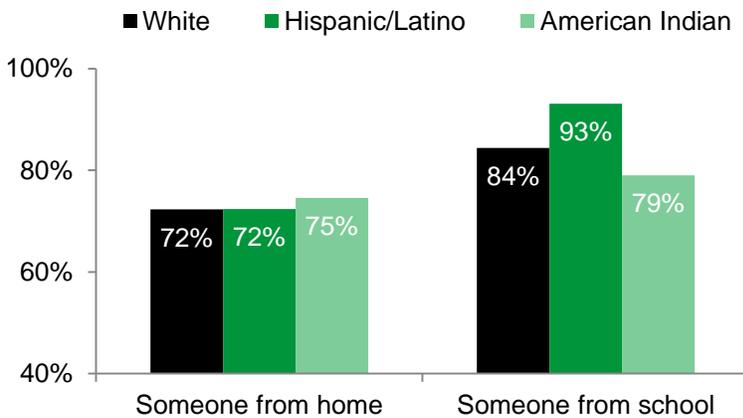
Two thirds of the Hispanic and American Indian students said their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging courses; 71 percent of White students responded similarly (Figure 41). The highest percentage of students who said their parents were actively involved in their learning was White students; the percentage for American Indian and Hispanic/Latino students was the same.

Figure 41
Percentage of Students, By Race/Ethnicity, Who Said Their Teachers, Counselors, and Parents Encouraged Their Learning, 2014



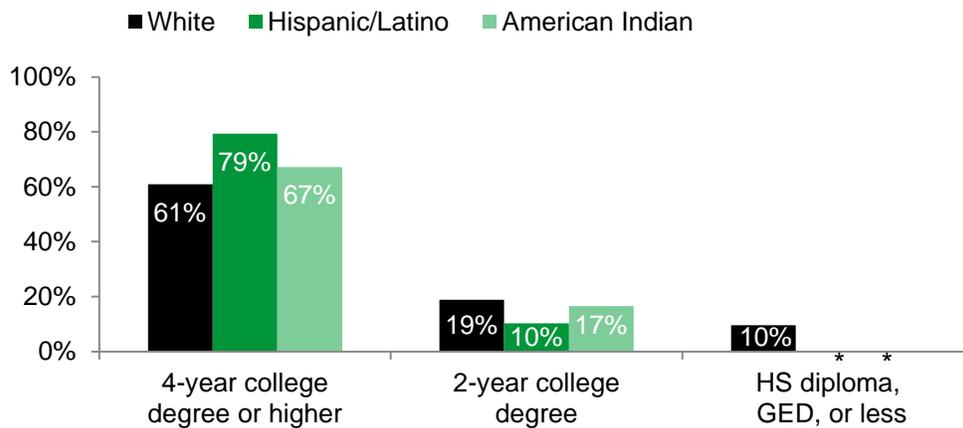
Across all groups, more students reported talking about college entrance requirements with someone from school than home (Figure 42). Between 72 and 75 percent of the students said they had talked with someone from home. The percentage of students who said someone from school had talked to them ranged from 79 percent for American Indian students to 93 percent for Hispanic/Latino students

Figure 42
Percentage of Seniors, by Race/Ethnicity, Who Talked About College With Someone at School or Home, 2014



The percentage of White, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian students who expected to get a 4-year or 2-year degree ranged between 80 and 89 percent (Figure 43). The group with the highest percentage of students who expected to get a high school diploma, GED, or less was White students (10%).

Figure 43
Percentage of Seniors, by Race/Ethnicity, Who Expected to Get a College Degree, 2014



* Indicates data are not reported because the number of students was less than 10.

Note: The percentages do not sum to 100 percent because data on students who said they expected to attend a one-year trade school or attend some college are not reported due to the small number of responses.

Across all racial/ethnic groups, the reasons that students decided not to continue their education mostly related to cost and the desire or need to work (Table 19). The percentage of White students who said they planned to join the military or had other reasons for not attending college was 10 percent. Across all groups, the lowest percentage of students said they did not plan to attend college due to poor grades, lack of interest, or the need to care for their family.

*Table 19
Reasons Seniors Decided Not to Enroll in College, by Race, 2014*

Reason for deciding not to attend college	White (n=146)	Non-White (n=64)
I am definitely going to college	51%	53%
It costs too much	14%	*
I need to work to support myself	9%	*
I want to work	7%	*
I want to join the military or some other reason	10%	*
I need to take care of my family	*	*

* Indicates data are not reported because the number of students was less than 10.

Note: Non-white refers to Hispanic/Latino and American Indian students.

Source: 2014 Oregon GEAR UP Senior Survey.

Summary

The seniors' view of the support that GEAR UP and schools provided around college and career readiness varied by their perceived academic ability, gender, and, to a lesser degree, race/ethnicity. Compared to "C" or below students, a higher percentage of seniors who rated themselves as "A" or "B" students agreed that their parents and teachers expected them to go to college and helped them prepare for college enrollment. The types of support that students wanted to prepare for college varied by their perceived academic level. Students in the "A" and "B" group stated that they wanted more college and career planning support in earlier grades. They also asked for more hands-on help to complete scholarship and financial aid applications. In contrast, the "C" or below group wanted to participate in more college visits.

Although the majority of "C" or below students said their parents expected them to go to college, less than half said their teachers expected them to do so. The percentage of students who said that their teachers had encouraged them to take challenging courses and that an adult from home or school had talked to them about college also decreased in accordance with their perceived academic ability.

Compared to male seniors, a higher percentage of female seniors 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 school about college was also higher than for male students. However, for both groups, about two thirds of the students said

their teachers and counselors encouraged them to take challenging classes, and over three quarters said their parents were actively involved in their learning.

The majority of all students, regardless of race or ethnicity, said their parents expected them to go to college. The majority of students also said that their teachers encouraged them to take challenging courses, that their parents were actively involved in their learning, and that they had talked to someone at home or school about college. Although the majority of students in each racial/ethnic group said they received support and expected to get a degree, the percentages varied. Compared to American Indian or White students, a higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino students agreed that they received help from school and adults expected them to get a college degree. However, the percentage of students who said someone from school encouraged them to take challenging courses and that their parents were actively involved in their learning was highest for White students.

Across all groups, the primary reasons that seniors decided not to enroll in postsecondary education were the high cost of college and their need or desire to work. Compared to other groups, a higher percentage of male students said they were not going on to postsecondary education because they wanted to join the military and other reasons. The lowest percentage of all seniors said they did not plan to attend college due to poor grades, lack of interest, or family responsibilities.

Appendix A

Methods

In partnership with The Ford Family Foundation, Oregon GEAR UP provides support to schools in 10 rural communities or clusters. The aim of the partnership is to help schools build college-going cultures that will increase the awareness, preparation, and college enrollment of rural students. Oregon GEAR UP provides each school with funding 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 supplant funding for existing activities.

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.

Education Northwest is the external evaluator of the Oregon GEAR UP program. The Education Northwest evaluation team worked with Oregon GEAR UP staff members to develop a formative evaluation plan that would provide information about program implementation and progress toward establishing a college-going culture in the school. The evaluation used multiple measures and collected information from multiple informants including students, parents or caretaking adults, and educators. This year's evaluation report summarizes findings for the following questions:

1. How has the Oregon GEAR UP Five "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

Schools

The participants in the GEAR UP evaluation include students, parents or caretaking adults, and educators in rural middle and high schools organized into 10 community clusters. The schools are located in Coos, Curry, and Douglas counties (Table A-1).

*Table A-1
GEAR UP Participating Schools*

Community	Schools
Camas Valley	Camas Valley School
Coquille	Coquille Junior/Senior High School
Drain	North Douglas Elementary/Middle School North Douglas High School
Elkton	Elkton Charter School
Myrtle Point	Myrtle Point Junior/Senior High School
Reedsport	Reedsport Community Charter School
Roseburg	John C. Fremont Middle School Joseph Lane Middle School Roseburg High School
Port Orford and Langlois	Driftwood Middle School Pacific High School
Powers	Powers Junior/Senior High School
Yoncalla	Yoncalla Middle/High School

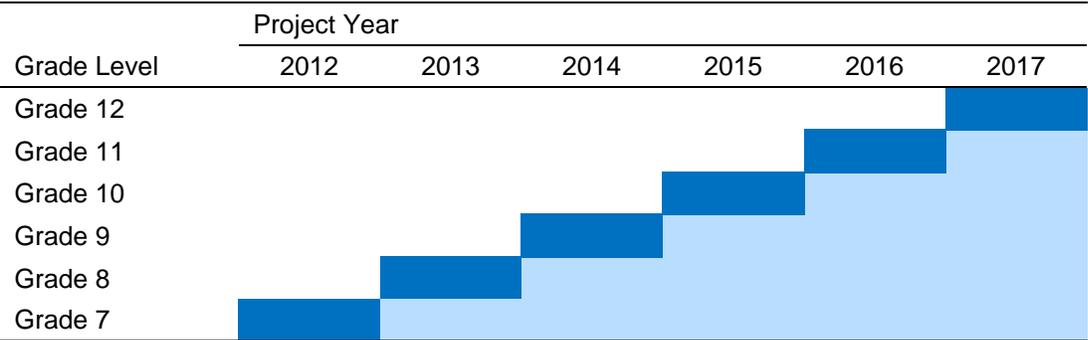
The values and goals that guided the design and implementation of Oregon GEAR UP services included:

- Establish college-going cultures in participating schools
- Allow clusters maximum flexibility in the design and implementation of their local GEAR UP plans
- Focus funding on the GEAR UP cohort (2017 graduating class), but allow schools to include students from other grade levels as much as possible
- Sustain services established at each grade level

The allocation of funding for student activities used a modified cohort model that focuses on supporting the 2017 graduating class as they progress 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 2017 graduating class. In Year 1, funds were used to support students in grade 7 only. In year 2, funds supported grades 7 and 8. In year 3—the focus of this report—services expanded to include ninth-grade students (Table A-2).

To maximize the efficient use of program services, the program encouraged schools to include other students, parents, and educators in GEAR UP activities whenever possible. For example, programs invited older students to participate in College Application Week, presentations by guest speakers, 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 A-2
Grade Level of Oregon GEAR UP Student Cohort by Project Year*



Note: Dark blue cells indicate the grade level progression of the GEAR UP Cohort across project years. The light blue cells indicate the grade levels for which GEAR UP schools were encouraged to sustain services.

Educators

All middle school and high school educators were invited by Oregon GEAR UP and their school principals to participate in the annual survey administration.

Parents

GEAR UP coordinators were responsible for administering the parent survey. Coordinators provided paper surveys to a voluntary sample of parents at parent events, registration, and conferences. Some schools also elected to mail surveys to parents. GEAR UP schools asked parents to complete a survey in the spring of 2012 and 2013. In response to direct requests from schools, the window for administering parent surveys was moved to September/October to take advantage of parent contact at registration. For this reason, surveys were not administered to parents in spring 2014.

Dual Credit

To study dual credit, Education Northwest linked data from the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) and Oregon Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD). ODE data also include National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data, so we can track student enrollment and completion at colleges nationally.

The dual credit analysis includes students in the graduating classes of 2008 to 2012 at the 10 Ford-funded GEAR UP high schools (N=4,167). We examined their dual credit participation in their junior and senior years, specifically. We selected these cohorts due to the nature of the data and data quality issues. The full dataset included data on students who attended a public high school in Oregon from 2004/05 to 2011/12. Dual credit data are most complete starting in 2006/07, so only the last two cohorts of students who were seniors in 2010/11 and 2011/12 have four full years of dual credit data. Because the majority of dual credit participation occurred during the students’ junior and senior years, we examined dual credit participation in the last two years of high school for each cohort beginning with the 2007/08 cohort.

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 A–3 summarizes the evaluation questions, data variables, and data sources 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 OAKS state test scores, dropout and graduation rates, college enrollment rates, FAFSA completion, and Oregon Student Assistance Commission (OSAC) application completion data. The data sources for the reports are Oregon Department of Education (ODE), National Student Clearing House (NSC), OSAC, and Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) reports.

Participant Surveys

The purpose of the Oregon GEAR UP surveys was 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 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. The surveys also gathered information about the participant’s background and demographic characteristics.

Behavioral measures are reliable to the degree that respondents answer items that demonstrate internal consistency or measure the same concepts in the same way. The most common indicator of internal consistency is coefficient alpha. Alpha coefficients range between 0 and 1. Larger values of alpha indicate that the responses of students (or educators) to a set of items are highly interrelated.

The reliability of the student and educator surveys was assessed by computing alpha coefficients for subsets of items on each survey. For surveys such as the GEAR UP student and educator surveys, which touch upon several concepts, it is appropriate to calculate and report alpha for each concept separately. Alpha coefficients of 0.7 and above are considered acceptable. By that measure, the student survey demonstrates good internal consistency for the total sample and by racial/ethnic groups (Table A–3). The Educator Survey also demonstrates good internal consistency for the total sample and for the teacher and administrator groups (Table A–4).

Table A–3
Internal Consistency for the Student Survey, 2012–13

Group	Alpha Coefficient
All students	0.87
Race/ethnicity	0.88
American Indian/Native Alaskan	0.91
Asian	0.93
Black	0.90
Hispanic	0.90
Multiracial	0.89
White	0.88

Note: Alpha coefficients calculated for items 18–1 to 18–13
Source: Author’s analyses of Oregon GEAR UP Student Survey data. 2012–13

Table A–4
Internal Consistency for the Educator Survey, 2012–13

Survey Items	Group	Alpha Coefficient
13-1 – 13-15	Total sample	0.88
	Teacher	0.88
	Administrator	0.94
14-1 – 14-10	Total sample	0.86
	Teacher	0.86
	Administrator	0.73
15-1 – 15-15	Total sample	0.75
	Teacher	0.75
	Administrator	0.79
20-1 – 20-7	Total sample	0.75
	Teacher	0.75
	Administrator	0.76

Source: Author’s analyses of Oregon GEAR UP Educator Survey data. 2012–13

*Table A-5
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.

Surveys were administered by schools to all grade levels in late March 2012 and 2013, and to seniors only in 2014. Each year, the evaluators provided written instructions and ongoing guidance to administer surveys schoolwide. Table A-4 provides a brief summary of the number of schools and participants for each survey administration. Tables A-5 through A-7 present detailed information about the student, parent, and educator survey participants.

*Table A-6
Number of Schools and Survey Participants, 2012–2014*

	<u>Schools</u>			<u>Participants</u>		
	2012	2013	2014	2012	2013	2014
Student	16	16	16	3,055	3,253	442
Parent	12	16	NA	284	476	NA
Educator	16	16	16	168	196	216

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

Focus Group and Interview Data

Content analyses were used to code and synthesize common themes in the focus group and interview data. Triangulation of the findings from the principal, coordinator, and survey data was conducted to identify common themes across the key stakeholder groups.

Survey Data

This evaluation report provides frequencies and percentages, by grade level, of the student survey data collected during the 2012 baseline year and for the GEAR UP students and educators for each project year. We also calculated the percentage change between 2012 and 2014 data.

Archival Document Review

Content analyses were used to summarize common themes and descriptive information from GEAR UP annual plans, site-based evaluation data, and other documents. We also report student outcome data summarized and reported annually by the Oregon GEAR UP project.

Table A-7
Characteristics of GEAR UP Student Survey Respondents, 2012–2014

Characteristic	Survey Years		
	2012 ^a (N=2,916)	2013 ^b (N=3,253)	2014 ^c (N=442)
Gender			
Male	51%	50%	45%
Female	49%	50%	55%
Race/ethnicity			
American Indian or Alaska Native	2%	3%	12%
Asian	1%	1%	3%
Black or African American	1%	2%	3%
Hispanic or Latino	4%	4%	6%
White	66%	58%	60%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	*	1%	*
Multiethnic/multiracial	23%	30%	9%
Other ethnicity	2%	3%	8%
Grade level			
Grade 7–8	28%	36%	0%
Grade 9–10	37%	35%	0%
Grade 11–12	34%	29%	100%
Perceived Academic Ability			
“A” student	33%	31%	36%
“B” student	43%	39%	43%
“C” student	21%	25%	19%
“D” student	3%	5%	*
Family members who obtained a degree			
Mother/female guardian	51%	54%	42%
Father/male guardian	42%	44%	39%
Brother or sister	23%	31%	35%
Grandparents	27%	29%	41%

a. For the 2012 survey, percentages of missing data ranged from >1 percent to 7 percent.

b. For the 2013 survey, percentages of missing data ranged from >1 percent to 6 percent.

c. For the 2014 survey, percentages of missing data ranged from >1 percent to 7 percent.

Source: GEAR UP Student Survey, 2012, 2013, 2014

Table A-8
Characteristics of GEAR UP Parent Survey Respondents, 2012 and 2013

Characteristic	Survey Years	
	2012 ^a (N=284)	2013 ^b (N=476)
Gender ^a		
Male	20%	21%
Female	80%	79%
Race/Ethnicity ^b		
White	94%	94%
Non-White	6%	6%

a. For the 2012 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 4 percent to 11 percent among the characteristics.

b. For the 2013 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 3 percent to 11 percent among the characteristics.

Source: GEAR UP Parent Survey, 2012 and 2013

Table A-9
Characteristics of GEAR UP Educator Survey Participants, 2012–2014

Characteristic	Survey Year		
	2012 ^a (N=168)	2013 ^b (N=196)	2014 ^c (N=216)
Race/ethnicity			
White	93%	90%	90%
Non-White	7%	10%	10%
Position			
Teacher	77%	69%	80%
Counselor/Administrator	8%	8%	8%
Other	15%	23%	12%
Subject taught most often			
Math	14%	12%	14%
English	21%	15%	16%
Science	13%	16%	12%
Social Studies	13%	8%	12%
I do not teach	27%	21%	12%
Other Subject	12%	28%	33%
Years working at current school			
Less than one year	7%	11%	11%
One to five years	27%	26%	29%
Six to ten years	21%	30%	28%
Eleven to twenty years	29%	22%	19%
Over twenty years	16%	11%	13%
Highest level of education			
Paraprofessional	9%	15%	8%
Bachelor's Degree and some graduate work	20%	16%	18%
Master's Degree or higher	71%	69%	74%

- a. For the 2012 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 1 percent to 7 percent among the characteristics.
- b. For the 2013 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 0 percent to 5 percent among the characteristics.
- c. For the 2014 survey, the percentage of missing data ranged from 1 percent to 7 percent among the characteristics.

Source: GEAR UP Educator Survey, 2012, 2013, 2014

Appendix B

Measures

Focus Group and Interview Protocols

Oregon GEAR UP Principal's Interview Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this interview. My name is _____ and I work for Education Northwest. Stephanie and her team have asked us to learn more about GEAR UP from the perspective of school principals. I am interested in hearing about the benefits and challenges you have faced implementing and operating GEAR UP at your school. All answers are completely confidential. Nothing you say will be reported with your name, your school, or any other identifiers. Before I start, do you have any questions for me?

1. What is your position? (Probe: middle school, high school, K-12.) How long have you partnered with GEAR UP? What is your role in relation to the GEAR UP program?
2. Is GEAR UP the only college and career readiness support you provide services? If not, what other services or programs? (e.g., ASPIRE)
3. In your opinion, in what ways has your school benefited from partnering with Oregon GEAR UP?
4. Which schools, higher education institution, and businesses are in your cluster? How has GEAR UP helped you strengthen your partnership with each?
5. How has involvement with Oregon GEAR UP benefited your students? Please explain and give examples.
6. What are specific strategies that your school implemented through GEAR UP to increase college readiness, college access, and enrollment?
7. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1="not at all" and 5="substantially"), to what extent has GEAR UP created a college-going culture in your school? Why did you give your school this rating?
8. How has GEAR UP created a college-going culture at your school? What are some examples of cultural changes you have observed as a result of GEAR UP?
9. What barriers and challenges have you encountered implementing Oregon GEAR UP? Implementing a college-going culture? Please explain and if possible provide examples.
10. In addition to grant management, Oregon GEAR UP provides participating schools several services. What services were most helpful? Please be specific.
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your school regarding college and career readiness?

Oregon GEAR UP Coordinators Focus Group Protocol

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this focus group. My name is _____ and I work for Education Northwest. Stephanie and her team have asked us to learn more about GEAR UP from the perspective of GEAR UP coordinators. We are interested in hearing about the benefits and challenges you have faced implementing and operating GEAR UP at your school. We also want to learn more about the supports that helped you in your work and any recommendations you have that might improve the program. All answers are completely voluntary and confidential. Nothing you say will be reported with your name, your school, or any other identifiers. Before I start, do you have any questions for me?

1. Is GEAR UP the only college and career readiness program at your school? If not, what other services or programs? (e.g., ASPIRE)
2. In your opinion, in what ways has your school or cluster benefited from partnering with Oregon GEAR UP? Your students?
3. *How* has GEAR UP created a college-going culture at your school? What are some examples of cultural changes you have observed as a result of GEAR UP?
 - a. e.g., increase in college-going activities, increased teacher time (college-going activities, incorporating college-going themes in homework/lessons, etc.), changes in attitudes/expectations/aspirations (teachers, students, parents) about college
4. In addition to grant management, Oregon GEAR UP provides participating schools several services. What services were most helpful? Please be specific.
5. Note – communication, technical assistance from Susie/John or Jerry, Success Retreat/Annual Meeting, access to GEAR UP materials, research briefs
6. What barriers and challenges have you encountered implementing Oregon GEAR UP? What recommendations do you have to address these challenges?
7. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your school regarding college and career readiness?

Oregon GEAR UP Educator Survey 2013–2014



OREGON GEAR UP PROGRAM
EDUCATOR SURVEY
2013-2014

8-11

Use a black pen or No. 2 pencil. Please fill in the bubbles completely. Do not fold the survey.

What is the name of your school? _____

What is your current position in your school?

- Teacher
- Counselor
- Administrator
- Secretary
- Librarian/Media Specialist
- Paraprofessional
- Other: _____

Please indicate how long you have you been working in education.

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- Over 20 years

Please indicate how long you have been working at this school.

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- Over 20 years

If applicable, what subject do you teach at your current school? (Please pick one subject area you teach most often)

- Math
- English
- Science
- Social Studies
- Not applicable (I do not teach)
- Other: _____





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How do you describe yourself? (Check all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Multiethnic/Multiracial
- Other (Describe) _____

Please indicate the highest level of education you have attained.

- Paraprofessional
- Bachelor's degree
- Some graduate work
- Master's degree
- Doctorate degree

What grade levels do you work with or teach? (Check all that apply)

- grade 6
- grade 7
- grade 8
- grade 9
- grade 10
- grade 11
- grade 12

If you teach MIDDLE SCHOOL students, please answer the following question: How academically challenging are the following subjects in your middle school?

	Very Challenging	Somewhat Challenging	Not That Challenging	Not Challenging	Don't Know
English	<input type="radio"/>				
Science	<input type="radio"/>				
Math	<input type="radio"/>				
History/Social Studies	<input type="radio"/>				





If you teach MIDDLE SCHOOL students, please answer the following question: How challenging is your middle school's curriculum this year compared with last year?

- More rigorous and college-preparatory this year
- Somewhat more rigorous and college-preparatory this year
- No change from last year
- Less rigorous and college-preparatory than last year

If you teach HIGH SCHOOL students, please answer the following question: How academically challenging are the following subjects in your high school?

	Very Challenging	Somewhat Challenging	Not That Challenging	Not Challenging	Don't Know
English	<input type="radio"/>				
Science	<input type="radio"/>				
Math	<input type="radio"/>				
History/Social Studies	<input type="radio"/>				

If you teach HIGH SCHOOL students, please answer the following question: How challenging is your high school's curriculum this year compared with last year?

- More rigorous and college-preparatory this year
- Somewhat more rigorous and college-preparatory this year
- No change from last year
- Less rigorous and college-preparatory than last year

On average, approximately how many hours do you spend monthly on GEAR UP program activities?

- none
- 1 hour
- 2-4
- 5-8
- 9-15
- 16 or more hours





The professional development topics that would most help me prepare students for college or other postsecondary options are...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Instructional strategies to help at-risk students reach high standards	<input type="radio"/>					
Opportunities to vertically align curriculum with the grades below and above me	<input type="radio"/>					
Opportunities to horizontally align curriculum with others at my grade levels	<input type="radio"/>					
Knowledge of funding opportunities for students to pay for post-secondary training and college	<input type="radio"/>					
Strategies for monitoring and analyzing student learning	<input type="radio"/>					
Strategies for applying the state or national standards in my content area	<input type="radio"/>					
Proficiency based formative assessment	<input type="radio"/>					
Common Core State Standards	<input type="radio"/>					
Behavioral management strategies	<input type="radio"/>					
Content area development (i.e., math, reading, and writing)	<input type="radio"/>					
Peer mentoring strategies	<input type="radio"/>					
Instructional technology development	<input type="radio"/>					
Strategies for negotiating home and school cultural differences	<input type="radio"/>					
Strategies for increasing parental /community involvement in the school	<input type="radio"/>					
Strategies for improving student learning	<input type="radio"/>					





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The strategies that successfully involve parents in my school are...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Through formalized parent involvement programs	<input type="radio"/>					
Through professional development that assists staff in reaching out to families	<input type="radio"/>					
Through parent/teacher conferences	<input type="radio"/>					
Through extracurricular school events (not including school athletic programs)	<input type="radio"/>					
Through providing parents with tools/ideas on how to support their child in school	<input type="radio"/>					
Through facilitating communication between parents and teachers (e.g., phone and email access)	<input type="radio"/>					
As volunteers to help students in academic activities	<input type="radio"/>					
As teachers' helpers	<input type="radio"/>					
My school has not succeeded in involving parents	<input type="radio"/>					
My school has not attempted to involve parents	<input type="radio"/>					



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If a student does not succeed in school, it is usually because...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The student does not try hard enough	<input type="radio"/>					
Parents do not get involved enough in their child's schooling	<input type="radio"/>					
Teachers do not try hard enough	<input type="radio"/>					
Classes are not meaningful or relevant	<input type="radio"/>					
Classes are not challenging enough	<input type="radio"/>					
Classes are too challenging	<input type="radio"/>					
The student does not get along with other students	<input type="radio"/>					
The student does not get along with teachers	<input type="radio"/>					
The student does not get enough personal attention in the school	<input type="radio"/>					
Teachers' expectations for their students are too low	<input type="radio"/>					
The student does not feel safe in the school	<input type="radio"/>					
The student has too many family or work responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>					
The student misses too much school	<input type="radio"/>					
The student has problems outside of school	<input type="radio"/>					
There is a disparity between student's home life and school	<input type="radio"/>					





In your opinion, approximately what percentage of your students is capable of successfully completing a college prep curriculum?

- none
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%

In your opinion, approximately what percentage of your students goes on to college?

- none
- 10%
- 20%
- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- 80%
- 90%
- 100%

What is the highest level of education that you expect the majority of your students to achieve?

- 4-year college degree or higher
- 2-year college degree
- Some college but less than a 4-year college degree
- 1-year trade school
- High school diploma
- GED or less





If your students decide not to continue their education after high school, what would be the main reason for the majority of your students?

- Not applicable; most will definitely continue
- They need to work to support themselves
- Their grades are not good enough
- They are not interested
- They want to start a family (or need to take care of their family)
- It costs too much
- They want to work instead
- They want to join the military service
- College is too far from home
- Some other reason (please specify): _____

To what extent do you agree with the following statements based on your experiences in your school this year?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
My school gives students information on what it takes to go to college.	<input type="radio"/>				
My school gives parents information on what it takes to get their children to college.	<input type="radio"/>				
My school provides students with opportunities to participate in financial aid awareness and planning activities for college education.	<input type="radio"/>				
My school provides parents with opportunities to participate in financial aid awareness and planning activities for their children's college education.	<input type="radio"/>				
My school provides challenging classes for students.	<input type="radio"/>				
My school encourages students to take appropriately challenging classes that will prepare them for postsecondary education.	<input type="radio"/>				
My school provides professional development for teachers to align curriculum between middle and high school.	<input type="radio"/>				





In your opinion, how aligned is the curriculum in core subjects between middle and high school?

- Very aligned
- Moderately aligned
- Minimally aligned
- Not at all aligned

The types of experiences that would help prepare my students to enroll and succeed in postsecondary education are...

	Strongly agree	Agree	Slightly agree	Slightly disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Tutoring in academic subject(s)	<input type="radio"/>					
Test prep for SAT, ACT, or other college entrance exams	<input type="radio"/>					
Visiting a college/college student shadowing	<input type="radio"/>					
Visiting a job site/job shadowing	<input type="radio"/>					
Mentoring	<input type="radio"/>					
Financial aid awareness & financial planning	<input type="radio"/>					
Workshop/counseling on college preparation	<input type="radio"/>					
Study skills classes	<input type="radio"/>					
College prep curriculum	<input type="radio"/>					
Summer academic enrichment programs	<input type="radio"/>					
Dual enrollment (e.g., AP, Tech Prep, College Now, 2 + 2)	<input type="radio"/>					
Social skills classes	<input type="radio"/>					



To what extent have you been involved in the following activities in your school?

	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Counseling students to take more rigorous courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing direction and extra instruction for at risk students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informing students of admissions requirements for various institutions of higher education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing information on financial aid and scholarships available for postsecondary education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing information about postsecondary work, training, and educational opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Familiarizing students with college environments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing information and counseling about college choices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

On a scale of 1-5, to what extent are you knowledgeable about financial aid and the cost and benefits to your students in pursuing postsecondary education?

No knowledge 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely knowledgeable

For counselors only: What kinds of counseling activities occupy most of your time? (Check all that apply)

- Academic counseling
- Personal/social counseling
- College/career/financial counseling

Thank you for completing this survey!

	School		Internal use only	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0		1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0	
	<input type="checkbox"/> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ <input type="checkbox"/> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	10	<input type="checkbox"/> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ <input type="checkbox"/> ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	

Oregon GEAR UP Student Survey 2013–2014



OREGON GEAR UP PROGRAM
STUDENT SURVEY
2013–2014

Use a black pen or No. 2 pencil. Please fill in the bubbles completely. Do not fold the survey.

What is the name of your school? _____

1. What grade are you in now?

- Grade 6 Grade 7 Grade 8 Grade 9 Grade 10 Grade 11 Grade 12

2. Do you have internet access at home?

- Yes No

3. How much time do you spend on homework EACH DAY?

- 3 or more hours
 2 hours
 1 hour
 None

4. How would you rank yourself academically?

- "A" Student "B" Student "C" Student "D" or below

5. Do you think your teachers expect you to go to college?

- Yes No Not Sure

6. Do you think your parents expect you to go to college?

- Yes No Not Sure

7. Do you know what it takes to be accepted into the following types of schools?

	Yes	No
4-year colleges or universities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2-year or community colleges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technical, trade, or business institutions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

8. Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about college entrance requirements?

- Yes No

9. During the past year, have you discussed the requirements for getting into college with any adults in your household?

- Yes No





10. What is the highest level of education that you expect to complete? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 4-year college degree or higher
- 2-year college degree
- Some college but less than a college degree
- 1-year trade school
- High school diploma
- GED or less

11. Have you been on a college site visit during the past 12 months?

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2-year college | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 4-year college or university | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Technical, trade, or business institution | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

12. About how much do you think it costs each year (including tuition, books, housing, and food) to attend a 4-year public college in Oregon? (Check only one)

- \$5,000 \$10,000 \$15,000 \$20,000 \$25,000 \$30,000 \$35,000

13. Do you think that you could afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?

- Definitely Probably Not sure Probably not Definitely not

14. Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about the availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?

- Yes No

15. On a scale of 1-5 to what extent are you knowledgeable about financial aid and the cost and benefits to you in pursuing postsecondary education?

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| No knowledge | | | | Extremely knowledgeable |
| <input type="radio"/> 1 | <input type="radio"/> 2 | <input type="radio"/> 3 | <input type="radio"/> 4 | <input type="radio"/> 5 |

16. How often do you talk about going to college with your friends?

- Almost never Rarely Sometimes Often Almost always

17. Think about your 4 best friends (the friends you feel closest to). How many of your best friends do you think will go to college?

- 0 1 2 3 4





18. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements based on your experiences in school this year?

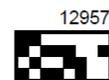
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel safe in the school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel respected by my teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My teachers are truly interested in my learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable talking with my teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel I belong to this school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
This school helps me get a clear sense of what I would like to do in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I receive help I need from my teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My parents/guardians are actively involved in my learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The school provides useful hands-on experiences that help me learn	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school provides challenging classes for students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Teachers and/or counselors in my school encourage me to take challenging classes that will prepare me for college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My school provides students with opportunities to participate in financial aid awareness and planning activities for college education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have become more aware of various career options because of GEAR UP	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. Are you male or female?

- Male
- Female

20. How do you describe yourself? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Multiethnic/Multiracial
- Other





21. Please mark the highest level of education the following family members achieved.

	4-Year Degree or Higher	2-Year Degree	Some College No Degree	1-Year Trade School	High School Diploma	GED or less	Don't Know
Mother or female guardian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father or male guardian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brother(s) or sister(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grandparent(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. **High School Seniors Only.** Have you applied to any colleges for next year?

- Yes, I applied to a 4-year college or university
- Yes, I applied to a 2-year college
- No, but I plan to apply
- No, I don't plan on attending college

23. **High School Seniors Only.** If you decided not to continue your education after high school, what was the main reason for this decision? Check only one.

- This question does not apply to me. I am definitely going to college
- I need to work to support myself
- My grades are not good enough
- I am not interested
- I need to take care of my family
- It costs too much
- I want to work
- I want to join the military service
- College is too far from home
- Some other reason (what reason

Thank you for completing this survey!



School

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

4

Internal use only

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0



Oregon GEAR UP Parent Survey 2013–2014



OREGON GEAR UP PROGRAM Parent/Guardian Survey 2013–2014

Name of your student's school _____

Please use a black pen or No. 2 pencil, fill in the bubbles completely and do not fold, since your answers will be read by a scanner.

1. What grades are your students in? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- grade 6 grade 7 grade 8 grade 9 grade 10 grade 11 grade 12

2. Do you have internet access at home?

- Yes No

3. During the past 12 months, about how often have you attended an activity (such as an open house, teacher conference, meeting with counselor, sports event, parent group, etc.) at your student's school?

- More than 5 times 3–5 times 1–2 times Never

4. Do you feel welcome at your student's school?

- Almost always Often Sometimes Rarely Almost Never

5. What is the highest level of education that you think your student will achieve? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- 4-year college degree or higher
 2-year college degree
 Some college but less than a college degree
 1-year trade school
 High school diploma
 GED or less

6. Have you talked with your student about attending college?

- Yes No

7. Have you visited a college campus with your student?

- Yes No

8. Are you familiar with the entrance requirements for each of these types of schools?

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 4-year colleges or universities | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| 2-year or community colleges | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| Vocational, trade or business schools | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |

9. Has anyone from your student's school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about college entrance requirements?

- Yes No

10. About how much do you think it costs each year (including tuition, books, housing, and food) to attend a 4-year public college in Oregon? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- \$5,000 \$10,000 \$15,000 \$20,000 \$25,000 \$30,000 \$35,000





11. Do you think that your student could afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?

- Definitely
- Probably
- Not sure
- Probably not
- Definitely not

12. Has anyone from your student's school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about the availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?

- Yes
- No

13. On a scale of 1-5, to what extent are you knowledgeable about financial aid and the cost and benefits of your student pursuing postsecondary education?

- 1 No knowledge
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 Extremely knowledgeable

14. During this school year, my student's school...	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Gives students information on what it takes to go to college	<input type="radio"/>				
Gives parents information on what it takes to get their students to college	<input type="radio"/>				
Provides students with opportunities to participate in financial aid awareness and planning activities for their college education	<input type="radio"/>				
Provides students with opportunities to participate in career awareness activities, such as job shadowing, career fairs, and career and counseling classes	<input type="radio"/>				

15. Are you? Male Female

16. How do you describe yourself? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other (Describe) _____



17. What is the highest level of education for members in your family?

	4 Year Degree or Higher	2 Year Degree	Some College No Degree	1 Year Trade School	High School Diploma	GED or less	Don't Know
Mother or female guardian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father or male guardian	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Brother(s) or sister(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Grandparent(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. If your student is a **SENIOR**, what is the main reason that he or she will not continue their education after high school? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

- He/she will definitely continue
- Needs to work to support himself/herself
- Grades are not good enough
- Is not interested
- Needs to take care of family
- It costs too much
- Wants to work full-time instead
- Wants to join the military

**Thank you for completing this survey!
Please return your survey to your student's school**

or mail to

**Aisling Nagel
Education Northwest
101 SW Main St.
Portland, OR 97204**

Appendix C

Student Outcomes

Table C-1
Percentage of Educators Who Reported Involvement “Sometimes” or “Often” in GEAR UP Activities Each Month, 2012–2014

	Survey Year			Percent change between 2012 and 2014 ^a
	2012 (N=168)	2013 (N=196)	2014 (N=216)	
Grades 7-8	40%	75%	75%	88%
Grades 9-12	41%	56%	67%	63%

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

Note: Responses from educators who teach grades K–12 are counted in grade-level groups.

Source: GEAR UP Educator Surveys, 2012, 2013, 2014

Table C-2
Oregon Assessments of Knowledge and Skills, 2008–2013

Student Outcome	School Year						
	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Grade 10/11 Reading							
GEAR UP	66%	66%	72%	86%	88%	85%	86%
State	65%	66%	71%	83%	84%	85%	84%
Grade 10/11 Math							
GEAR UP	48%	52%	48%	62%	63%	69%	71%
State	52%	54%	56%	68%	66%	69%	70%
Grade 10/11 Writing:							
GEAR UP	52%	44%	47%	63%	58%	53%	66%
State	56%	55%	53%	68%	67%	60%	59%
Grade 10/11 Science							
GEAR UP	57%	62%	57%	72%	64%	56%	53%
State	57%	58%	60%	70%	64%	63%	62%

Source: Oregon Department of Education OAKS State test scores, 2008–2013

*Table C-3
Graduation, Dropout, OSAC Scholarship Applications and College Enrollment Data, 2011–2014*

Student Outcome	School Year			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Four-year graduation rate ^a				
Ford GEAR UP	74%	72%	73%	NA
State	68%	68%	69%	NA
High school dropout rate				
Ford GEAR UP	2%	2%	3%	NA
State	3%	3%	4%	NA
OSAC application completion: Ford GEAR UP	26%	31%	NA	NA
FAFSA completion: Ford GEAR UP	NA	46%	50%	49%
SAT—Baseline data ^c				
Ford GEAR UP	39%	42%	39%	NA
State	35%	35%	34%	NA
College enrollment rate—Baseline data ^{b, c}				
Fall term	58%			
Within a year	61%			
More than a year	69%			
College enrollment rate ^{d, e}				
Fall term	57%	55%	51%	NA
Within 16 months	65%	63%	54% *	NA
More than 16 months	69%	63%	54% *	NA

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

Note: GEAR UP services started in 2009.

- In 2012, the Oregon Department of Education modified its list of high school graduations to include four-year graduates.
- Because the graduation date of the students who received GEAR UP services is 2017, 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 2018.
- Because the graduation date of the students who received GEAR UP services is 2017, 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 2018.
- 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.
- 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.

*Table C-4
Dual Credit Subject Areas and Popular Courses in Each Subject Area, 2008–2012 Classes*

Subject area ^a	Course name and number of the top three courses with the highest enrollment by subject area
All subject areas	English Composition I (121) College Algebra (111) Trigonometry/Elementary Functions (112)
Math	College Algebra (111) Trigonometry/Elementary Functions (112) Calculus I (251)
English	English Composition I (121) English Composition II (122) Introduction to Literature: Fiction (104)
Computers	Keyboarding (120 and 121) Computer Fundamentals (101) Beginning Word (216)
Language	First Year Spanish, Term 1 (101) First Year Spanish, Term 3 (103) First Year Spanish, Term 2 (102)
Health	Emergency First Aid (167) CPR (261) Introduction to Health Occupations (100)
Science	General Biology I (101) General Biology II (102) General Biology III (103)
History	History of the United States I (201) History of the United States II (202) History of the United States III (203)
Business	Personal Finance (218) Introduction to Business (101) Introduction to Business Computing (131)
Trades/CTE	Basic Drafting (DRF 142) Introduction to AutoCAD (DRF 130) Welding I (WLD 121)
Social Science	Introduction to Economics (115) American Government & Politics I (201) American Government & Politics II (202)
Education	Introduction to Early Childhood Education & Family Studies (120) Early Childhood Development (125) Introduction & Observation in Early Childhood Education (150)
Agriculture	Animal Science (121) Computers in Agriculture (111) Introduction to Animal Science Operation (122)

Subject area ^a	Course name and number of the top three courses with the highest enrollment by subject area
Art/Music	Photoshop (130) Introduction to Drawing (131) Fundamentals of Acting (141)
Hospitality	Restaurant Operations (105) Introduction to Hospitality Management (106) Introduction to Hospitality Industry (100)
College Success	College Survival and Success (100) Career and Life Planning (140) Study Skills for College Learning (111)
Fitness	Beginning Sports (5) Yoga (85) Weight Training (185)

^a Sixteen subject areas were identified based on the course names and names of the departments in which dual credit courses are housed at each community college. Each subject area has between 25 to 250 courses with different course numbers, but similar names and departments.

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