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West Virginia **GEARUP**  
Evaluation

2009 School Personnel Survey  
Summary - Updated

September 30, 2009

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## School Personnel Survey

The GEAR UP evaluation team at Edvantia surveyed the personnel at GEAR UP schools to gather information about their perceptions of the implementation and impact of the GEAR UP program. The purpose of gathering this information was to provide formative input to GEAR UP program staff that will allow them to make any adjustments they deem necessary. This brief summary highlights the major findings of the School Personnel Survey and presents recommendations to facilitate discussion about programmatic adjustments.

### Methods

With extensive feedback from GEAR UP staff at the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC), the Edvantia evaluation team developed a 29-item questionnaire to capture the perceptions of school administrators, teachers, and counselors on the implementation and impact of the GEAR UP program in their schools. School personnel were asked about the quality of various GEAR UP services and resources; whether GEAR UP provided necessary, relevant, and useful professional development; and their perceptions of student academic development, and college and career awareness.

In late May 2009, the evaluation team administered the Web-based survey to West Virginia GEAR UP school personnel via site coordinators, who were instructed to deliver the survey's Web link and instruction page to school principals, 6th- to 12th-grade teachers, and counselors. A reminder letter was also sent to West Virginia GEAR UP school principals requesting their assistance in delivering the Web survey link to relevant school personnel. Some GEAR UP schools were closed in late May due to a large flood in their area the survey was administered. The survey was reopened in August 2009 to give school personnel who did not participate at the first administration a second chance to complete the survey. This report is based on all data from both administrations.

A total of 264 participants completed the School Personnel Survey. Table 1 lists the number of participants from each GEAR UP school. Of the respondents, 6.9% are principals, 86.2% are teachers, 4.2% are counselors, and 2.7% are other school staff members such as substitute teachers and librarians. Approximately 8% of participants are also West Virginia GEAR UP site coordinators, and 20.4% of participants have been involved in a previous GEAR UP project.

**Table 1. Number of Participants by School**

County and School	N	County and School	N
<b>Boone County</b>		<b>Roane County</b>	
Madison Middle School.....	6	Geary Elementary/Middle School.....	2
Sherman Junior High School.....	10	Walton Elementary/Middle School.....	4
Sherman High School.....	32	Spencer Middle School.....	11
		Roane County High School.....	2
<b>Clay County</b>		<b>Summers County</b>	
Clay Middle School.....	27	Summers Middle School.....	19
Clay High School.....	3	Summers High School.....	1

**Table 1. (continued) Number of Participants by School**

County and School	N	County and School	N
<b>Lincoln County</b>		<b>Webster County</b>	
Duval PK-8 School .....	3	Diana Elementary School.....	1
Hamlin PK-8 School.....	3	Webster Springs Elementary School .....	1
Guyan Valley Middle School .....	14	Hacker Valley Elementary School .....	0
Harts Intermediate School.....	3	Glade Middle School .....	4
Lincoln County High School .....	6	Webster County High School.....	5
<b>McDowell County</b>		<b>Wirt County</b>	
Southside K-8 School.....	2	Wirt County Middle School.....	7
Sandy River Middle School.....	13	Wirt High School.....	4
Big Creek High School.....	1		
laeger High School.....	4		
Mt. View High School .....	4		
<b>Mingo County</b>		<b>Wyoming County</b>	
Lenore K-8 School.....	2	Baileysville Elementary/Middle .....	0
Kermit Area School.....	0	Glen Fork Elementary/Middle School.....	1
Matewan Middle School .....	0	Rock Branch Elementary/Middle .....	5
Williamson Middle School.....	12	Mullens Middle School .....	1
Birch High School .....	8	Oceana Middle School.....	7
Gilbert High School.....	0	Pineville Middle School .....	0
Matewan High School.....	0	Herndon Consolidated School.....	1
Tug Valley High School.....	1	Huff Consolidated.....	9
Williamson High School .....	1	Westside High School .....	11
		Wyoming County East High School.....	23

## Major Findings

The major findings of the School Personnel Survey are presented in this section. Findings are organized by survey section.

### Reach of Services

The survey asked participants to report how often they had been involved in GEAR UP activities (Table 2). Most frequently, the school personnel were involved in tutoring, homework assistance, or academic enrichment; nearly half of the respondents participated in such activities weekly or more often. More than half (55%) of respondents used a computer-assisted lab at least monthly, and more than one third of respondents also participated in mentoring (35%) and counseling/advising/academic planning (38%) at least monthly. Nearly three fourths (74%) of respondents reported that, during the 2008-2009 school year, they had been involved in professional development at least quarterly. Respondents reported participating less frequently in career counseling, college visits/college student shadowing, job site visits/job shadowing, and summer programs, which is understandable given these activities targeted specific grades and only higher-grade teachers would have access to them.

**Table 2. Percentage of Respondents Reporting Participating in Activities**

Activity Type	Never	Only 1-2 times	Quarterly	Monthly	Weekly or more often
Tutoring/Homework Assistance/Academic Enrichment	23%	16%	6%	6%	49%
Computer-assisted Lab	21%	16%	8%	17%	38%
Mentoring	46%	14%	5%	11%	24%
Counseling/Advising/Academic Planning/Career Counseling	34%	21%	8%	14%	24%
College Visit/ College Student Shadowing	53%	37%	7%	1%	1%
Job Site Visits/ Job Shadowing	77%	18%	2%	2%	2%
Summer Programs	79%	17%	0%	2%	2%
Educational Field Trips	33%	54%	10%	2%	1%
College Planning/Financial Aid Workshops	67%	25%	4%	3%	0%
Family Activities/Events	31%	37%	20%	8%	3%
Cultural Activities	34%	40%	14%	8%	3%
Teacher Professional Development	6%	19%	31%	35%	8%

When asked how information about GEAR UP was shared with students, parents, or school personnel (Table 3), most respondents reported that GEAR UP information was shared through literature such as brochures, pamphlets, flyers, letters, and so on for teachers (64%), for students (85%), and for parents (75%). Respondents were less likely to see GEAR UP information being shared with students, parents, or school personnel via advertisements (13%) or automated calling services (17%).

**Table 3. Percentages of Respondents Reporting Whether Each Form of Communication Was Used to Share Information About GEAR UP With Students, Parents, or School Personnel**

Communication Resource Shared	%	<i>n</i>
Literature (brochures, pamphlets, flyers, letters, and so on) for students	85%	196
Literature (brochures, pamphlets, flyers, letters, and so on) for parents	75%	175
Literature (brochures, pamphlets, flyers, letters, E-Newsletters, and so on) for teachers	64%	148
Community events	51%	118
Newsletters	39%	90
Web site announcements	28%	64
Automated calling service	17%	40
Advertisements (TV, radio, newspaper)	13%	30
Other	7%	17

### Professional Development

Participants were asked to indicate whether they received professional development (PD) in 12 different areas and further to indicate the resources sponsoring that PD (Table 4). Although all the respondents had received some kind of PD through West Virginia GEAR UP resources,

more of them received PD through other grant, school, district, or personal resources (e.g., 8% GEAR UP vs. 47% non-GEAR UP in “Your academic content areas”; 4% vs. 45% in “Assessment strategies”). Many respondents did not know what resources were used to offer the PD they received.

**Table 4. Percentage of Respondents Receiving Professional Development from Different Resources**

Professional Development Topic	Yes, through GEAR UP resources	Yes, through other grant, school, district, or personal resources	Yes, but I do not know what resources were used to provide the PD	No, I have not received that kind of PD this year
Your academic content area(s)	8%	47%	25%	19%
Classroom management	3%	34%	20%	37%
Hands-on instructional strategies	7%	45%	28%	17%
Project-based learning (PBL)	5%	44%	28%	19%
Assessment strategies	4%	45%	31%	16%
21st Century learning skills	9%	56%	31%	5%
Instructional technology (equipment)	18%	52%	27%	8%
Technology integration	15%	51%	29%	9%
Curriculum alignment	3%	43%	24%	26%
Tutoring or mentoring (for students)	10%	24%	13%	49%
Study skills (for students)	5%	25%	13%	50%
Test preparation	5%	41%	26%	26%
Other	2%	9%	2%	13%

Participants were asked to report the extent to which West Virginia GEAR UP PD had prepared them to engage in instructional and student support activities (Table 5). About one in five to one in four believed that the West Virginia GEAR UP PD had prepared them well to use technology (27%), integrate 21st Century learning skills (23%), and integrate instructional technology in classroom instruction (21%). About the same percentages reported that the West Virginia GEAR UP PD did *not* prepare them in hands-on instruction (20%), tutoring (24%), or mentoring (23%).

**Table 5. Percentages of Respondents Rating the Extent to Which West Virginia GEAR UP Professional Development (by Category) Had Prepared Them**

Target of Preparation	Not At All	A Little	Somewhat	A Great Deal	N/A did not participate
Hands-on instruction	20%	13%	20%	13%	35%
Tutoring	24%	11%	17%	11%	38%
Mentoring students	23%	11%	17%	12%	36%
Using technology	17%	6%	19%	27%	31%
Integrating 21st Century learning skills	17%	8%	20%	23%	32%
Integrating instructional technology in classroom instruction	17%	7%	23%	21%	31%

The survey then asked the participants to indicate what additional PD activities would be most beneficial to them. Sixty-seven participants answered the question; the majority of them thought that technology integration in the classroom would be the most beneficial PD. The other PD activities respondents perceived to be most beneficial were tutoring/mentoring ( $n = 6$ ); “other,” including PBL, organizational skills, GEAR UP training and information ( $n = 6$ ); 21st Century learning skills ( $n = 4$ ); instruction, including differentiated instruction, different types of instruction ( $n = 4$ ); classroom management ( $n = 2$ ); and PD in specific content areas ( $n = 3$ ).

### Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness of Services

Participants were asked to rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of services they or their students received through the West Virginia GEAR UP grant (Table 6). The majority of the respondents believed that the quality of services they received was either good or very good (60%). Many of them also thought the services their students received were good to very good quality (71%), relevant (72%), and useful (70%). It is noteworthy that no respondent rated the services as “very poor,” and very few people rated the services as “poor” in any of the areas of interest.

**Table 6. Percentage of Respondents Reporting the Quality, Relevance, and Usefulness of GEAR UP Services**

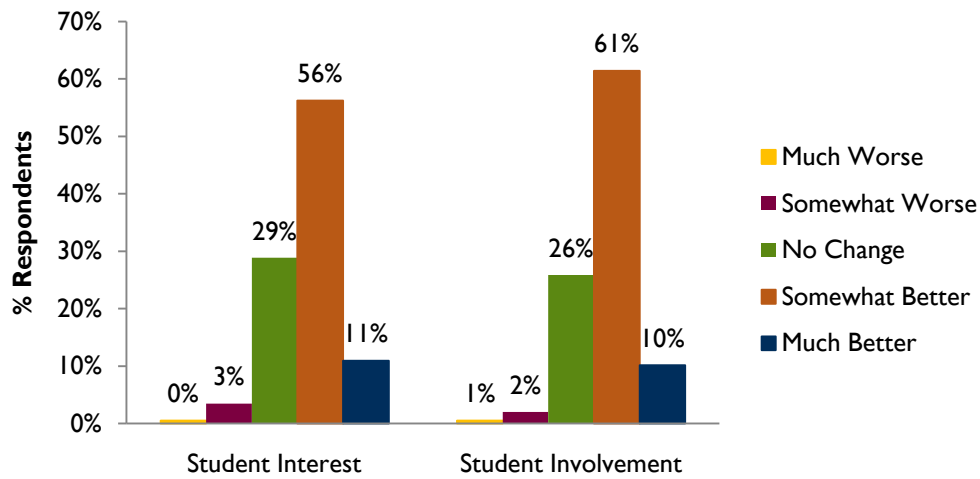
Items	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	N/A, no services received
Quality of services you have received	0%	2%	12%	27%	33%	26%
Quality of services your students have received	0%	1%	9%	27%	44%	19%
Relevance of services your students have received	0%	1%	8%	28%	44%	19%
Usefulness of services your students have received	0%	1%	9%	28%	42%	19%

The majority of the respondents (79.6%) were aware that resources had been made available at their schools. More than half of the respondents (56.7%) reported that they had used these resources this school year. Resources they had used included SMART boards, computers and printers, college trips/visits, and other technology equipment, among others.

### Impact of GEAR UP Project

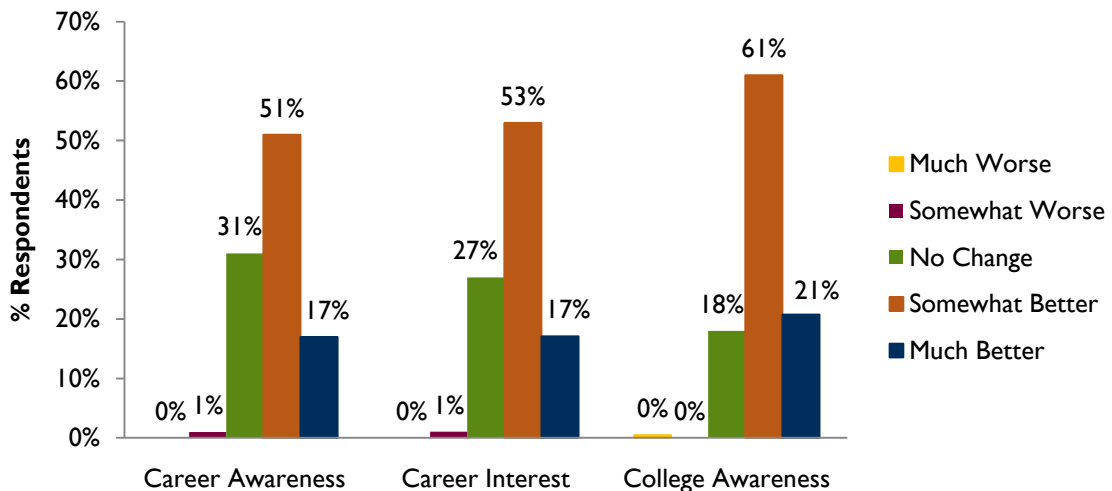
Participants were asked to rate the extent to which student interest and involvement in school had been different this year than in the previous year (Figure 1). The majority of the respondents reported that student interest was somewhat better (56%) or much better (11%) than the previous year. They also believed that student involvement had improved, with 61% indicating it was somewhat better and 10% indicating it was much better than in the previous year. As evidence for their ratings, respondents included such statements as “[Students] are participating in the activities that are offered and asking about more”; “Students are showing

more interest in higher learning and planning for the future”; and “Students are talking about trips, college, and other things that GEAR UP has introduced.”



**Figure 1. Number of respondents reporting changes in student interest and involvement.**

More than two thirds of respondents believed that student career awareness and interest (68% and 70%, respectively) had been better than during the previous year. Students’ college awareness was also improved, with 61% of respondents reporting that students’ college awareness was *somewhat* better, and 21% reporting that college awareness was *much* better than previous year (Figure 2). Respondents reported that “students have begun to talk about different careers and interests they have, such as teaching or nursing” and “because of college visits some students are considering careers they would not have otherwise.”

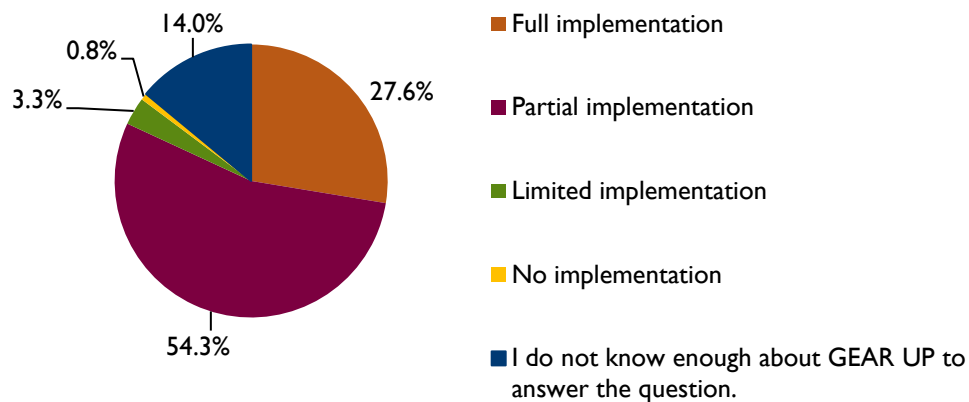


**Figure 2. Number of respondents reporting changes in students’ college and career awareness and interest.**

When asked about the impact of the West Virginia GEAR UP project, 47.3% of respondents *agreed* that GEAR UP was having a positive impact in their school, county, and/or community. More than one fourth (28.5%) of respondents *strongly agreed* that GEAR UP had a positive impact. Less than 5% of respondents *disagreed* or *strongly disagreed* that GEAR UP had a positive impact in their community.

### Implementation of West Virginia GEAR UP

Slightly more than half of respondents (54.3%) thought that the West Virginia GEAR UP project had been *partially implemented* in their schools. More than one fourth (27.6%) reported that the GEAR UP project was *fully implemented* in their schools. Only 4.1% of respondents believed that the GEAR UP project was *not implemented* or had only *limited implementation* in their school (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Percentages of respondents reporting each level of implementation of the West Virginia GEAR UP project.**

### Challenges and Solutions

When asked whether they noticed any challenges with regard to the West Virginia GEAR UP grant at their schools, 27% of respondents answered “yes.” Respondents were then asked to give a brief description of the problems they had noticed. Sixty-four respondents answered this question and reported the following challenges:

- GEAR UP money could be used only on students and teachers in certain grades ( $n = 21$ )
- transportation and scheduling ( $n = 6$ )
- getting parents involved ( $n = 5$ )
- motivating students to participate ( $n = 4$ )
- vague information about GEAR UP shared with teachers ( $n = 4$ )

Out of the respondents who reported challenges, 48.9% reported that the problems had not yet been resolved. About 1 in 8 (13.3%) respondents reported that problems had been resolved completely; 14.4% thought the problems had been mostly resolved, and 23.3% believed a few of the problems had been resolved. Respondents indicated that some problems were resolved after more money and equipment had been requested, and West Virginia GEAR UP site coordinators helped deal with the problems. Although many of the problems were not completely resolved, respondents believed that the West Virginia GEAR UP project was implemented as planned, albeit slowly.

When asked about whether the current West Virginia GEAR UP activities were sustainable beyond the end of the grant, nearly half (43.5%) of respondents answered “yes.” Slightly more than half (51%) of the respondents were not sure, and only 5.4% of respondents thought that the current activities were not sustainable.

Participants were given an opportunity to elaborate on their ideas of changes they would suggest for the West Virginia GEAR UP project. Eighty eight participants responded to this item, and the largest portion ( $n = 31$ ) reported that West Virginia GEAR UP project should become a schoolwide project that covers all grades. For example, one respondent suggested, “It should be geared to all students, not just juniors and seniors.” Another respondent commented, “Make it available to all teachers and all students.” Some respondents ( $n = 10$ ) wanted to see more trips to more colleges. Some respondents made comments concerning the excessive amount of paperwork (i.e., requests to reduce the paperwork burden).

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Findings from the School Personnel Survey indicated that the West Virginia GEAR UP program experienced a successful start in the first year of implementation. Highlights of the successful implementation include the following:

- West Virginia GEAR UP resources were distributed in schools and were being used by school personnel.
- School personnel were generally satisfied with the professional development provided by the West Virginia GEAR UP program.
- School personnel believed that the services provided for them and their students were useful, relevant, and of high quality.
- Student involvement and interest seemed to be higher than in the previous year.
- Students were perceived as being more aware of college and career opportunities than in the previous year.
- School personnel perceived the West Virginia GEAR UP program to be having a positive impact in their school, county, and/or community.

- The majority of the participants believed that West Virginia GEAR UP had been implemented fully or partially in their school and was running smoothly.

The survey results also revealed some challenges to implementation within the schools. The West Virginia GEAR UP program has not received sufficient publicity in the schools; this is reported directly by respondents and possibly implied by the low response rates. Some school personnel were not clear about the scope of the program. The PD provided by West Virginia GEAR UP seemed to receive mixed reviews from the respondents, with approximately 23% to 35% of respondents who had received West Virginia GEAR UP PD indicating that the PD had prepared them “not at all” or “a little” in each topic. School personnel would like West Virginia GEAR UP to provide more PD in technology, including integration and use of equipment, as well as on mentoring and tutoring. Targeting only Grades 7, 11, and 12 causes confusion among school personnel about which resources they could use. Many school personnel believed that the GEAR UP program should cover all grades in their schools. Parent involvement, which was perceived to be necessary for successful implementation of GEAR UP, was also perceived to be a problem by some school personnel.

The evaluation team makes the following recommendations (if the budget permits) to West Virginia GEAR UP staff based on the results of the School Personnel Survey:

- Continue to invest in intensive efforts to help school staff understand the purpose of the project as well as the rationale for the grades served and activities offered.
- Provide more college trips/visits to students and include more colleges in the trips; at least work with district and school staff to brainstorm solutions to the transportation cost challenges.
- Provide more professional development in technology integration and use of technology equipment, hands-on instruction, mentoring, and tutoring.
- Intensify efforts to improve parent involvement by publicizing West Virginia GEAR UP via Web sites, TV advertisements, and through other local outlets (e.g., churches, community centers, community bulletin boards at grocery stores and other settings).