

# CREATING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

engaging students, parents and the community



Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness  
for Undergraduate Programs



Dear Fellow Oregonians,

For the first time in Oregon’s history, young adults are less educated than their parents’ generation, with fewer high school diplomas, college certificates and degrees. Therefore, programs like GEAR UP are even more imperative to provide students, parents and educators the expectation, motivation, and resources to continue on to education after high school.

As a state, we have declared that one of our top priorities is delivering a rigorous, seamless educational system which starts with early childhood programs and culminates in the attainment of advanced degrees. GEAR UP spans the formative years in the middle of the education pipeline, connecting students in 7th-12th grades with the tools, information and capital to succeed in our community colleges and universities. Their work, in conjunction with the state’s new education achievement compacts which emphasize career and college readiness,

will help Oregon reach our 40-40-20 goal for 2025 – that is, all Oregonians will earn a high school diploma or its equivalent, 40 percent will go on to earn an associate’s degree or credential, and 40 percent will earn at least a bachelor’s degree.

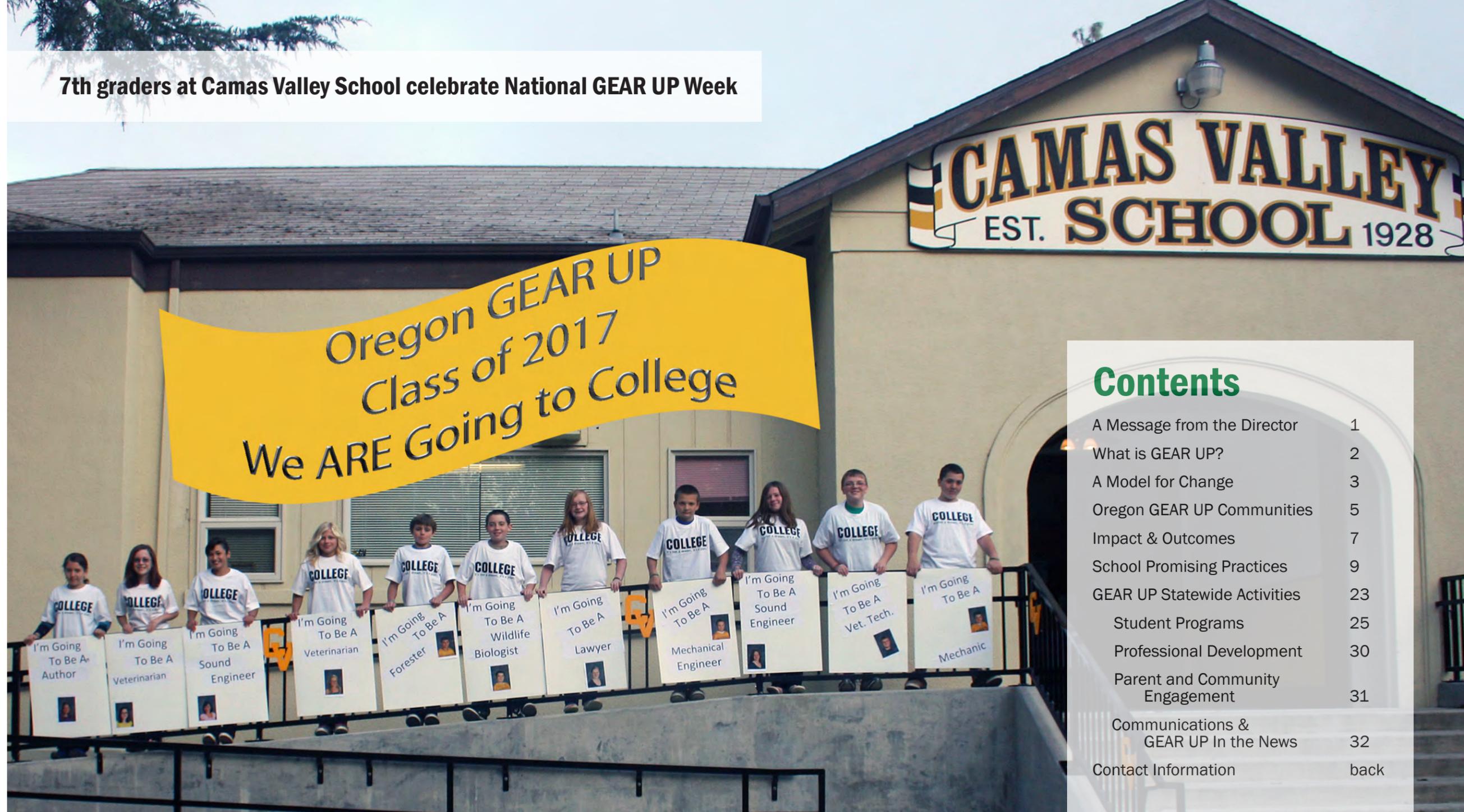
I commend the communities that have embraced GEAR UP and its mission; our social, civic and economic objectives depend on it. I also applaud the drive and dedication of the educators, parents, students and staff that aspire toward higher education for all students.

Sincerely,

John Kitshaber, M.D.  
Governor



7th graders at Camas Valley School celebrate National GEAR UP Week



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Greetings,

What does it mean to create a “college-going” culture? How does one measure culture? It isn’t easily quantified, but if we consider the definition of culture, it does help us think about how we might not only measure, but actually influence a culture. Broadly speaking, culture is made up of the behaviors and beliefs that are characteristic of a particular group or community. These observable characteristics might include language, art, symbols, clothing, and other physical manifestations of the things we value. Placing that lens on the school communities with which we work, I look for visual cues that tell me what a community considers important. It is always refreshing to see pictures of students and where they will attend college displayed just as predominantly as the athletic trophy case. It makes me smile when I hear a teacher say to her classroom “This will be important *when* you go to college” as opposed to *if* you go to college. Many of our schools have intentionally designated days of the week when the entire community wears their college t-shirts as a way to spark conversations and bring greater awareness to the fact that many members of that community have attended or plan to attend some form of postsecondary education.

We can dramatically change our cultures to not only value college, but also provide students with the support they need to succeed: by making seemingly small changes in our language that imbue a sense of high expectations for all students, celebrating academic achievements with the same vigor we do athletic ones, rewarding seniors with a signing ceremony to acknowledge their acceptance to college, and prominently displaying artwork and symbols that suggest to students that their next step is college. I hope you’ll take some time to read more about how the 22 GEAR UP communities across the state are undertaking this very important work. Our Governor and legislature have established a very audacious goal for the state that we are actively working to support—that by 2025 100% of our students will successfully graduate from high school and 80% of them will go onto some form of postsecondary education. We know we have a long way to go to achieve both of these, but these communities have rolled up their sleeves and gotten busy. I am inspired by their work, and I know you will be as well.

All my best,

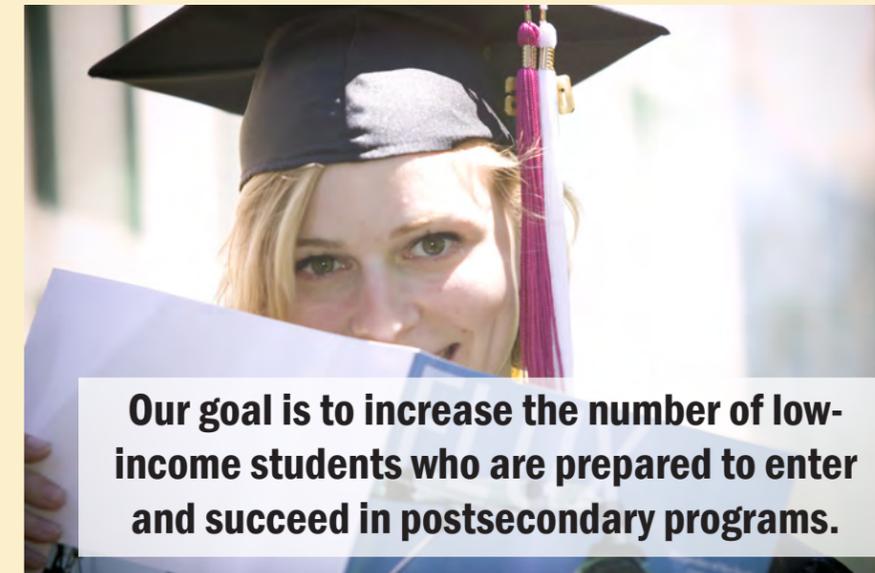
Stephanie Carnahan,  
Director, Oregon GEAR UP

## What is GEAR UP?

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

That’s our motto at Oregon GEAR UP, and it guides our work with middle and high schools around the state. Our goal is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary programs by working with school districts, colleges and universities, and a variety of partner organizations.

GEAR UP—which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs—is administered by the Oregon University System and began in 2002 with a six-year grant from the United States Department of Education. We received a second federal grant in 2008 that supports selected schools through 2014 and beginning in the fall of 2011, ten new districts brought GEAR UP to their schools thanks to supplementary funding from The Ford Family Foundation.



A total of 22 Oregon school districts receive annual grants of \$30,000 to \$45,000 to support efforts that set high academic expectations, promote early awareness of college opportunities, and engage students in college and career planning. In addition to providing funds, Oregon GEAR UP provides the districts with technical assistance,

professional development, and other resources to aid in their college readiness initiatives. Middle and high school staff in these districts design and carry out most of the GEAR UP program activities, while partner organizations offer curriculum support, mentoring programs, college campus-based events, and additional services to the schools.

Students who participate in their schools’ GEAR UP activities may be eligible for college scholarships, renewable for up to four years, and/or matched savings accounts. Thus, GEAR UP students receive both the knowledge and the capital necessary to fulfill their aspirations to higher education.

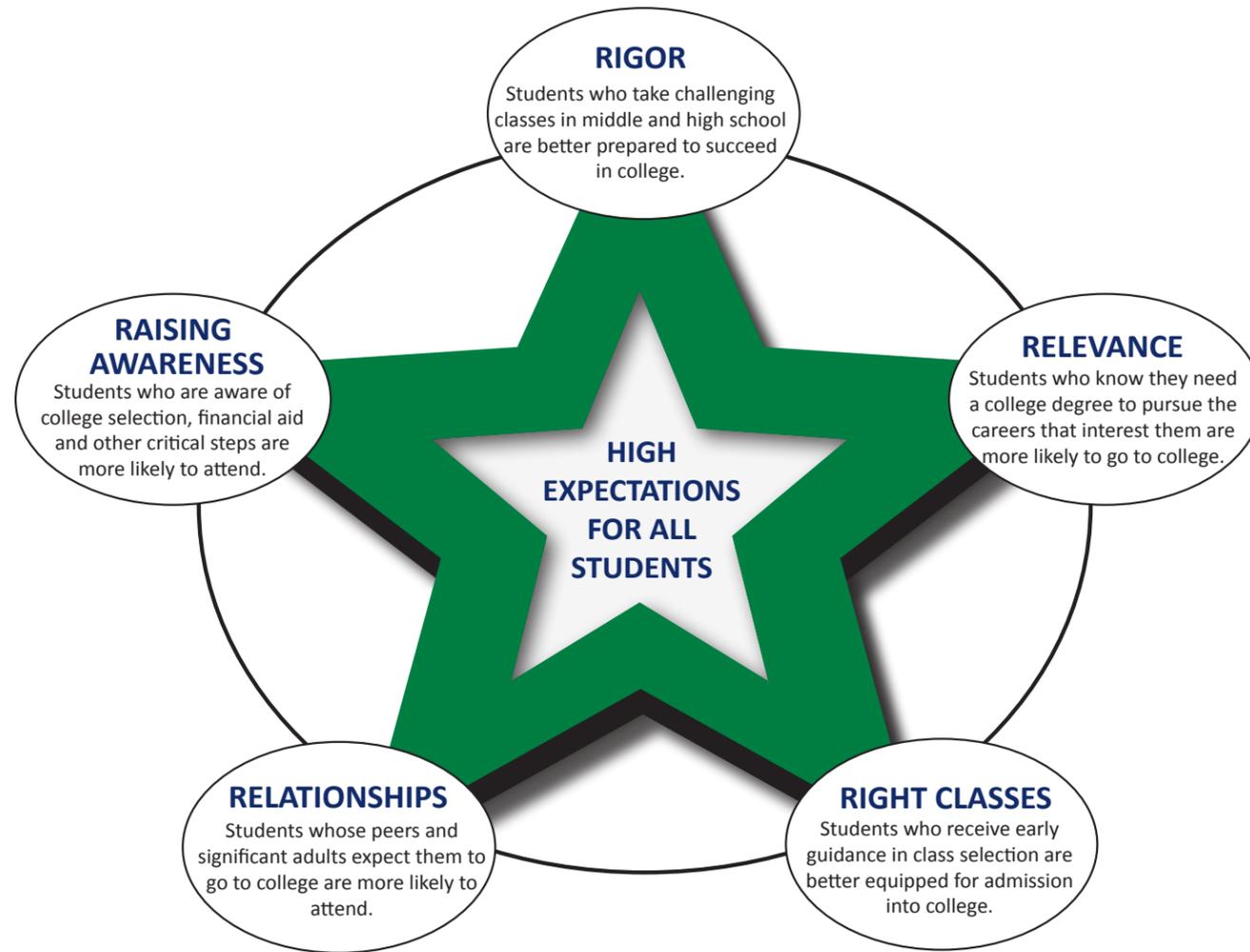
# A Model for Change: The 5 “Rs”

Oregon GEAR UP begins with high expectations and emphasizes five key components of effective postsecondary preparation:

- Rigor
- Relevance
- Right Classes
- Relationship
- Raising Awareness

This research-based “5 R” model underpins all school-based and statewide GEAR UP activities.

Schools create yearly plans that incorporate activities and services that address each area, customizing programs for their individual needs.



## SAMPLE STRATEGIES

### Rigor

- Curriculum alignment
- Dual enrollment at community colleges
- Tutoring and summer school opportunities

### Relevance

- Career exploration
- Job shadowing
- Internships

### Right Classes

- 5-year education plan for 8th graders
- Educate students, parents, staff, and mentors on the right classes to take

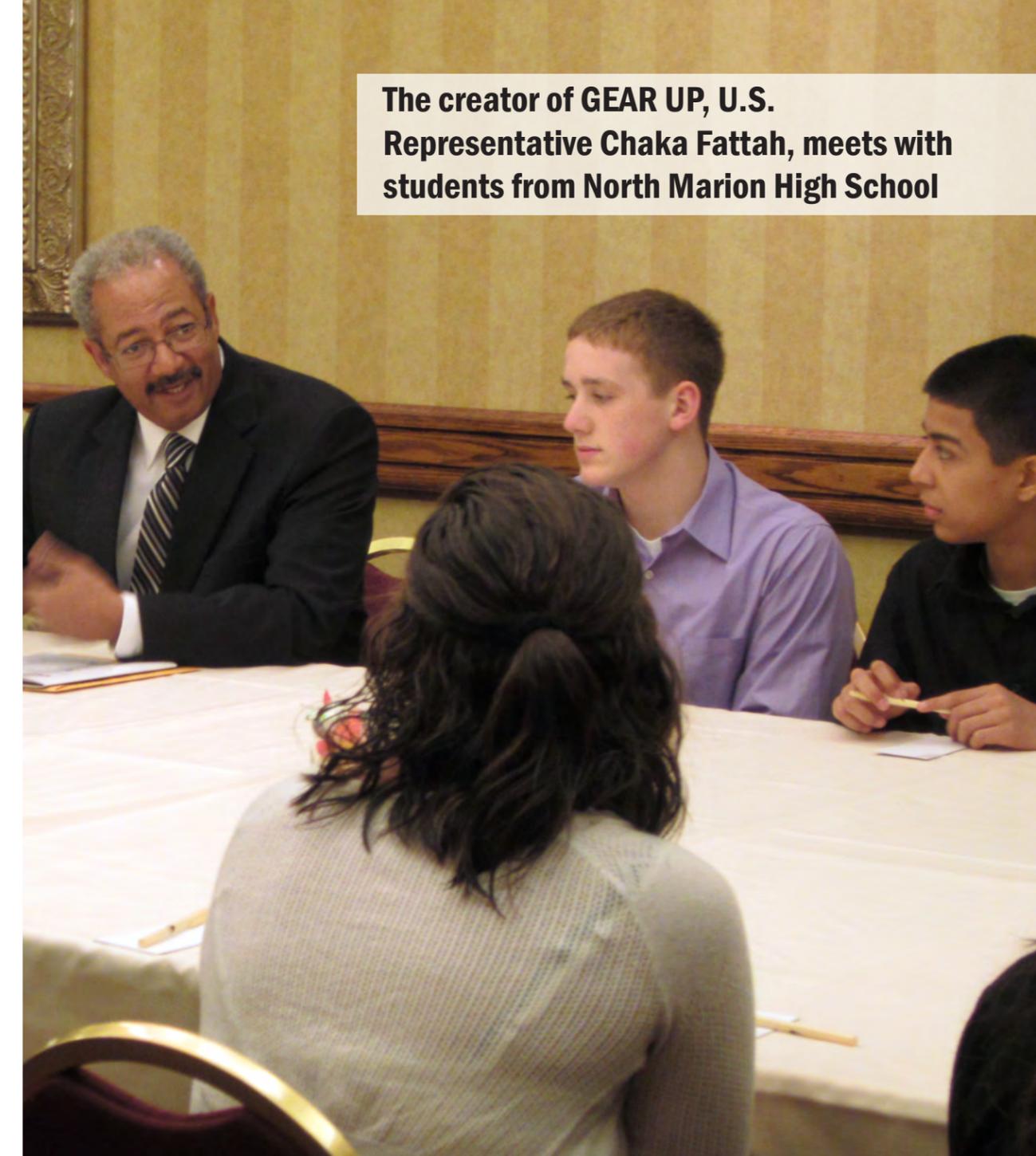
### Relationships

- Create student clubs around college
- Match students with peer and adult mentors
- Involve parents in college visits

### Raising Awareness

- College campus visits and tours
- Provide information on college and financial aid to students and parents

The creator of GEAR UP, U.S. Representative Chaka Fattah, meets with students from North Marion High School



# Oregon GEAR UP Communities

- 2008-2014 Cohort
- 2011-2017 Cohort



Public schools around the state were selected to receive GEAR UP funding based on five criteria: demonstration of need, strong staff commitment to the program, sufficient partner involvement, readiness to engage in school-wide college readiness efforts, and a solid plan for sustaining those efforts beyond the life of the grant. All schools must have 50% or more of the student population eligible for free or reduced lunch.

Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education support twelve rural GEAR UP clusters from 2008 through 2014. With additional funding from The Ford Family Foundation, ten school districts in Coos, Curry and Douglas counties began GEAR UP activities and services with a cohort of 7th graders in the fall of 2011 continuing through 2017.

The selected middle and high schools began targeting students in the 7th grade. With each subsequent year, a new cohort of seventh graders joins the GEAR UP program so that a college-going culture becomes ingrained in the district.

## 2008-2014 Cohort

- Aurora:** North Marion Middle and North Marion High
- Brookings:** Azalea Middle and Brookings-Harbor High
- Cottage Grove:** Lincoln Middle, Kennedy High and Cottage Grove High
- Glendale:** Glendale Jr/Sr High
- Grants Pass:** Fleming Middle and North Valley High
- Irrigon:** Irrigon Jr/Sr High
- La Pine:** La Pine Middle and La Pine High
- Lincoln City:** Taft 7-12
- Merrill:** Lost River Jr/Sr High
- Myrtle Creek:** Coffenberry Middle and South Umpqua High
- Stanfield:** Stanfield Secondary
- Sweet Home:** Sweet Home Jr High and Sweet Home High

## 2011-2017 Cohort

- Camas Valley:** Camas Valley School
- Coquille:** Coquille Valley Middle and Coquille High
- Drain:** North Douglas Elementary and North Douglas High
- Elkton:** Elkton Charter School
- Myrtle Point:** Myrtle Point High
- Port Orford/Langlois:** Driftwood Elementary and Pacific High
- Powers:** Powers High
- Reedsport:** Reedsport Community Charter School
- Roseburg:** John C Fremont Middle, Joseph Lane Middle and Roseburg High
- Yoncalla:** Yoncalla Elementary and Yoncalla High

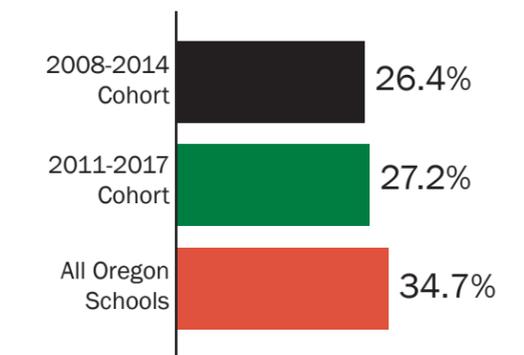
## WHO WE SERVE

The middle and high schools that comprise both cohorts yield a demographic profile that is fairly representative of rural Oregon. As reflected in the graphs below, the population served by these schools is lower-income and somewhat less ethnically diverse than the state's population as a whole.

### Percent of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Lunch



### Percent Minority Student Enrollment



Source: Oregon Department of Education, 2011-12

# Impact & Outcomes

In 2011-2012, the GEAR UP program served 5,343 students in 36 schools through counseling and advising services, workshops, educational field trips, and many other school or campus-based activities. In addition, teachers and school staff participated in over 600 hours of professional development that helped spread educational best practices. Furthermore, GEAR UP schools engaged family and community members with over 2,200 parent interactions during the year.

Collaborations with colleges for campus visits and summer programs continued to be a linchpin of almost every school's programming. Students were exposed to over 40 schools, from technical and trade schools to community colleges to public and private 4-year schools both in Oregon and in neighboring states.

A survey of the 2008-14 schools found positive attitudes among parents, students, and educators in their expectations of student educational attainment. GEAR UP fosters these expectations, providing the resources necessary to turn these dreams into reality.

## SUPPORTING STUDENTS



**5,343**  
students served

with **69,199**  
student interactions

### INCLUDING:

COUNSELING & ADVISING • WORKSHOPS • EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS • SCHOOL CLUBS • COLLEGE AND CAREER FAIRS • FINANCIAL AID NIGHTS • JOB SHADOWING • MENTORING PROGRAMS • CAMPUS VISITS • TUTORING AND SUPPORT SERVICES • TRANSITION CAMPS • ACADEMIC AND LEADERSHIP SUMMER CAMPS • STUDY SKILLS CLASSES • DUAL ENROLLMENT COURSES • STANDARDIZED TEST PREPARATION & MUCH MORE

## CONNECTING WITH COLLEGES

Students visited or heard from representatives at

**40+**  
colleges and universities



**G** "Going on college trips has made me think about my future and what I need to do to get there."

## CHANGING CULTURES

More students than ever are taking the **SATS** for college admission



**\$ = \$\$\$\$**

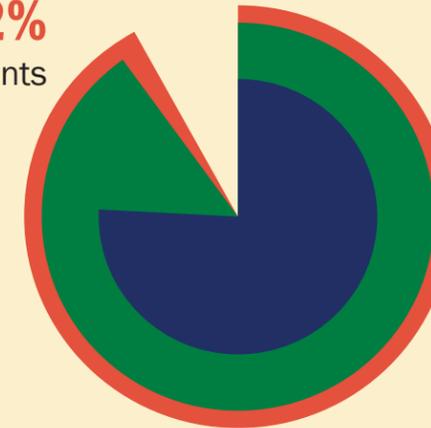
Eligible students can be matched up to \$5 for every \$1 they save for college with Individual Development Accounts



**92%**  
of parents

**90%**  
of students

**76%**  
of teachers



expect students to continue their education after high school

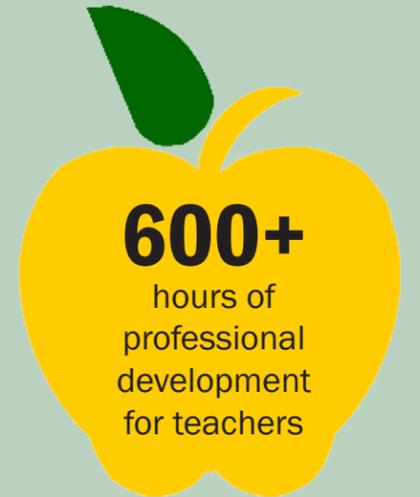
GEAR UP schools have a



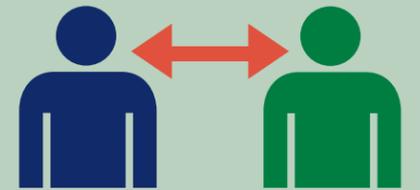
high school dropout rate than the state average



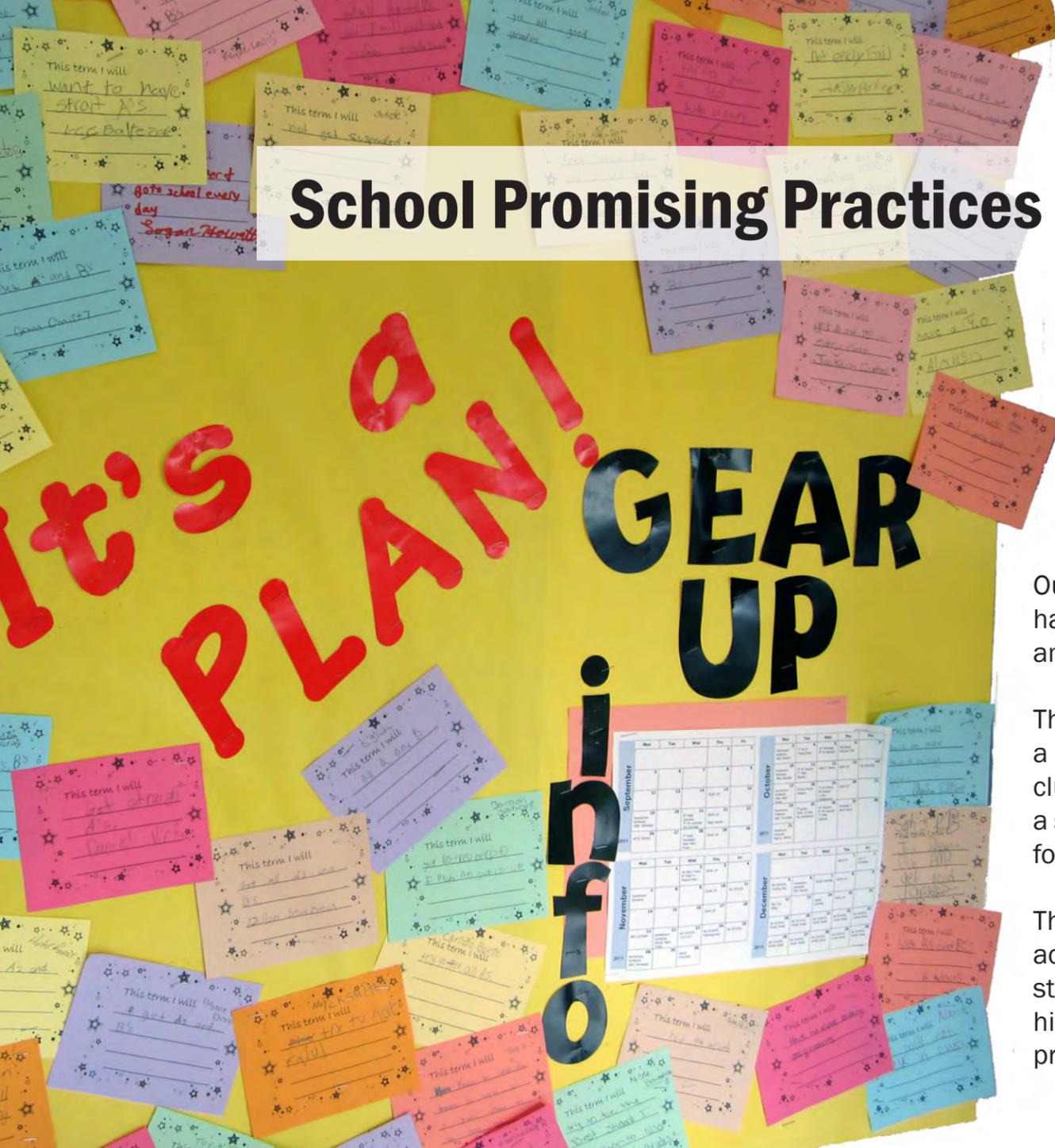
## ENERGIZING EDUCATORS



**600+**  
hours of professional development for teachers



Educators have a supportive network of consultants and practitioners for technical assistance, research questions, and more.



## School Promising Practices

2008-2014 Cohort

Our 22 Oregon GEAR UP communities have all accomplished an incredible amount during 2011-2012.

These promising practices showcase a successful, unique activity that each cluster implemented this year, which gives a sense of the creative ways that GEAR UP fosters a college-going culture.

The 2008-2014 cohort began new activities for the original GEAR UP students, now in their sophomore year of high school, as well as continued notable programs for the other grades.

### Aurora

North Marion Middle School  
North Marion High School

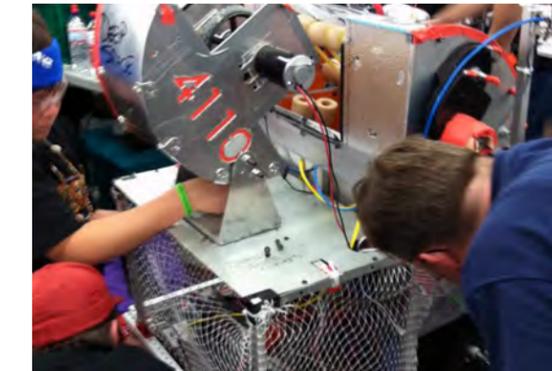
Students interacted with professionals from the community during a **middle school Career Day** and a **high school College and Career Fair**.

“Career Day was a big hit! We had three different types of engineers, a veterinarian, dentist, TV news reporter, author, musician, nurse, school counselor, teacher, fire fighters, police, corrections officer...In all, there were 25 careers represented!” said middle school GEAR UP coordinator Tracy Anderson.

Students received a personalized schedule to hear about careers related to their specific interests. Thus, students learned the relevance of a college degree for many different career fields.



**Jerome Kersey, former Portland Trail Blazer, shared his career path with students.**



### Brookings

Azalea Middle School  
Brookings-Harbor High School

Physics, computer science, mathematics, engineering, computer aided design and computer controlled manufacturing—these might seem out of reach for many high school students, but not for the juniors and seniors participating in the Robotics team.

**FIRST® Robotics Competitions** happen regionally nationwide, with teams of students guided by an adult coach. Students design, fabricate, test and program a 120-pound robot in just six weeks to accomplish various tasks.

School staff raved about the program. “The project based curriculum is rigorous, relevant and a realistic simulation of the world outside of high school—and develops skills that give students a world of options for the jobs that exist now and in the future.”

### Cottage Grove

Lincoln Middle School  
Kennedy High School  
Cottage Grove High School

Cottage Grove High School focused efforts on 75 juniors still needing to pass their OAKS writing tests, organizing an **intensive Writing Workshop** to strengthen particular skills.

The entire staff helped grade writing samples in preparation for the workshop, deciphering the key areas that students needed extra help. Teachers then spent half a day working with students on their own work samples. “[This] was important,” said Kay Graham, principal of Cottage Grove High School, “because it gave credibility to the process.”

The staff is now looking to provide similar workshops for reading and math, in order to ensure all students successfully gain the skills they need.

**“I want to go to college, so I better get on the ball.”**

## Glendale

### Glendale Junior/Senior High School

Students were able to get an up-close look at professions that interested them during a full day job shadow experience in a field of their choice.

The school contracted with the Douglas Education Service District (ESD) to help implement the program, pairing every 8th and 10th grader with a professional in a broad range of careers without staff having to break a sweat.

“It is very valuable for the students,” said Jan Hubler, co-GEAR UP coordinator. “We will continue the program, as it’s now part of our graduation requirements.”

By the senior year, students at Glendale are expected to have performed 20+ hours of community service, participated in a job shadow and visited at least three colleges, and completed a senior project or portfolio and presentation.

Starting job shadowing in middle school allows students to experience multiple professions and recognize the importance of doing well in school before they begin their high school academic career.

## Grants Pass

### Fleming Middle School North Valley High School

8th grade students from Fleming Middle School benefitted from a full year of mentoring and activities designed to ease their upcoming transition to high school. Each month, various clubs, sports, activities, and academic groups from North Valley High School presented opportunities to get involved, while building relationships as near-peer role models.

A no-cost program, it’s easy to both implement and sustain, and saw 100% participation for 8th grade students.

“The mentoring program helps create and strengthen the bridge between middle school and high school,” said Jerry Keeling, GEAR UP coordinator. “It promotes community and school spirit and an increased preparedness and enthusiasm toward transitioning to 9th grade.”



## Irrigon

### Irrigon Junior/Senior High School

The My Story Project inspired 8th grade students to share their values and goals through written, visual and oral communication methods.

The My Story Project has four components: first, students write a college and career dream essay and take pictures that represent who they are now; then they create a poster including the essay and pictures; and finally they give a class and community presentation.

The school provided cameras and materials, and hosted a “Knight” (the school mascot) of Excellence that served as a forum for the presentations as well as a celebration of 8th grade graduation.

Adopted from a similar program created by the Chiloquin cluster in the first cohort of GEAR UP schools, the My Story Project encourages students to reflect on their past, present and future and the steps they should take in order to fulfill their dreams.

## Students prepare to confront and break through their fears at the Student Leadership Event.





**In Lincoln City, a college-going culture is on display.**

## La Pine

La Pine Middle School  
La Pine High School

Five years ago, only 33% of high school students were meeting or exceeding the statewide math standard. Administrators changed the downward trend by instituting **Math Labs for all freshman and sophomores as well as juniors** that had not yet passed the state exam.

Adopted from a model at Forest Grove High School, the Math Lab provides a second daily dose of math instruction, in addition to the regular class. “The success is due in part to the dual reinforcement of mathematical content between the regular math class and the math lab. The students’ determine the curriculum and program so it is tailored to their needs, not the teacher,” said Vondell Fox, a Math Lab teacher.

In 2011-12, the percentage of juniors meeting or exceeding the math standard had jumped to **81%**, clearly demonstrating the success of the program. Furthermore, the school culture has changed as well; once questioned, the Math Labs are now simply part of the way La Pine High School academically supports students.

Jay Mathisen, principal of La Pine High School, also credits the efficacy of the program to teachers’ dedication. “The teacher needs to ‘own the cause’, they need to be excited about helping kids and make it their mission.” Certainly, the staff at La Pine is doing just that, engaging students and seeing results.

## Lincoln City

Taft 7-12 High School

School staff and administrators recognized the growing issue of homelessness for students and families in the district (around 20% of the student population), and worked in conjunction with community partners to offer an educative event and consider supportive actions.

The **Homeless Summit brought local decision-makers together** to understand the experience of homelessness through a simulation as well as look for local solutions and assistance. Sessions were led by Lynda Coates, a poverty consultant, and partners included the Lincoln County homeless liaison, the Chamber of Commerce, the Ministerial Association and the Rotary Club.

As a result of the Summit, organizations have held several outreach events for the homeless population of Lincoln County, providing multiple services in one location at one time. In addition, teachers and staff recognize the barriers that homeless students might face in succeeding in school and are equipped with stronger relationships with community organizations that can offer support.

## Merrill

Lost River Junior/Senior High School

At Lost River, there is one big transition, from elementary to secondary school. With that in mind, staff offered **two programs to ensure a positive academic and social transition**. In the spring, 6th grade students went through an initial orientation preparing them for the move to the Junior/Senior high school. At the start of the academic year, 7th and 8th graders had a day at the school to themselves, known as Raider Camp. This day of activities and information sessions focused on student success, positive school climate, building relationships with peers and staff, as well as practicing logistics like opening lockers and getting to class on time.

Starting junior high school with clear expectations has paid off. 7th and 8th grade students consistently had fewer discipline referrals and failing grades. In terms of state testing, 64% of the 7th grade met or exceeded in Reading and 81% in Math, the latter well above the state average.

Traci Reed, GEAR UP coordinator, further elaborated on the benefits. “Attendance is above 97% for this day and the relationships between staff and students have been a great reward.”

**G**  
**“Going to college has been my dream, and gearing up for college is a good start!”**

## Myrtle Creek

Coffenberry Middle School  
South Umpqua High School

The staff at Coffenberry Middle School used students' love for competition as the impetus for **a series of contests around the 5 "Rs"** (Rigor, Relevance, Right Classes, Relationships and Raising Awareness) that celebrated a college-going culture.

For example, students decorated their homerooms with posters, pennants and information from their chosen college that helped raise awareness about different types of colleges, price of attendance, minimum GPA requirements and more. Competition became fierce among the teachers, too, once it was announced that the winning classroom teacher would receive a half-day off.

Another contest called for students to write a one to three page essay on their definition of rigor, including personal experiences and goals. In this way, students reflected on the importance of strong academics as well as rehearsed writing college essays.

Overall, the contests helped set the tone of college readiness for the whole school, increasing student participation and creating teacher buy-in.

## Stanfield

Stanfield Secondary School

Stanfield faces many of the same barriers as other GEAR UP communities including low levels of parental educational attainment. Thus, students may struggle with homework, without the benefit of a parent or guardian who is able to support their learning process.

The high school math teacher, Tyler Davis, recognized this and decided to experiment with **the flipped class method**, which allows students to watch online videos of the lecture at home and use class time to work collaboratively and with the guidance of the teacher.

Students are assessed at the end of each lesson and must show proficiency before they can continue. Students that need additional support can work with the teacher in small groups during class time or one-on-one during academic appointments, a tool used school-wide.

"Mr. Davis has refined the art of providing direction for learning through questioning strategies," said Stanfield principal Steve Ellis. "When students do the thinking, learning is so much deeper."

Thus far, the results are encouraging. Students are able to move at their own pace, with some students flying through the material with little coaching from the teacher, while others are able to re-watch the lessons multiple times and profit from increased teacher attention.

**"GEAR UP has enabled us to do many activities with our kids we wouldn't have otherwise been able to do." GEAR UP Coordinator**

## Sweet Home

Sweet Home Junior High School  
Sweet Home High School

**Making Dreams Happen** is Sweet Home School District's overall theme for changing the culture in the community to one where education is valued.

A college and career curriculum is embedded into the schedule starting at the 7th grade level with a mandatory elective class titled *Is College for Me?* 8th graders have the opportunity to follow that class with another elective, *College IS for Me!* The curriculum is continued throughout high school with a *Freshman Fortitude* class twice a month in English classes, followed by a one semester *GEAR UP for Success* class in the sophomore year. Finally, students work with ASPIRE mentors and a College/Career Counselor for final preparations to make their dreams for life after high school a reality.

Sweet Home High School celebrates students' acceptances into college, trade school, the military, and apprenticeship programs with Senior Signing Days held once a month, beginning in February of each year. Seniors must show proof of their acceptance at a particular postsecondary institution or other option before being allowed to participate.

During the signing ceremony, students' intentions are announced and they "sign" (autograph) their picture. All pictures are then hung up in the main hall of the high school for all students, parents and community members to see where the students are heading after graduation - a great way to showcase a college-going culture!

**College acceptances are on display for students, parents and staff to see.**





## 2011-2017 Cohort

Supported by The Ford Family Foundation, the 2011-2017 cohort began their first year of GEAR UP with enthusiasm and dedication.

Efforts were primarily concentrated on 7th graders, but many activities and services included high school students as well as teacher professional development.

### Camas Valley

#### Camas Valley School

The highlight for Camas Valley was the **GEAR UP class for all 7th graders that focused on raising awareness and general college knowledge** as well as tips for academic success. “We covered many topics: study skills, I’m Going to College curriculum from NELA, Believing the College Dream curriculum from ECMC, computer skills, and the list could go on forever,” raved GEAR UP coordinator Wendy Roque.

The class also went on six different college visits, often bringing along interested high school students as well. Stops included Umpqua Community College, Rogue Community College, Western Oregon University (with a stop at the Evergreen Air and Space Museum), Oregon State University, University of Oregon, and Southern Oregon University.

The impact and effectiveness of college visits was clear; pre- and post- surveys reflected a high percentage of increased knowledge of the reality of affordability and the relevance of a college degree as well as general information on class requirements and other admissions policies.

### Coquille

#### Coquille Valley Middle School Coquille Valley High School

Capitalizing on students’ love of free food, the **Pizza with a Professional** series was an extremely popular program. Three times during the year, members of the community from a range of occupations shared their education and career journey during a free lunch available to all interested students.

Presenters were prompted beforehand to briefly discuss their career and education requirements as well as stress the importance of focusing on academics in middle and high school. Students had an opportunity to ask questions and learn about specific fields in-depth.

Community businesses and organizations were happy to participate and share their expertise, from a dentist to a photographer to representatives from the Bureau of Land Management. Thanks to willing presenters, low cost and general popularity, the program will be easily sustained and replicated with more occupations in future years.

**A** “After high school, I will go to Oregon State University and study veterinary medicine. I’ve already been saving money for college!”

## Drain

North Douglas Elementary School  
North Douglas High School

Increasing rigor within the school curriculum was a main objective at North Douglas High School this year. The school greatly expanded the availability of **dual enrollment classes that allowed participants to earn both high school and college credit.**

Partnering with Umpqua Community College (UCC) and Yoncalla High School, eligible students could take Extended Options UCC courses - available online or on campus and taught by college staff - as well as College Now/Dual Credit courses offered at one of the high schools and taught by regular teachers.

44% of high school students now have at least one college credit, with one senior graduating with 32 credits from all of the dual enrollment classes taken over 4 years.

GEAR UP coordinator Janon Rogers remarked on the powerful motivation of the classes. "Upon learning that GEAR UP would pay the \$25 fee for a course, one student has changed his attitude about school generally. He even got his hair cut, because he was a 'college student' now, and needed to look the part!"

## Elkton

Elkton Charter School

Aspiring computer and video game designers got an inside look at a premiere college of computer interactive technologies with a **visit to the DigiPen Institute of Technology** in Redmond, WA.

Five high school students participated in an extensive tour of the campus, learning about their programs which include computer science, computer engineering, and art with an emphasis in creating video games.

"Students were much more aware of how much it costs to attend, the dedication required, and the classes they should be taking in high school," said Lisa Olson, the school's GEAR UP coordinator. "They all were surprised by the GPA required to get into this school."



## Myrtle Point

Myrtle Point Junior/Senior  
High School

Myrtle Point **hosted a Career Fair in conjunction with the GEAR UP middle schools in Coquille and Powers**, a shining example of collaboration and partnerships.

7th and 8th graders from all three schools listened to six different career presentations of their choice, learning about a typical workday, salary range, education and training required, and high school classes pertinent to the career.

Presenters included a radio announcer, representatives from the culinary arts, firefighters and paramedics, electricians and others. Students were prepared with questions after researching career pathways and their own interests using the Oregon Career Information System (CIS).

Myrtle Point also partnered with Roseburg High School in the fall, sending high school seniors to their College Fair in order to meet with admissions officers and learn more about higher education opportunities.

## Port Orford/Langlois

Driftwood Elementary School  
Pacific High School

Pirates were on the prowl at Driftwood Elementary School this year. The school mascot served as the namesake of a special class for 6th-8th grade students that focused on study skills and preparing for high school and college.

**The Pirate Cruise class explored careers and had students build their middle and high school plans** using Oregon Career Information System (CIS). As part of the required curriculum in the school, 100% of middle school students developed a program of study with the right classes they need to take in middle and high school in order to graduate from high school, matriculate into college, and enter their profession of choice.

In addition, students visited Willamette University in an effort to expose them to life on a college campus and the different opportunities available. After the visit, students reflected on what they had learned in their online portfolios.

As it is part of the regular schedule and curriculum, the program will continue every year with expanded campus visit options.



**Students support their peers' college aspirations at the Student Leadership Event at the University of Oregon.**

The mentor program at Powers pairs 7th graders with high school students.



## Powers

Powers High School

The GEAR UP mentor program was a powerful experience for both mentors and mentees. **Three seniors and one sophomore from the high school were each paired with a small group of 7th grade students to serve as academic tutors and near-peer role models.**

Mentors met with their groups once a week during lunch. Three weeks of every month the groups worked on school assignments, seeking support from each other and their mentor if needed. Lunch was provided the fourth week, with mentors leading their groups in games or other special activities.

“100% of our 7th graders participated in the mentor program,” said Ellen Baldwin, GEAR UP coordinator and the supervisor of the mentor program. “In doing exit interviews, EVERY one of them listed it as one of the best parts of our GEAR UP program.”

## Reedsport

Reedsport Community Charter School

In Reedsport, learning doesn't stop when school lets out for the summer.

Before the end of the school year, 7th and 8th grade students select a book of their choice. At the end of June, the book is mailed to the student's house so s/he will be able to read it over the summer. The final piece of the **Summer Reading Program** is a book-related project in Language Arts class when students return in the fall.

Benefits of the Summer Reading Program include fostering an interest in reading for pleasure among students and increased reading comprehension levels. In fact, the number of 8th grade students who met or exceeded the standard on statewide reading tests increased by over 10%.

**“GEAR UP is cool. I can't wait to go to college!”**

## Roseburg

John C Fremont Middle School  
Joseph Lane Middle School  
Roseburg High School

This year, the sole objective was to engage teachers across all three schools in Professional Learning Communities and **professional development in order to align curriculum, enhance content knowledge, and increase pedagogical skills.**

The language arts and mathematics departments from two middle schools and high school convened to engage in a review of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and alignment of content and resources across the grades. As part of this work, staff attended workshops together regarding the implementation of CCSS and the language arts team at the middle school level developed common writing prompts for all students and scored them collaboratively.

Further work on curriculum alignment will continue in future years by utilizing early release time.

## Yoncalla

Yoncalla Elementary School  
Yoncalla High School

Students in 7th and 8th grades studied strategies to be successful in school as well as investigating postsecondary options during an **Eagle Exploration class**, which included a week of college visitations and job shadows.

Designed to make the move to the high school seamless, topics included class and time schedules, moving from class to class, getting organized, getting good grades from the start, and how high school is different from middle school.

Every middle school student created a 6-year plan with their goals for high school and beyond, which was evaluated during a student-led parent conference in the spring. 100% of parents attended these conferences, which were designed to help the student and parents understand how the student's life is going to change and how to help them transition smoothly.

Thanks to the activities of the Eagle Exploration class, 90% of 7th and 8th graders attended a career fair, visited a college campus and/or participated in a job shadow.

# GEAR UP Statewide Activities



2011-12 was a busy year! Statewide events, activities, and programs engaged students, parents, teachers, and the community.

GEAR UP thrives in large part due to our partnerships with universities, programs, and organizations that provide professional development, campus programs for students and funding for low-income students and school staff across the state. In 2011-2012 we instigated, continued and expanded many collaborations across the state.

## By the numbers...



# 15

Oregon GEAR UP students met Rep. Chaka Fattah at the GEAR UP West conference in October

# 760+

students learned information on the relevance of a college degree at the Career Photo Booth



# 1,116

students, parents, school alumni and community members participated in the National GEAR UP Week Facebook contest

## PROGRAM PARTNERS

Access to Student Assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone (ASPIRE)

Camp Odyssey & Oregon Solutions

Community and Shelter Assistance Corp. (CASA)

Education Northwest (formerly NWREL)

Education Partnerships, Inc. (EPI)

Educational Credit Management Corporation (ECMC)

Envictus Corporation

Gear Up for Excellence

Klamath Community College

NeighborWorks® Umpqua

NELA® Center for Student Success

Oregon Career Information System

Oregon College Access Network

Oregon Community Foundation

Oregon Small Schools Network

Oregon State University Precollege Programs

Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC)

Path to Scholarships®

Southern Oregon University Precollege Programs

Student Paths

The Ford Family Foundation

## I'm Going to College

Partner: Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA)

The NELA® Centers for Student Success<sup>SM</sup> designed the I'm Going to College program for elementary and middle school students to create awareness of higher education and instill in students the idea that going to college is an attainable goal.

GEAR UP received a grant from NELA for the program that covered teacher guides, student workbooks and backpacks for the 8-lesson curriculum, as well as funds for transportation to a college and lunch on campus during the visit. A total of 486 seventh grade students from eight clusters participated in the program, visiting colleges and universities across Oregon.

## Student Paths College & Career Curriculum

Partner: Student Paths

Three schools opted to use Student Paths curriculum with high school students which includes peer-to-peer publications about college, career and life readiness.



## Summer Leadership & Academic Enrichment Activities

In addition to on-campus programs sponsored by GEAR UP (see next page), funds were available for schools to send students to other summer programs and camps, as well as bolster learning opportunities in their communities.

12 schools received support for students to attend:

- Enhanced Campus, summer remediation plus courses at Oregon Coast Community College
- Sea Camp of Oregon at Southern Oregon University
- OASC Summer Leadership Camp at Western Oregon University
- Forensic Science Camp at Oregon State University
- MedStars at Oregon Health & Science University
- & many other activities!

## Individual Development Accounts

Partner: Community and Shelter Assistance Corp. (CASA); NeighborWorks® Umpqua

We continued our partnership with two community development organizations to offer income-eligible students a matched college savings account, also known as Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). Schools assisted students and families in the enrollment process, giving them the tools to begin investing in their future. Every dollar a student saves in their IDA is matched up to 5:1.

To date, 181 students have enrolled in the program and benefitted from money management workshops and other learning opportunities.

## Camp Odyssey

Partner: Oregon Solutions

GEAR UP high school students were invited to attend a revived summer program, Camp Odyssey, which examines the dynamics of oppression and privilege and transforms young people into becoming social investors and emerging leaders in their communities.



## Student Programs

# College and University Partnerships



GEAR UP builds bridges between K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions through field trips and summer programs on college campuses. Participants interact with college student guides and faculty members, explore career options, and become familiar with the resources available on campus.

In 2011-2012, over 5,000 students benefitted from a college campus experience. Campus representatives also visited schools as part of college and career fairs to meet with students and parents.

## Natural Resources Leadership Camp

Partner: Oregon State University's Office of Precollege Programs

Over 80 middle and high school students from 19 GEAR UP schools learned about natural resources careers and gained leadership skills while at OSU.

Students met professionals in a variety of fields including fisheries and wildlife, zoology, forestry, and soil and water conservationists. Hands-on activities included a service project pulling invasive species at the William L. Finley National Wildlife Refuge. Accompanying teachers also benefitted from professional development.

College students served as mentors and group leaders, leading students in college readiness programming. Highlights included a morning at the Challenge Course, where students developed their teamwork and problem-solving skills, as well as capstone presentations on advice for their peers and younger students on how to succeed in high school and prepare for college. For more photos and videos, visit [www.facebook.com/oregongearup](http://www.facebook.com/oregongearup).

## Camp M.D.

Partner: Southern Oregon University Precollege Programs

Future nurses, doctors, and dentists spent a week at Southern Oregon University learning about careers and majors in the medical field. 16 high school students raved about their experiences in the medical forensic lab, touring Mercy Flights, and participating in Oregon Health and Science University's nursing lab simulations. "I loved every second of Camp M.D.," said one participant.

Carol Jensen, the director of Pre-College Youth Programs at SOU added, "The highlight of the program for the students seemed to be the individual job shadows that were arranged with physicians throughout the Rogue Valley." Students were able to observe doctors in a wide array of medical specialties including Hematology, Oncology, Endocrinology, Cardiology, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Infectious Disease and more.

One student summed up her experience, "I came only wanting one career and now I see a few I could do in the medical field."

## Student Leadership Event

Partner: Gear Up for Excellence

200 middle and high school students and chaperones from nine GEAR UP clusters descended on the University of Oregon for three days of activities focused on leadership, academic success, and personal growth led by a team from Gear Up for Excellence. Held annually each August, students worked in small and large groups with college student mentors on problem-solving and teamwork challenges that apply to real-life situations.

This year, high school students who had gone through the program before had the opportunity to take their leadership skills to the next level, working on communication tactics, goal-setting, and overcoming fears.

Kristen Peterson, a senior at Sweet Home High School, said, "[The] camp was so amazing. I met some great people and learned quite a bit for my future."

To see photos and videos of the Student Leadership Event, visit [www.facebook.com/oregongearup](http://www.facebook.com/oregongearup).

"[The OSU Natural Resources Leadership Camp] was a fun camp. I was able to meet new people and learn new things."

Dariyan Woodard, Elkton Charter School



# Star Students



## Student of the Month

Oregon GEAR UP recognizes one student a month who has demonstrated determination, leadership, teamwork, or overcome adversity and is on track for college success. Teachers and administrators nominate outstanding students, like Shantell Goodwin (left), who was very involved in the community and at Brookings-Harbor High School and will be attending Oregon Institute of Technology in the fall.

*Other students recognized:*

**Sierra Burgess**  
Glendale Junior/Senior High School

**Kenya Hampton**  
Yoncalla High School

**Newton Allred**  
Powers High School

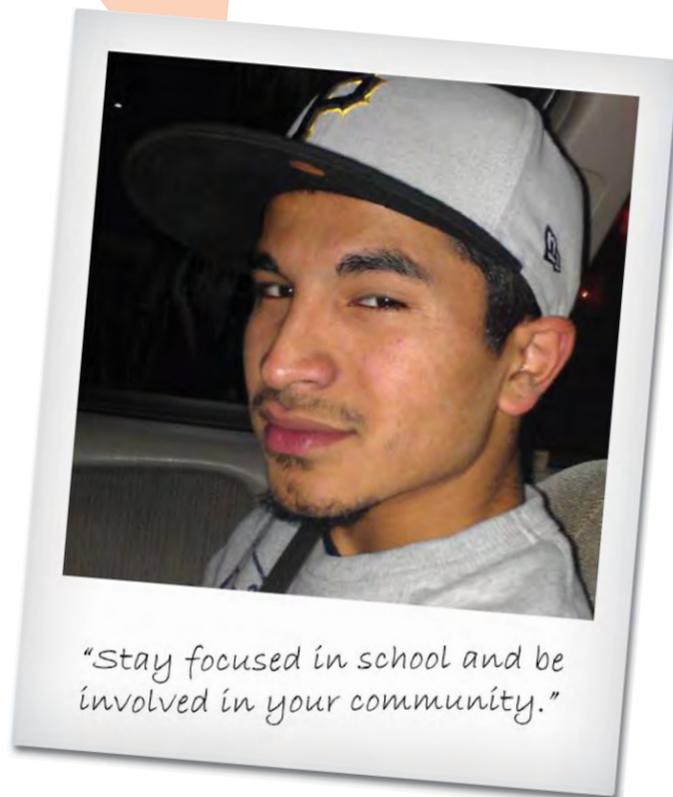
**Kerston Weekly**  
Myrtle Point Junior High School

## National Youth Congress

BillyAnn Stempel and Alexa Taunton, students at Taft 7-12 School in Lincoln City, and Loudon Oleachea and Colton Mullings, students from La Pine Middle and High School, respectively, were selected to represent Oregon at the National Youth Congress in Washington D.C. during the National GEAR UP Conference. They learned leadership and communication skills that will be brought back to their schools to further a college-going culture and an active, engaged student body.

## Success Stories

Pedro Arenas (right) is a graduate of McMinnville High School and attends Oregon State University where he is studying to be a high school history teacher. He is just one of several *Success Stories* from the first cohort of GEAR UP schools (2002-2008) featured on our website and Facebook page.



# Professional Development

Oregon GEAR UP continued to provide teachers and administrators with a broad range of professional development opportunities. GEAR UP coordinators and administrators attended the regional conference, GEAR UP West, in Portland, OR and the national NCCEP/GEAR UP Conference in Washington D.C. to present and learn promising practices from across the country. In addition, school teams were able to discuss ideas, brainstorm initiatives, and plan programs during statewide meetings.

## SUCCESS Retreat

*Partner: Education Northwest*

The three-day retreat for Supporting Unique Community Coalitions Engaged in Student Success (SUCCESS) is one of the most valuable and compelling professional development opportunities for GEAR UP clusters.

Schools were encouraged to bring a diverse team of constituents including coordinators, teachers, parents, administrators and even students to learn from regional experts on *Engaging Student, Parents and the Community*, this year's theme.

In addition, teams had uninterrupted time to generate an outline for GEAR UP programs and services at their school in the year ahead, as well as share highlights and promising practices with other schools.



## Principals' Leadership Program

*Partner: Education Partnerships, Inc. (EPI)*

GEAR UP school leaders benefit from the expertise of EPI consultants and each other in the Principals' Leadership Program, now in its third year. School principals receive a personal education mentor, access to current research on school trends, workshops, and networking opportunities.

In addition to receiving research briefs on participant-generated topics, principals shared their own best practices in *Principal Perspectives*, a podcast series available on the GEAR UP website and iTunes.

## Rural Schools Network (RSN) for College Access

*Partner: Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) at Education Northwest*

With federal funding from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) over the next five years, REL Northwest began work with Oregon GEAR UP schools in a research alliance to support the use of existing state and local data to answer important questions about preparing low-income, rural students to succeed in postsecondary education.

School administrators and staff will benefit from customizable and user-friendly data on what works in college readiness programs as well as workshops and forums that disseminate research findings.



## Parent and Community Engagement

### Parent Newsletter

Recognizing the critical need to engage parents with information about postsecondary education and steps for college preparation, we offered schools the *GEAR UP Gazette*, a customizable quarterly parent newsletter with timely information about financial aid, summer opportunities and more. Schools added their own events and important reminders and distributed the newsletter either electronically or in paper form.

### Community Conversations

*Partners: Oregon Community Foundation; Everyday Democracy*

Several schools took advantage of funds from the Oregon Community Foundation to begin the process of engaging their communities in dialogue regarding education and broader city goals, with some using the framework and technical assistance provided by Everyday Democracy.

### Community Engagement Specialist

*Partner: Becky Wilson*

Building upon previous work mapping community assets in GEAR UP communities, Becky Wilson joined the team to help schools implement best practices engaging parents, businesses, philanthropic organizations and other local stakeholders. The GEAR UP coordinator at Chiloquin from 2002-2008, Becky brings on-the-ground experience and will continue her work looking toward sustainability for college readiness programming at the schools.

## Communications & GEAR UP In the News

Education Week Teacher, 4.18.2012,  
by Liana Heitin  
*Flattening the School Walls*

[Principal Tom] Horn's leadership style—and his emphasis on beyond-the-classroom learning—appears to be working. The attendance rate at the 100-student high school, formerly called Al Kennedy Alternative School but now referred to by students and staff as the Kennedy School of Sustainability, has jumped from 23 percent in the fall of 2006, when Horn took over, to a current rate of about 90 percent. The dropout rate is now at 12.5 percent, down from 20 percent in 2004-05. Test scores, though still below par, are on the rise. And for the first time ever, students from Kennedy are going to college.

Curry Coastal Pilot, 4.18.12, by Lorna Rodriguez  
*Students get serious about education*

Students at Brookings-Harbor High School learned all about postsecondary options – financial aid, scholarships, the college application process, what students need to do to be competitive and how to save for college – this past week.

The sessions were led by BHHS staff, former students, and community members. "Everything was based on gearing students and families up for postsecondary education," [teacher and counselor Kristi] Fulton said. "Really, what the night is all about is to start planning. College is not a dream, it's a plan. We want students to be prepared, and pursue some sort of secondary training. It doesn't end when you're a senior."

News-Review, 5.1.2012,  
by Inka Bajandas  
*Douglas County schools work to increase college enrollment*

Douglas County school administrators say they're working hard to encourage more students to go to college. "It was clear the biggest difference we could make in our students lives was to focus on what was going to happen after high school," South Umpqua High Principal Kristi McGree said.

At South Umpqua High School, seniors [Alayna] Budel and [Bryce] Walter said taking the GEAR UP course makes them feel poised for the transition from high school to college. Budel said she hopes to study at OSU for the medical field. She recently found out she made the cheer leading squad. Walter plans to attend a community college to study dental hygiene. She said she's spent a lot of time in the GEAR UP classes applying for schools and scholarships. "I got mostly everything done in here," she said.



Visit our redesigned website  
**gearup.ous.edu**  
with resources for teachers,  
students and parents.



### Social Media

From Facebook to YouTube, Twitter to Pinterest, Oregon GEAR UP delivered college readiness information to students, teachers, elected officials, community members and any other interested stakeholders. Follow, friend, subscribe or just generally join in!

**www.facebook.com/oregongearup**  
**www.twitter.com/oregongearup**  
**www.youtube.com/oregongearup**  
**www.pinterest.com/oregongearup**



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

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**Creating a  
college-going  
culture early...**

**...with high  
expectations for  
all students.**



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