Dear Fellow Oregonian,

Since 2002, the Oregon GEAR UP program has worked with low-income middle and high schools to prepare students for postsecondary education. In turn, schools across the state have adopted new strategies to improve student learning that have led to decreased dropout rates and increased graduation rates. There is much work still to be done to create a more seamless, student-focused system for Oregon students, but there is much to celebrate and many reasons for students to be optimistic about their futures.

Oregon GEAR UP builds bridges between K-12 schools and community college and university partners, and joins schools & communities in supporting students. I appreciate the efforts of the teachers, parents, students, and staff in the GEAR UP program who are committed to high expectations for all students and like me, believe that all students should graduate from high school ready to attend postsecondary education.

As Oregon reaffirms its commitment to education, GEAR UP serves as a model program for supporting the dreams and aspirations of students. The goals of GEAR UP reflect those of our state, and together we can reach our goal of 80% of Oregonians with at least two years of post-secondary education by 2020.

Sincerely,

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.
Governor
Greetings,

It is hard to believe that this marks the mid-way point of our 2008 GEAR UP grant; so much has happened in the communities throughout the state that are implementing the program. Students that began the program as 7th graders made the transition to high school, with school staff and our GEAR UP partners supporting the process. Within this report you’ll discover some of the incredible work being done in these communities to enhance their college-going culture and ensure that all students are college and career ready. You’ll also read about the partnerships that supported these schools in realizing the GEAR UP mission – increasing the number of low-income students who are prepared to succeed in postsecondary academic pursuits. Most notable among these partnerships is the expansion of GEAR UP into ten new communities with support from The Ford Family Foundation. We are extremely grateful for this new partnership and see it as both an endorsement of our efforts as well as a challenge to continue raising the bar and bringing about systemic school improvement.

During the course of the year, more than 4,000 students received direct services designed to enhance their awareness of and readiness for postsecondary education. These activities covered a vast array of programs supporting the five GEAR UP pillars: rigor, right classes, relevance, relationships and reality of affordability. Untold numbers of students benefitted from improved school cultures, and thousands of parents and family members received information and training on college preparation and financial aid, visited campuses with their students, and volunteered in the schools as tutors and mentors.

I continue to be honored and humbled to be a part of such an amazing program, and offer many thanks to all who were involved this year. Please celebrate our successes with us and join us in our continued efforts to make college a reality for thousands of students across the state.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Carnahan
Director, Oregon 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. Ten new districts are bringing GEAR UP to their schools beginning in the fall of 2011, thanks to supplementary funding from The Ford Family Foundation.

Twelve Oregon school districts receive annual grants of $30,000 to $40,000 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, 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, mentorship programs, college campus-based events, and additional services to the schools.

All students who participate in their schools’ required GEAR UP activities may be eligible for college scholarships, renewable for up to four years. Therefore, Oregon GEAR UP students receive both the knowledge and the capital necessary to fulfill their aspirations to higher education.
A Model for Change

Oregon GEAR UP emphasizes five key components of effective postsecondary preparation: Rigor, Relevance, Right Classes, Relationships and the Reality of Affordability. This research-based “5 R” model underpins all school-based and statewide GEAR UP activities.

**RIGOR**
Students who take challenging classes in middle and high school are better prepared to succeed in college.

**REALITY OF AFFORDABILITY**
Students who explore financial aid options early on are well informed about how to pay for college.

**RELEVANCE**
Students who know they need a college degree to pursue the careers that interest them are more likely to go to college.

**RELATIONSHIPS**
Students whose peers and significant adults expect them to go to college are more likely to attend.

**RIGHT CLASSES**
Students who receive early guidance in class selection are better equipped for admission into college.

**High Expectations for All Students**

**Use of data**

**Leadership**

**Partnerships**

**Flexible resources**
In 2008, public schools in twelve rural communities 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.

The twenty middle and high schools selected began targeting students in the 7th grade. This first cohort of students completed their freshman year of high school in 2010-2011, with new programs and services designed with this transition in mind. 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.

“GEAR UP is giving me the opportunity to learn about and experience college, to better help me decide which is the best college for my future.”

Kaila Haertle, student, La Pine Middle School
The twenty middle and high schools that comprise the 2008-2014 GEAR UP cohort yield a demographic profile that is fairly representative of rural Oregon. As reflected in the chart below, the population served by these schools is lower-income and somewhat less ethnically diverse than the state’s population as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEAR UP Middle Schools</th>
<th>Oregon Middle Schools</th>
<th>GEAR UP High Schools</th>
<th>Oregon High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>69% Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
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<td>28% Minority Enrollment</td>
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<td>26% Minority Enrollment</td>
<td>31% Minority Enrollment</td>
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<tr>
<td>3% LEP* Students</td>
<td>8% LEP Students</td>
<td>4% LEP Students</td>
<td>5% LEP Students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reflects most recent data available from the Oregon Department of Education; Free/Reduced Lunch and Minority Enrollment data is from the 2010-2011 school year; LEP Students are from 2009-2010.

*Limited English Proficient
The Year in Review: Transitions & Partnerships

In 2010-2011, the GEAR UP program served 4,038 students in our twenty 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 1,900 hours of professional development that helped spread educational best practices. Furthermore, GEAR UP schools engaged family and community members with over 2,300 parent interactions during the school year.

Since the grant began in 2008, state assessment scores have increased across the board in GEAR UP high schools, as well as reading test scores in GEAR UP middle schools. Particular achievements in 2010-2011 were at Fleming Middle School, where 78% of 8th graders met or exceeded expectations in Reading, Math and Science assessments, high above the state averages. Cottage Grove High School also recorded large gains, with a 32% increase in Writing scores in the past three years.

Average OAKS* Assessment Scores - All GEAR UP High Schools

Reflects most recent data available from the Oregon Department of Education. Scores are for 10th graders before 2010-2011; currently taken at 11th grade level.

*Oregon Assessment of Knowledge and Skills.
The focus for many of our schools this year was the transition from middle school to high school, as the original cohort of 7th graders entered their freshman year. Numerous clusters started the school year with transition programs, utilizing both staff and older students for support during a pivotal year for students. Schools therefore included a near-peer mentoring component, and gave staff opportunities to set clear expectations from the outset of the school year.

“This is the first year we have had GEAR UP students in the high school—our first year cohort are now 9th graders. I can see the change in culture that they are bringing with them in terms of how comfortable they are with college related topics, and how knowledgeable they have become regarding what different schools have to offer. For this group, talking about college has become a natural thing—and not just in terms of sports!”

Patty Fleming, Principal, Glendale Junior/Senior High School

Highlights from each school cluster follow, in addition to summaries of initiatives undertaken by the central GEAR UP office and program partners which include campus-based activities, staff professional development, and community asset mapping. These efforts will reach even greater number of students across the state with the expansion of the GEAR UP program to ten new clusters in the fall of 2011, thanks to the partnership with The Ford Family Foundation.

Therefore, as we look back to the past year of accomplishments in our schools, we also look forward to the future in expanding college access for all students by collaborating with new program partners.
North Marion Middle School
North Marion High School

The highlight of the year for North Marion Middle and High Schools was the first annual College and Career Fair, which featured 35 businesses from a variety of industries and 13 community colleges and universities, as well as the armed forces. “Students had the opportunity to ask questions and connect career ideas with college programs all in one location,” said middle school teacher and GEAR UP Coordinator Jane Carlton.

The day-long event reached every student in the 8th-12th grades through the coordinated efforts of school staff, parents, and community volunteers. Each grade level received a short orientation about the importance of college and career, followed by free time to peruse the career and college booths. The students filled out “passports” by visiting and talking with professionals from three careers, then identifying the colleges that offer applicable degrees. Brandon Noriega, a senior, shared his future plans, “I either want to be a nurse or an actor — or maybe both. I’m planning to go to Chemeketa Community College next year.”

North Marion Middle School also focused on the relevance of a college degree with a career assembly series. Representatives from a variety of fields, including video production, business consulting, fitness training, architecture, forensic science, and veterinary medicine, spoke to students about the educational requirements for their occupation, as well as a candid view of the daily workings of their job. Approximately half of the students reported they were more likely to attend college after listening to specific speakers.

Overall, North Marion Middle and High Schools utilized their community resources to engage and encourage students towards future career aspirations and higher education.
Brookings

Azalea Middle School
Brookings-Harbor High School

Middle school and high school students in Brookings traveled to community college and university campuses near and far this year, developing relationships with university staff and students as well as raising awareness about academic programs, financial aid, and available support services. Brookings GEAR UP team members note, “College visitations are popular with our students. We have been able to maintain the visits from past years and add some exciting additional visits.”

An annual tradition, the 7th graders took a three-day trip to San Francisco to connect their social studies curriculum to historic places, additionally visiting the University of California, Berkeley for a first look at campus life. The student-led tour included a question-and-answer session and a stop at the residence halls. Other popular visitations for middle school students this year included Rogue Community College, Oregon Institute of Technology and Southern Oregon University.

At Brookings-Harbor High School, the entire junior class traveled to Southwestern Oregon Community College (SWOCC) in Coos Bay to learn about opportunities available both during and after high school. In addition, select students traveled to college campuses for academic competitions, including the Regional and State Math Contests, held at SWOCC and Oregon State University. Thus, students were exposed to rigorous academic programs while experiencing college life.

The breadth of the college visits that schools in Brookings offer allows students to explore many types of careers and postsecondary education options and introduces parent chaperones to college campuses.
Parents in Cottage Grove benefitted from a variety of events geared towards understanding the importance of higher education, its reality of affordability, and ways to support students on their academic path. Lincoln Middle School hosted two evenings dedicated to college preparation with approximately 100 parents attending, and 8th grade parents had an additional opportunity to meet with Cottage Grove High School staff during the annual Transition Night. With a redesigned small group format, individual teachers reviewed graduation requirements and advised on college credit elective choices, allowing both parents and students to start thinking about the high school experience as a college career pathway. “It was particularly successful because parents felt the experience allowed more questions, interaction with teachers and a more personalized transition experience,” said superintendent Krista Parent.

Cottage Grove High School also hosted a Financial Aid Night for parents and students to receive assistance in filling out the FAFSA and other financial aid forms. Support and feedback from parents is encouraged in other ways in Cottage Grove as well: the district’s Parent Club was asked to share their perspectives on a college-going culture with the superintendent and school board, while at Kennedy High School, all students received a personal visit to their homes from principal Tom Horn.

In addition to parent support and outreach, Kennedy High School has focused on experiential learning based on current and relevant topics, often using university partnerships to strengthen curriculum. For example, the new Apiary (beekeeping) Program connects to research conducted at Oregon State University around colony collapse disorder, in addition to making delicious honey!
By partnering with outside programs, Glendale Junior/Senior High School has enhanced the college-going culture and support systems in their school. The ASPIRE program, short for Access to Student assistance Programs In Reach of Everyone, is overseen by the Oregon Student Assistance Commission and relies on community volunteers to serve as mentors to high school students.

This year, the ASPIRE program included 15 mentors building strong relationships with 36 students. ASPIRE encourages students to take an active role in their futures, explore careers with the Oregon Career Information System, and apply to institutions of higher education. Gloria Mobus, ASPIRE coordinator at Glendale Junior/Senior High School, said, “Our students involved in GEAR UP are exhibiting greater self-confidence about school and their future!”

ASPIRE also provided a financial aid meeting for both parents and students to explain the process of applying for federal assistance for postsecondary education. Partnerships with two additional programs, College Dreams and Dream$avers, offered students funding and/or financial guidance for higher education. The Glendale GEAR UP coordinator reiterated the importance of exposing families to the reality of affordability. “This piece of the program transformed what might have been an unaffordable dream into a realistic plan. Students now view postsecondary education as a viable option, and in many cases, a major part of their life plans. These students are learning to look toward the future and take ownership of their life goals.”
Teachers at Fleming Middle School took an interdisciplinary approach to integrating a college awareness curriculum throughout their lesson plans. In Language Arts, students researched and wrote essays about a college of their choice that would allow them to fulfill their career goals. The History teacher led a discussion of the global economy and projected job outlooks, followed by an exploration of individual strengths using the Oregon Career Information System (CIS). Science class also utilized CIS to explore technology careers, followed by an analysis of annual wages to understand hourly wages, net and gross salaries, and standard of living in Math. Thus, the teachers used creativity and teamwork to highlight the expectation for college attendance while increasing rigor in each of their classes.

North Valley High School also succeeded at implementing a stronger college-going culture in the daily routine of students. Activities include the popular “Breakfast of Champions”, held each trimester, which recognize students who have overcome challenges or demonstrated exemplary character in their dedication to completing high school and working towards postsecondary education. Regularly scheduled “College Days” encourage students and staff to wear college t-shirts and gear, while year-long advisory meetings have students focus on goal-setting for high school and beyond. The North Valley GEAR UP coordinator noted, “Our improving state assessment scores are a testament to the focus of both the staff and students of North Valley.”

**Select activities and services in 2010-2011:**
- Fleming Middle School
  - College visits
  - Career Information System (CIS)
  - Advisory class: college readiness
  - Career booklets
  - After-school tutoring
- North Valley High School
  - Oregon Diploma presentation
  - Back-to-school night
  - Advisory class: goal-setting
  - Freshman orientation
  - FAFSA nights
  - College visits
  - ASPIRE
  - Breakfast of Champions

**Integrating College into the Curriculum**

**Fleming MS**
- 59% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 10% Minority Students

**North Valley HS**
- 52% Free/Reduced Lunch
- 15% Minority Students
Irrigon

Irrigon Junior/Senior High School

The Irrigon Junior/Senior High School GEAR UP team continued engaging students throughout the year with campus visits, a Career Showcase, and a parent volunteer program. The efforts of the staff have resulted in a new school atmosphere. “GEAR UP has changed the culture and nature of hallway discussions,” reports Matthew Matz, vice-principal.

New this year was a Survivor Camp for incoming 7th and 9th graders to aid their transition into middle and high school. Student mentors provided leadership and support, helping 7th graders practice opening lockers and navigating the building, while 9th graders learned about high school graduation requirements and expectations. In addition, attendees took part in teambuilding activities and breakout sessions on organizational skills, dealing with stress, and getting involved with school clubs and activities.

Supporting Student Transitions

GEAR UP coordinator and teacher Sarah Miller explained the benefits of the transition experience. “This camp gave the students familiarity with the school and expectations and therefore the students had more confidence the first day of school. They got to know the teachers and a feeling that school was fun when they won mp3 players, DVD players, t-shirts and other prizes.”

Students in Irrigon were encouraged by staff at both the middle and high school as well as their peers during the Survivor Camps, reinforcing a strong community of support.

Select activities and services in 2010-2011:

- College visits
- Career Showcase
- Survivor transition camps
- Path to Scholarships®
- Parent volunteer program
- “My Story” project
La Pine

La Pine Middle School
La Pine High School

The students at La Pine Middle and High Schools shared in the planning and execution of GEAR UP events, demonstrating the power of positive peer relationships. Students helped brainstorm and plan a variety of events, most notably the district-wide Civil War Day. Capitalizing on the football rivalry between the University of Oregon and Oregon State University, the students planned a week of competitions among classes that included poster and door design contests. “After making over 300 cupcakes, decorated in OSU and UO colors, and gallons of hot cocoa – we had a tailgate party. Every student attended and celebrated with us,” recounted La Pine Middle School GEAR UP staff. This event captured the students’ attention and interest in exploring higher education – a great example of a fun way to promote a college-going culture!

In addition, the middle school’s College and Career Club met weekly during the lunch hour to begin charting their post-high school plans. At the end of the year, the students explained the impact that GEAR UP had on their lives. “I understand how college is good for you,” wrote one student. “GEAR UP gives me more hope to really be able to go to college,” shared another.

La Pine High School also encouraged students to take the lead during activities, such as having seniors share their college acceptance letters and scholarship packages. By recognizing and celebrating these students, schools send an influential message to all students that education beyond high school matters.

Select activities and services in 2010-2011:

**La Pine Middle School**
- Career day: “Vocation Destinations”
- College & Career club
- Civil War (OSU v. UO) Day
- Campus visits

**La Pine High School**
- Senior Signing Day
- Math support lab
- Summer science camps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>La Pine MS</th>
<th>La Pine HS</th>
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<tr>
<td>75% Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
<td>68% Free/Reduced Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>9% Minority Students</td>
<td>8% Minority Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.2% LEP Students</td>
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The GEAR UP program at Taft 7-12 High School continued to expand their focus on careers and the relevance of a college degree by involving the local community. A new coordinator brought increased opportunities for students to get a taste of what is available post-graduation through internships and job shadowing. Students received training on appropriate workplace attire and behavior prior to the start of the internship so that they were more adequately equipped for their first day on the job.

In addition, the entire student body participated in a one-day College and Career Fair, with 25 different colleges and nearly 40 businesses. Family and community members were invited to attend through coverage in the local paper.

Susan Smith, the Taft GEAR UP coordinator, was thrilled about the growth of the fair. “We have been overwhelmed with positive feedback as well as requests from businesses that would like to be involved next year. We see this growing even bigger.”

She also recounted the story of a 9th grade student in attendance at the College and Career Fair, who exclaimed, “Mrs. Smith, you were right! I CAN go to college! I just talked to the guy from Portland State University and he told me everything I have to do to go there and it is all stuff I can do!” This student embodies the cultural shift that is taking place at Taft, as students and teachers begin looking towards the future.
GEAR UP supplemental technology grants allowed Lost River Junior/Senior High School to upgrade their 70’s-era microscopes, therefore enhancing learning opportunities for students and increasing rigor in science classes such as Anatomy, Life Science, and Biology. “I have more than tripled the amount of microscope use during the school year,” says science teacher Traci Baumgardner. “It’s a huge help for upper level students as I can use them for lab practicals – identifying tissue types or tissue structures during tests. This is something they will expect to be able to do in college, and have not had the practice until this year.”

Lost River Junior/Senior High School also implemented an Advisory class, dedicating the first 25 minutes of each day for differentiated topics. Seniors were able to select an option that utilized the Path to Scholarships® curriculum covering the college application and scholarship process. 22 of 35 seniors self-selected into the program which included FAFSA and financial aid workshops.

“Path to Scholarships® has made me aware of the various ways to pay for college,” said senior Baylee Thompson. Over half of the students were awarded scholarships, with all students showing increased knowledge about the reality of affordability. Another student, Celeste Hernandez concurred, “Path to Scholarships® helped me understand college and scholarships better. It gave me a clear understanding on what I want to do in the future. This also helped my family and I have a better estimated cost for college, which has really helped.”
The GEAR UP team in Myrtle Creek improved existing programs and implemented numerous other ones aimed at creating higher achieving learners and increasing college awareness. At Coffenberry Middle School, additional math lab sections were added to give students better opportunities to improve their skills. The Academic Recovery class also began using the “Gradewatch” website to track students that need the most support. Technology grants helped fund other assessment tools such as Student Response Systems or “clickers” that help engage students and track learning progress.

South Umpqua High School also concentrated on increasing rigor, as they applied Credit by Proficiency school-wide. They adopted a “No D’s” policy, but provided an Extended Semester session for students who needed supplemental time to meet proficiency standards. A new Academic Guide Group provided 30 minutes of daily study time for those students not earning C’s or better. Students surpassed expectations. “More students passed when C’s or better were required than when the school allowed D’s,” said Sandy Wertz, GEAR UP coordinator.

After-school tutoring expanded with a dedicated “study bus” to transport students after homework sessions. In addition, the school hired a tutor to work with 9th grade students in order to address the specific challenges that freshman face in the transition to high school. Teachers continued to work towards vertical articulation between middle and high school classes so that Myrtle Creek students are prepared for a rigorous college preparatory curriculum.
Stanfield

Stanfield Secondary School

Stanfield Secondary’s most notable achievement was a dramatic 41% increase in meeting standards for middle school state assessment writing scores, attributed to a change in professional practices to emphasize literacy throughout the curriculum. Staff members formed Professional Learning Communities (PLC’s) in order to share ideas and best practices as well as support students and each other. “Teachers met by grade level to evaluate and discuss student writing samples which generated instructional direction and a focused purpose to the writing program,” explains Steve Ellis, principal of Stanfield Secondary School. Consequently, students had writing assignments every day in all classes, which improved proficiency in writing and reading.

Stanfield also garnered headlines when featured in a two-part series on rural schools and higher education in the Oregonian. One article highlighted the giant leap in the number of seniors planning to attend college in the three years that GEAR UP has been active; in 2011, 83% of seniors were continuing on to some form of postsecondary education, compared to just 5% from 2003-2008. One such success story is Jeremy Alford, a first-generation college student who will be attending Oregon State University in the fall, thanks to the high expectations set by his teachers. “Every day I get asked, ‘Did you fill out an application?’” he says.

Clearly, the tireless effort of staff in constantly pursuing professional development opportunities to raise student achievement has vividly changed the aspirations of students and the community.

Select activities and services in 2010-2011:
Stanfield Secondary School
- Professional Learning Communities
- Literacy across curriculum
- Junior College Ready class
- ASPIRE
- College club
- AP courses in Government, Biology

Professional Learning Communities

Stanfield Secondary School
76% Free/Reduced Lunch
48% Minority Students
9% LEP Students
Sweet Home

Sweet Home Junior High School
Sweet Home High School

All freshman at Sweet Home High School were exposed to the GEAR UP message of college readiness through a Freshman Fitness and Fortitude curriculum, implemented by several staff rotating through core classes approximately five times a term. Coordinated and co-taught by Sweet Home GEAR UP Coordinator Kristin Adams, she noted, “It’s been a great opportunity to expose ALL students to GEAR UP dreams and because of it, more and more students are involving themselves in the high school GEAR UP club.”

The curriculum first covered the transition to high school and the importance of setting goals, stress management, and class attendance. During the winter, students created a personal profile that helped them identify passions, strengths, and skills. Finally, the students applied their newfound self-awareness to potential career choices through the Oregon Career Information System.

A Visible College Culture

The high school also continued a popular tradition with “Senior Signing Days” which honors students who have confirmed post-high school plans with a special luncheon and the chance to autograph their pictures in front of staff and fellow students. Students verify their plans by turning in copies of an official admissions letter, a receipt for the paid application fee to a community college or tech school, military card or a letter from an employer verifying on-the-job training. Pictures are taken of the students and put on colored cardstock that represents their new school colors. After signing, pictures are hung in the windows of the main hall for all students to look at. “It’s made a significant impact at changing our college-going culture,” says Adams.
Oregon GEAR UP thrives in large part to our partnerships with universities, programs, and organizations that provide professional development, campus experiences, community asset building, and funding for low-income students and school staff across the state.

**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 Vancouver, WA and the national NCCEP/GEAR UP Conference in San Francisco, CA 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. Specialized professional development on school leadership and educational equity were also stressed this year.

**Leading for Educational Equity**

*Partner: Oregon Small Schools Network*

Oregon GEAR UP and the Oregon Small Schools Network joined forces in order to offer three Leading for Educational Equity Institutes (LFEE) during the 2010-11 school year. 22 current and former GEAR UP school staff participated, as well as 45 additional Oregon school leaders.

The three-day institute provided staff members with the time, space, resources, and guidance to help address equity issues in Oregon schools. Working in school teams, participants explored what equity meant to them, learned about historical oppression of non-dominant culture groups in Oregon, examined relational trust in their schools, and developed the skills necessary to becoming allies across differences.
SUCCESS Retreat  
*Partner: Education Northwest*

One of the most compelling professional development events held annually is the three-day retreat for Supporting Unique Community Coalitions Engaged in Student Success (SUCCESS), put on in partnership with Education Northwest. Schools are encouraged to bring a diverse team of constituents including coordinators, teachers, parents, administrators and even students to assist in strategizing the trajectory of GEAR UP in their school and community. Keynote speakers included John O’Neill, former principal of Forest Grove High School and Dr. David T. Conley from the University of Oregon’s Center for Educational Policy Research and the Educational Policy Improvement Center (EPIC). Sessions covered parent engagement, community marketing strategies, and education research, among others, with ample time for teams to share successes and challenges, as well as generate an outline for programs and services in the year ahead. Each cluster also contributed to a SUCCESS Retreat blog that served dual purposes: an introduction to new technology for some and a way to share ideas and resources for all.

*For workshop agendas and presentation materials, visit 2011successretreat.blogspot.com.*

**Principals’ Leadership Program**  
*Partner: Education Partnerships, Inc. (EPI)*

Now finishing its second year, the GEAR UP Principals’ Leadership Program recognizes the critical, but often challenging role facing school administrators. In association with consultants at EPI, school principals receive a personal education mentor, access to current research on school trends, seminars and workshops, and networking opportunities to connect with other Oregon school leaders. The goal of this program is to engage GEAR UP school leaders in systematic, schoolwide, local site planning to create sustainable school cultures that support rigorous academic programs and high achievement for all students.
Campus Partnerships

Oregon GEAR UP fosters bonds 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 and services available on campus. In 2010-2011, over 3,200 students benefitted from a college campus experience. Campus representatives also visited schools in order to bring information about college to a greater number of students.

OSU Health Sciences Camp

*Partner: Oregon State University’s Office of Precollege Programs*

The Office of Precollege Programs at Oregon State University supported college campus visits from numerous clusters, in addition to offering a weeklong residential summer program for 9th grade GEAR UP students. Students and chaperones from every cluster participated in a Health Sciences Camp that featured hands-on activities related to the medical profession and the corresponding majors or degrees. Health fields covered included veterinary medicine, nutrition research, pharmacy, obstetrics, and others.

In addition to exploring potential career options, GEAR UP students were grouped with college mentors in order to build near-peer relationships and hear a first-hand account of the benefits and challenges of attending college. The camp emphasized teambuilding and problem solving at the OSU Challenge Course, as well as the importance of giving back and helping others with an afternoon of community service at the Linn Benton Food Share. Megan Schweighardt, a student at North Marion High School, was especially grateful for the experience. “I loved this camp. I built new friendships, learned new information, and now I have a better idea in what I want in the future, as a nurse. The mentors, teachers, and leaders are a big inspiration.”
Student Leadership Event
Partner: Gear Up for Excellence

Over 100 middle school students and chaperones from five 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 applied to real-life situations.

“My favorite part is meeting new people and getting to learn about college. Sleeping in the dorms is pretty fun, too,” said Matthew Bayer, an 8th grader at Taft 7-12 High School. “I’ve learned not to have fimage [fear of image] and how to work as a team,” added Olivia Dominguez from Irrigon Junior/Senior High School.

For more information about the activities and to see photos of the Student Leadership Event, visit gearupforexcellence.com/oregon811

I’m Going to College
Partner: Northwest Education Loan Association (NELA)

The NELA® Centers for Student Success℠ 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 756 seventh grade students from seven clusters participated in the program, visiting five public 4-year universities and one 2-year community college.
GEAR UP Programs and Services

Community Asset Building
Partner: Alan Baas, Community Resource Consultant

In order for the GEAR UP model to be sustainable in communities beyond the life of the grant, we have utilized an independent contractor to complete site visits that included drive-arounds with local staff and detailed discussions of how schools are integrating with current “community assets” (e.g., the local theater that offers free tickets as special incentives for students, or the car dealer that lends vans to help students visiting colleges or college/career fairs, or the dentist who offers her office for a job shadowing). These site summaries will provide anecdotal baseline data for evaluating future efforts as well as the basis for ongoing communication among all the GEAR UP sites regarding best practices for coordinating school and community goals and strategies.

At the same time, efforts have been launched to better coordinate GEAR UP with the goals and established programs of existing foundations, civic groups, and other community bodies. Negotiations are underway with local Chambers of Commerce and economic development groups to establish regional commitment to GEAR UP in building stronger local work forces.

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

GEAR UP has partnered with two community development organizations to offer students a matched college savings account, also known as Individual Development Accounts (IDAs). Schools will be assisting 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 5:1.

The Community and Shelter Assistance Corp. (CASA) and NeighborWorks Umpqua supports GEAR UP efforts to give students with limited financial resources the means to achieve post-secondary education by leveraging their savings and incentivizing positive financial behaviors.
GEAR UP Expansion
Partner: The Ford Family Foundation

Oregon GEAR UP continues to spread its influence on rural, low-income schools through a partnership with The Ford Family Foundation of Roseburg that will provide funds for school districts in Coos, Curry and Douglas counties. The Ford Family Foundation is committed to improving postsecondary education awareness, preparation and enrollment among rural students and is a natural partner to spread the GEAR UP program more broadly across Oregon.

Through a competitive process similar to the federal grant, ten school districts were selected in April to begin GEAR UP activities and services with a cohort of 7th graders in the fall of 2011. The new GEAR UP schools will use the funding from The Ford Family Foundation in addition to the best practices, professional development, and other program support from the Oregon University System to engage students and teachers in planning for postsecondary education.

John Amoroso, program officer for The Ford Family Foundation’s grant programs, said, “By partnering with GEAR UP in these 10 new sites, we hope to help raise the bar of success for students in rural Oregon, and the parents, teachers, administrators and communities who support them.”
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