



Year 2 Annual Evaluation Report

October 2016

Report Prepared By:

ICF

9300 Lee Highway

Fairfax, VA 22031

www.icf.com

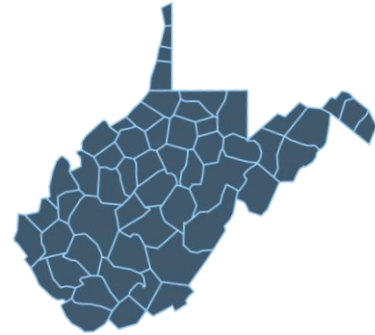
Table of Contents

I. Introduction.....	3
1. West Virginia GEAR UP	3
2. GEAR UP Evaluation Design	3
3. Purpose of this Report.....	3
II. Data Sources.....	4
1. Year 2 Participant Surveys	4
1.1 The Year 2 WV GEAR UP Student Survey	4
1.2 The Year 2 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Survey	4
1.3 The Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey	4
2. Year 2 Focus Group Interview Protocols.....	5
2.1 The Year 2 Site and County Coordinator Focus Group Protocols	5
III. Methods.....	5
1. Evaluation Participants and Administration Methods.....	5
1.1 Students	5
1.2 Parents/Guardians	6
1.3 School Personnel	6
1.4 Site and County Coordinators.....	7
2. Analytic Approach.....	7
2.1 Longitudinal Analyses	7
2.2 Cross-Sectional Analyses	8
2.3 Thematic Analysis	8
IV. Results.....	9
1. Year 1 to Year 2 Survey Findings	9
1.1 Characteristics of Respondents.....	9
1.2 Year 1 to Year 2 Outcomes for Cohort Students and Parents/Guardians	14
1.3 Year 1 to Year 2 Outcomes for School Personnel	24
2. Year 2 Focus Group Results	41
2.1 Communication, Roles, and Resources	41
2.2 Tutoring, Mentoring, and Academic Preparation	46
2.3 College Awareness Services	49
2.4 School Support and Buy-In	51
2.5 GEAR UP Partners	52
2.6 Impact and Sustainability	55
2.7 Perceptions of GEAR UP Activities	57
V. Discussion.....	59
VI. Recommendations.....	65
VII. References	67
VIII. Appendix - Consent Forms/Instruments.....	68

I. Introduction

1. West Virginia GEAR UP

West Virginia GEAR UP is a federally funded program that helps students in 50 high-poverty middle and high schools situated in ten counties across the state prepare to succeed in education and training beyond high school. “GEAR UP” stands for “Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs,” and the program’s goal is to help more students pursue their dreams of earning a college diploma or skillset certificate.



The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) manages West Virginia (WV) GEAR UP in collaboration with the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, the West Virginia Department of Education, the West Virginia Department of Education and the Arts, and many other community partners. The GEAR UP program operates on seven-year cycles. The Commission is administering its second consecutive GEAR UP grant, which began in 2014 and will conclude in 2021. This report summarizes information gathered in Years 1 and 2 of the program.

2. GEAR UP Evaluation Design

ICF is conducting an external program evaluation of WV GEAR UP. The evaluation framework includes a program **implementation study** to assist the Commission in determining the fidelity with which program activities were delivered, which outputs from the WV GEAR UP logic model were accomplished, and to inform the Commission of any facilitators or barriers to implementation. ICF is also conducting a summative **outcomes study** to ascertain the extent to which data-informed benchmarks, identified in concert with the Commission, are achieved. ICF plans an **impact study** with a quasi-experimental design to address selected program outcomes and impacts. Finally, the evaluation framework includes a **sustainability study** to inform the Commission about how the GEAR UP program could continue to have an impact after the grant ends. This report primarily addresses summative outcomes for Years 1 and 2 of the program.

3. Purpose of this Report

The objectives of the Year 2 Annual Evaluation Report are twofold. First, the report describes the longitudinal changes that have occurred in annual survey outcomes for cohort students, their parents/guardians, and school personnel over the course of the project to date. Specifically, we examine survey outcomes for Year 1 (school year 2014-15) and Year 2 (school year 2015-16) of the WV GEAR UP program. Unlike the Year 2 WV GEAR UP Interim Evaluation Report, the analyses in this report include all survey completers, even those who do not have two consecutive survey records across time. Second, the report provides a summary

of key findings from a series of focus group interviews of WV GEAR UP site and county coordinators conducted by ICF staff in Year 2 of the project.

II. Data Sources

1. Year 2 Participant Surveys

In collaboration with the Commission, ICF developed three participant surveys for Year 2 of the program. Each survey was designed for a specific audience of program participants and included an associated informed consent document and administration protocol. Appendix A includes a reproduction of each Year 2 participant survey.

1.1 The Year 2 WV GEAR UP Student Survey

The Year 2 WV GEAR UP Student Survey included 28 items organized across three sections. Ten were demographic items designed to gather background information about respondents and their families; seven measured student perceived academic ability and educational goals; and eleven measured student knowledge about college entrance requirements, the perceived cost of attending college, and financial aid options. While the Year 2 student survey includes many of the same items as the Year 1 survey, there were some notable additions. Specifically, two matrix items were added to measure college-going self-efficacy (CG-SE), and three items were added to measure knowledge of specific scholarship/grant opportunities (i.e., PROMISE Scholarship, WV Higher Education Grant Program [WV HEGP], and Pell Grant). The latter items were summarized in a descriptive manner in the WV GEAR UP Year 2 Interim Evaluation Report.

1.2 The Year 2 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Survey

The Year 2 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Survey included 26 items organized across three sections. Eleven were demographic items designed to gather background information about respondents and their children, four measured parent/guardian perceptions of their child's educational goals and their own expectations for their child, and eleven items measured parent/guardian knowledge of college entrance requirements, the perceived cost of attending college, and financial aid options. Like the student survey, the parent/guardian version was largely based on the Year 1 instrument, but three items were added to measure knowledge of specific scholarship/grant opportunities. Baseline data from these new survey items were also described in the WV GEAR UP Year 2 Interim Evaluation Report.

1.3 The Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

The Year 2 School Personnel Survey included 14 items. Four were demographic questions designed to gather information about respondents' primary roles, school location, and grade level(s) served. Nineteen items measured faculty member perceptions of college-going culture (CGC) in their schools and classrooms: 10 examined the rigor and expectations dimension of CGC, and 9 measured the visual cues/material resources dimension of CGC. These items were refined based upon Year 1 survey results.

Additional items asked respondents to rate their level of involvement in college-related activities in their school and their level of comfort with their knowledge to assist students with various college-related topics. Respondents were also asked to indicate their level of agreement with several statements about the overall experience provided through GEAR UP, how often they participated in GEAR UP activities, and to rate how effective GEAR UP activities were in helping students to succeed in school and prepare for college.

Several new items were included on the Year 2 survey. First, a series of items was developed to measure school faculty members' perceptions of the college-going efficacy of the students in their schools. Second, for middle schools that would not be participating in GEAR UP after the 2015-16 school year, the survey asked about the likelihood that various GEAR UP activities would be sustained. Baseline data from these new items are described in this report.

2. Year 2 Focus Group Interview Protocols

Two interview protocol guides were developed for the Year 2 evaluation of WV GEAR UP. Each included a facilitator script and a series of informed consent forms. A reproduction of the two interview guides is available in Appendix A.

2.1 The Year 2 Site and County Coordinator Focus Group Protocols

The Year 2 site and county coordinator focus group protocols were based largely on the protocols developed in Year 1 of the program. Each protocol guide included eleven prompts with a series of sub-questions and probes. For the Year 2 report, items from the two protocols were organized under seven major themes: (1) communication, roles, and resources; (2) tutoring, mentoring, and academic preparation; (3) college awareness services; (4) school support and buy-in; (5) GEAR UP partners; (6) impact and sustainability; and (7) perceptions of GEAR UP activities. Findings are also presented under these themes later in this report.

III. Methods

The following section describes the WV GEAR UP evaluation participants, instrument administration methods, and analytic approaches used in the development of this report.

1. Evaluation Participants and Administration Methods

1.1 Students

Student surveys were administered online to all grade 7 and grade 8 students who were currently enrolled in WV GEAR UP schools during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, respectively. This sample represents the “cohort” group of students who are receiving continuous intervention support from WV GEAR UP for the entire duration of the project (i.e.,

the class of 2020). Grade 8 and grade 12 classes in WV GEAR UP schools were also surveyed in the 2014-15 school year, but not again in 2015-16.¹

Depending on the needs of individual schools, different settings were utilized for student survey administration. Some students completed surveys on their home computers and others on school computers or mobile devices. Survey links and scannable Quick Response (QR) codes were made available for the student survey and promotional materials/reminders were sent home to parents/guardians and publicized on the WV GEAR UP website. Paper/pencil versions of the student surveys were offered in both years as an accommodation for students who could not access content using a computer and for any students whose parent/guardian explicitly requested that the student not be allowed to access a computer. Spanish language versions of each survey and consent form were also made available upon request. Ultimately, 2,508 unique grade 7 students and 2,504 grade 8 students completed the Year 1 and Year 2 surveys, in 2014-15 and 2015-16, respectively.² A total of 2,075 cohort group students had both a Year 1 and Year 2 survey record—approximately 83% of cohort students who completed the survey in Year 1.

1.2 Parents/Guardians

Parent/guardian surveys were administered primarily by way of paper and pencil to a single parent/guardian for each currently enrolled grade 7 and grade 8 student in participating schools during the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years, respectively. This sample represents the parents/guardians of the cohort group of students described above. Notably, a comparison group of the parents/guardians of then-current grade 8 students were also surveyed in 2014-15, but not again in 2015-16.

In both years, the ICF evaluation team provided paper copies of the parent/guardian surveys to each site coordinator, who sent the surveys home. An online option was also available to parents/guardians but not widely used. The total number of valid parent/guardian surveys returned for cohort group students was 1,378 in 2014-15 and 1,323 in 2015-16. A total of 681 cohort group parents/guardians had both a Year 1 and Year 2 survey record—approximately 49% of cohort parents/guardians who completed the survey in Year 1.

1.3 School Personnel

The WV GEAR UP school personnel survey was administered from May to June in Year 1 and again in Year 2. Both surveys were administered online to all grade 6-12 teachers, counselors, site coordinators, and school administrators employed in WV GEAR UP schools. The evaluation team utilized the Standardized Collection and Reporting of Information Benefitting Education

¹ The Year 1 WV GEAR UP Interim Evaluation Report describes survey results for 2014-15 grade 12 students. The Year 2 WV GEAR UP Interim Evaluation Report compared outcomes for grade 8 cohort students and their parents/guardians as measured in 2015-16 with outcomes for grade 8 comparison group students and their parents/guardians as measured in 2014-15.

² These totals exclude students who selected “I do not agree to participate in this survey” when presented with the student assent page.

(SCRIBE) system to administer the surveys. Each year, site coordinators were provided with a link to the survey during a regularly scheduled site coordinator meeting and instructed to distribute the link to school personnel who served students in grades 6-12. The link was also embedded on the WV GEAR UP website.

Ultimately, 800 school personnel members completed the Year 1 survey and 805 completed the Year 2 survey. Unique respondent IDs were only collected in Year 1. As a result, it is not possible to assess the number of school personnel who completed both surveys.

1.4 Site and County Coordinators

All 10 WV GEAR UP county coordinators were invited to participate in focus group interviews during Year 2. Because 45 WV GEAR UP schools participated in the program in Year 2, the research team developed a purposeful sampling plan for the focus groups with site coordinators. The plan identified three separate focus groups, each consisting of eight site coordinator participants. The 26 schools selected represented 58% of all Year 2 WV GEAR UP schools.

Four separate focus group interviews were conducted during a regularly scheduled site coordinator meeting in May 2016. One focus group included only four county coordinators. (Three individual interviews with county coordinators were conducted by telephone after the meeting.) Two focus groups included those site coordinators who were currently serving middle or K-8 schools that would no longer participate in WV GEAR UP after Year 2. The final focus group included site coordinators from high schools and grade 6-12 schools. Each of the three site coordinator focus groups was assembled purposefully in an attempt to include representation from all three of the geographic regions of West Virginia served by GEAR UP. However, some individuals did not attend the meeting and could not be interviewed. Replacements were taken on an as-needed basis. Ultimately, seven county coordinators (70% of the total) and 25 site coordinators, representing 55% of Year 2 GEAR UP schools, participated in Year 2 interviews.

2. Analytic Approach

The evaluation team conducted three primary types of analyses for this report: longitudinal, cross-analytic, and thematic. The following section describes those analytic approaches and statistical test interpretation.

2.1 Longitudinal Analyses

To examine changes in survey outcomes for program participants from Year 1 to Year 2 of WV GEAR UP, we constructed a series of three datasets, one per respondent group. Each dataset included all available Year 1 and Year 2 survey records collected by the evaluation team. Notably, the student and parent/guardian data sets used for this report differ from those used in

the Year 2 WV GEAR UP Interim Report. Specifically, for this report, the evaluation team did not require that each survey respondent had both a Year 1 and Year 2 survey record.³

When examining differences across time for each group of program participants, we used either chi-square analyses or independent samples t-tests, depending on the level of measurement of the outcome variable under examination. We interpreted statistically significant differences using common effect size calculations. For chi-square analyses we used *Phi* or *Cramer's V*, as appropriate depending on the number of degrees of freedom in the categorical data. For independent samples t-tests we used Cohen's *d*. For *Phi* and *Cramer's V*, we used the following interpretations: (1) .20 or lower = small effect, (2) .21 - .40 = moderate effect, and (3) >.40 = strong effect. For Cohen's *d*, we used the following interpretations: (1) .40 or lower = small effect, (2) .41 - .79 = moderate effect, and (3) .80 or higher = strong effect. See Figure 1.

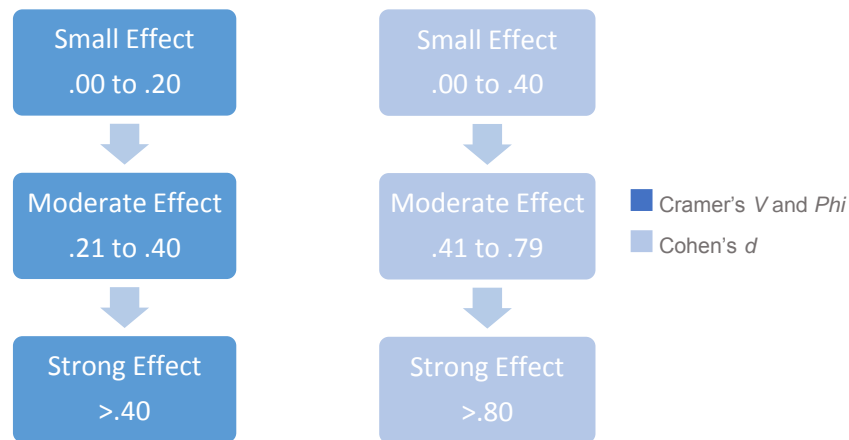


Figure 1. Effect Size Interpretations for Cohen's *d*, Cramer's *V*, and *Phi*

2.2 Cross-Sectional Analyses

As noted above, several items were newly developed for inclusion on Year 2 surveys. Since no longitudinal information is available for these items, we presented the data in a cross-sectional manner (e.g., for a single year only). Most of these items included categorical response options. As such, we primarily presented descriptive statistics, including measures of frequency (i.e., the number and percentage of respondents choosing each option) to describe these outcomes. For those items that employed Likert-type response scales, we also calculated mean scores and standard deviations.

2.3 Thematic Analysis

All qualitative interview data, focus group, and open-ended survey responses were coded using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves reviewing and coding participant responses according to broad themes, breaking those themes into subthemes, and analyzing and

³ One notable consequence of this decision was a dramatic increase in the number of parents/guardians included in the analytic sample when compared with the sample used for the Year 2 Interim Evaluation Report.

assessing the interrelationships among themes. Results are described in narrative form and supported by illustrative quotes.

IV. Results

The findings in this report are divided into two principal sections. First, we present a comparison of the Year 1 to Year 2 survey outcomes as measured for cohort students, their parents/guardians, and for school personnel. Second, we present findings from Year 2 focus group interviews conducted with site and county coordinators.

1. Year 1 to Year 2 Survey Findings

Our first set of analyses compares the survey outcomes obtained from cohort group students and their parents/guardians and from school personnel in Year 1 of the program (SY 2014-15) with the parallel survey outcomes from these participant groups in Year 2 of the project (SY 2015-16). Again, it should be noted that the surveys were offered to all potential respondents in both years, and because we did not require two consecutive survey observations for inclusion in the analytic sample for this report, some respondents are represented in both years, while others are represented only in a single year.

We begin this section with an overview of the samples in terms of their demographic composition. Next, we provide results for the student and parent/guardian surveys under three sub-headings: (1) educational goals, aspirations, and academic confidence; (2) college entrance requirements, cost, and financial aid; and (3) additional support requested.

Next, we present the results of the school personnel survey under six sub-headings: (1) participation in and satisfaction with GEAR UP, (2) perceptions of CGC in schools and classrooms, (3) knowledge of postsecondary education (PSE) topics and involvement in college-related activities, (4) college-going outcomes expectations for students, (5) sustainability of GEAR UP activities, and (6) additional comments.

1.1 Characteristics of Respondents

1.1.1 Students

A total of 2,518 students responded to the Year 2 Student Survey. While all of these students were included when calculating response rates, we allowed students the opportunity to opt out of answering questions if they so desired. After removing those students who did not assent to completing the Year 2 survey, we had survey data for 2,504 grade 8 cohort students. The corresponding number of grade 7 students who took the Year 1 survey in 2014-15 was 2,525, with a total of 2,508 students included in the analysis sample after removing those students who did not assent.

The following section describes the student samples, including both Year 1 (Grade 7) and Year 2 (Grade 8) cohort group students ($N = 5,012$). For each demographic characteristic on the survey, we conducted statistical significance tests (chi-square) to determine if the Year 1 and Year 2 samples differed.

Gender. The student analysis sample was approximately 51% male and 49% female in both Year 1 and Year 2. There were no statistically significant differences in the distribution of gender across years.

Race/Ethnicity and Primary Language. In Year 2, approximately 91% of students identified as white, 4% as two or more races, and 4% as black/African American. This is nearly identical to Year 1, in which 91% of students reported being white, 5% two or more races, and 3% black/African American. The remaining race categories for both years included less than 1% of the sample. Students were also almost universally non-Hispanic in Years 1 and 2 (97%), and spoke English as their primary language at home (99%). There were no statistically significant differences in the distribution of race/ethnicity or primary language across years.

Family Income. Although a plurality of cohort student respondents (56%) still indicated they did not know their family's total annual income in Year 2, this was a considerable decrease from Year 1 (64%). There was no major difference in the percentage of students who estimated their family income to be \$30,000 or less across years (~11%). However, some important differences did emerge when examining the other income categories: (1) approximately 12% of students reported income between \$30,001 and \$60,000 in Year 2, compared with only 9% in Year 1; (2) 14% reported income between \$60,001 and \$100,000 in Year 2, compared with only 10% in Year 1; and (3) 7% reported income greater than \$100,000 in Year 2, compared with 5% in Year 1. These differences resulted in a statistically significant difference in the distribution of family income between Years 1 and 2.⁴ However, as noted above, the largest difference occurred in the "don't know or I'd rather not say" category, which decreased by eight percentage points, suggesting that students are becoming more aware of their family's finances. The effect size was small ($V = .10$).

Because just over half of students still did not know or report family income, we also examined the distribution across Years 1 and 2 for the subset of students who provided a response other than "I don't know or I'd rather not say." Figure 2 shows the distribution of the remaining respondents by year. It should be noted that these subsamples from Year 1 and Year 2 include 36% and 44% of students, respectively. This is because the majority of students did not know or did not choose to report their family income. There was a statistically significant difference in the distribution of self-reported family income across years for this subgroup of respondents, but the effect was small ($V = .08$).

⁴ $\chi^2(4) = 45.29$ $p > .001$

The percentage of cohort students reporting their income as \$30,000 or less decreased from Year 1 to Year 2. All other categories increased slightly.

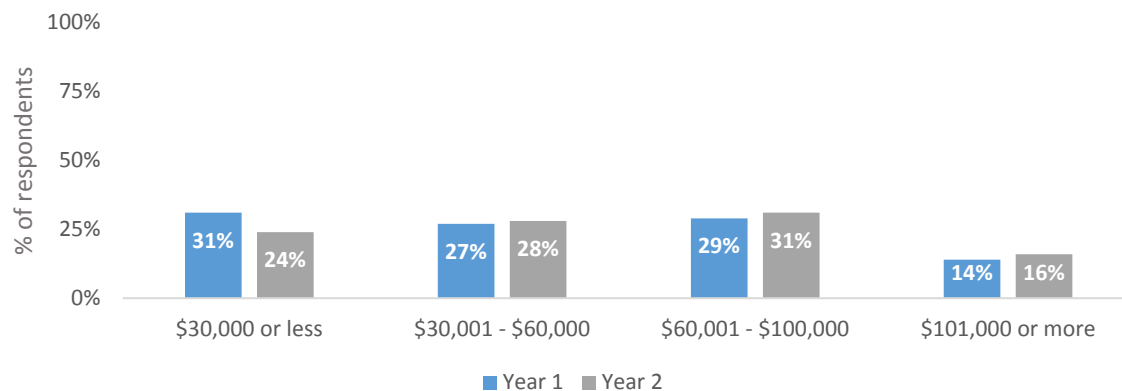


Figure 2. Family Income as Reported by Cohort Students in Year 1 and Year 2 (excluding those that did not respond or did not know; percentages rounded to nearest whole number)

Parental education levels. There were significant differences in parent education levels reported by students in Years 1 and 2, both for father/male guardians and mother/female guardians.⁵ Most interestingly, the percentage of cohort students who did not know their parents/guardians' education level decreased considerably from Year 1 to Year 2. It was also more common for students to report that they did not know their father/male guardian's education level than their mother/female guardian's (see Figure 3).

⁵ $\chi^2(2) = 56.03$; $p < .001$ ($V = .11$) and $\chi^2(2) = 37.26$, $p < .001$ ($V = .09$) for fathers/male guardians and mothers/female guardians, respectively.

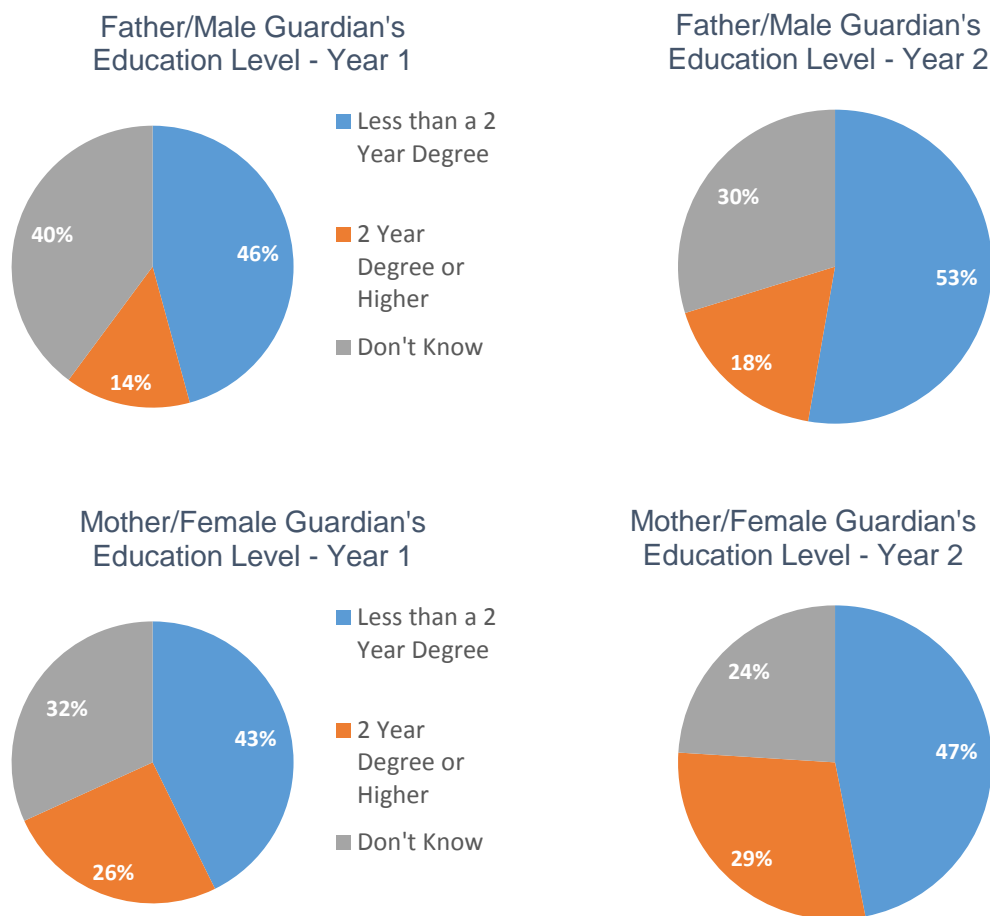


Figure 3. Parent Education Levels as Reported by Cohort Students from Year 1 to Year 2

1.1.2 Parents/Guardians

A total of 1,323 parents/guardians of cohort group students responded to the Year 2 survey, while 1,378 parents/guardians of cohort group students responded to the Year 1 survey. Below, we provide a brief description of the demographic characteristics of all parents/guardians ($N = 2,701$). As with the student data above, we conducted statistical significance tests (chi-square) to determine if the two samples differed on important characteristics (e.g., family income, parent education) prior to conducting analyses comparing outcomes.

Relationship. Nearly 92% of respondents in Year 2 reported their relationship to their child as parent or guardian, a decrease of only one percentage point from Year 1. Approximately 6% and 2% indicated they were grandparents or step/foster parents in Year 2, respectively. The remaining respondents noted “other” relationships or did not respond. There were no statistically significant differences in the distribution of this variable across the two years.

Race/ethnicity, gender, children in college, and primary language. Nearly all parents/guardians were white (97%), not Hispanic or Latino (99%), and spoke English as their primary language (99%) in Year 2. We asked parents/guardians for the first time in Year 2 to identify their gender, and approximately 71% reported they were female. We also asked

parents/guardians to report the number of their children in college, and 70% indicated they had no children in college in Year 2. The differences in the distributions of race and primary language were not statistically significant across years. However, the difference in ethnicity between the two years was significant, but the effect size was extremely small ($V=.05$). The differences across years for the number of children in college was also significant, with a large effect size, but this can be attributed to the omission of a “zero” category from the Year 1 survey.

Family income. Nearly a third of all respondents (30%) reported annual family income of \$30,000 or less in Year 2. Approximately 22% reported income between \$30,001 and \$60,000, approximately 19% had income between \$60,001 and \$100,000, and approximately 7% reported income greater than \$100,000. Nearly a quarter of Year 2 respondents (22%) declined to report their annual family income. Importantly, we found no statistically significant differences in the distribution of family income across the two years.

We also analyzed family income, after removing those parents/guardians who did not provide a response or indicated that they did not know or would rather not respond. This subsample included 78% of Year 1 and 75% of Year 2 parents/guardians. We did not find a statistically significant difference across the two groups in terms of the distribution of family income (see Figure 4).

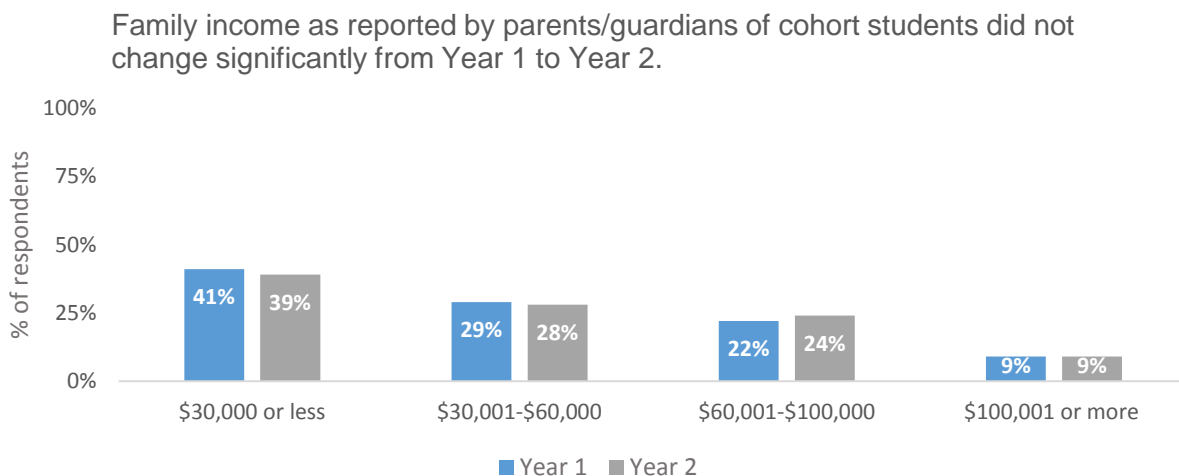


Figure 4. Family Income as Reported by Cohort Parents/Guardians by Year (excluding those that did not respond or did not know)

Parental education levels. In general, parents/guardians reported that their child’s father/male guardian had obtained a lower level of education than their child’s mother/female guardian (77% of fathers/male guardians reported having less than a two-year college degree in Year 2 compared with 68% of mothers/female guardians). The corresponding percentages for Year 1 were 80% and 68%, respectively. These differences were not statistically significant.

1.1.3 School Personnel

A total of 805 individuals representing 43 WV GEAR UP schools responded to the Year 2 School Personnel Survey. The majority reported that they were teachers (87.1%), with 7.3%

administrators and 5.6% counselors. The composition of the Year 1 and Year 2 samples did not differ significantly on this variable. Figure 5 illustrates that the majority of respondents reported serving students in the middle grades (i.e., grades 6-8). Slightly fewer served students in high school grades (i.e., grades 9-12). The differences were significant for all grades except Grade 8 and Grade 12. Effect sizes were small.

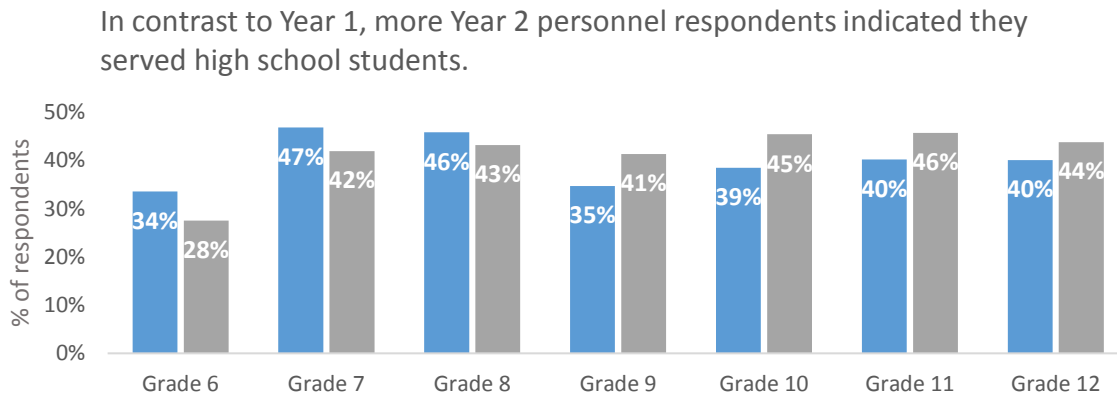


Figure 5. Grade Levels Served, as Reported by School Personnel by Year

We also developed a categorical variable indicating each respondent's school level (i.e., middle school, high school, or middle/high school). Approximately 38% of Year 2 respondents worked in middle schools, more than one-third worked in high schools (34%), and nearly one-third worked in middle/high schools (28%). Middle school personnel were less likely to respond to the survey in Year 2 than Year 1. This difference was statistically significant ($p < .001$), but the effect size was small ($V = .10$).

Just over half of all administrators who responded to the survey worked in middle schools (51%), and a plurality of counselors worked in high schools (53%). In Year 2, only 36% of teachers indicated they worked in middle schools, a decline from Year 1 (47%).

1.2 Year 1 to Year 2 Outcomes for Cohort Students and Parents/Guardians

The following section describes the trends in Year 1 to Year 2 survey results obtained for cohort students and their parents/guardians.

1.2.1 Educational Goals, Aspirations, and Academic Confidence

Plans to continue education after high school. All students were asked to indicate whether or not they planned to continue their education after high school. We found no significant difference in the percentage of students who responded affirmatively (94% of students in Year 1 and 93% of students in Year 2).

Academic confidence. Students rated their academic confidence across six content areas (i.e., mathematics, English, science, study skills, test-taking skills, and general ability to do well in

college courses in the future).⁶ We found that, with the exception of confidence in science and English skills, students exhibited lower self-reported confidence in Year 2 than in Year 1. These differences were statistically significant for study skills $t(4,401.38) = 2.78, p = .05$; test skills $t(4,371) = 4.25, p < .001$; and future college course skills $t(4,176) = 5.32, p < .001$, but the effect sizes were small ($d < .2$). See Figure 6 for an illustration of this relationship.

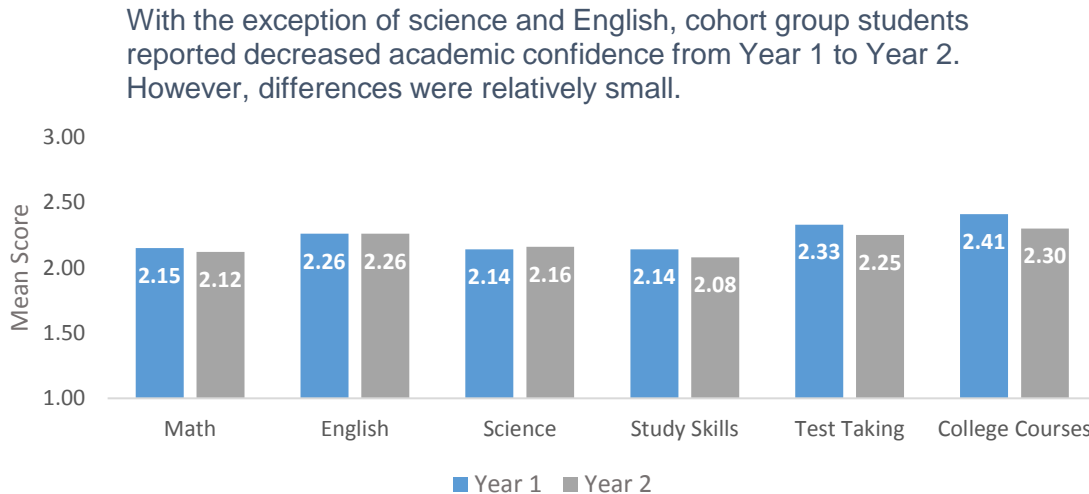


Figure 6. Students' Academic Confidence in Multiple Areas by Year

Educational aspirations and expectations. Students were next asked to indicate the level of education to which they both aspired and expected to achieve. For these items, the survey included five response options: (1) high school or less, (2) some college, (3) a two-year college degree, (4) a four-year college degree, and (5) more than a four-year college degree. To ease interpretation of the findings, we combined the first two options into a category we labeled, “*less than a two-year degree*.” The top three response options were collapsed into a category labeled, “*two-year degree or higher*.” This consolidation of data is reflected in Figure 7.

Notably, the percentage of cohort students aspiring to attain a two-year degree or higher increased from 79% in Year 1 to 83% in Year 2, and the number expecting to attain this level of education increased by four percentage points. In both cases, the difference was statistically significant, but the effect size was relatively small ($\phi = .04$).

⁶ Academic confidence survey items were on a Likert-type response scale of 1 – 4 (1 - Not Confident, 2 – Confident, 3 – Very confident, and 4 – I don’t know). When calculating means, standard deviations, and other descriptive statistics, the “I don’t know” option was identified as missing and not calculated (i.e., a 3-point scale was used).

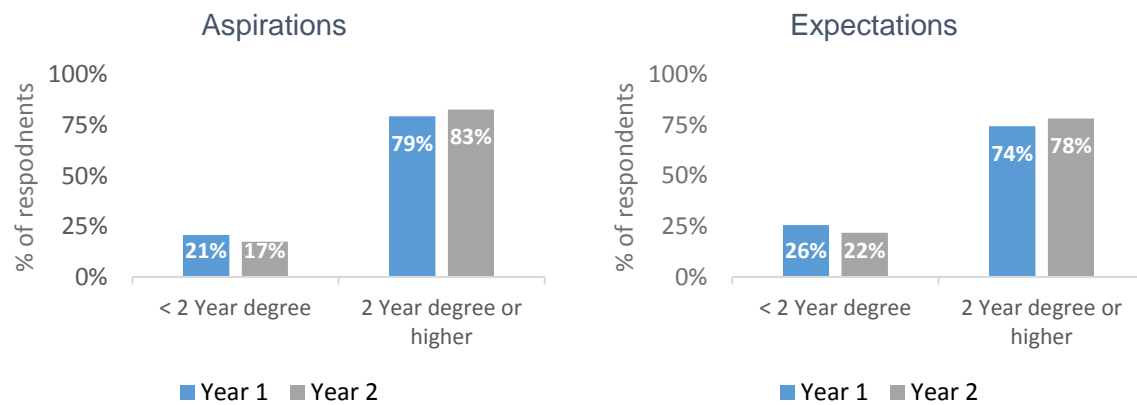


Figure 7. Comparing Cohort Students' Educational Aspirations and Expectations by Year

The parent/guardian survey also included two items asking parents/guardians to indicate the highest level of education they would like and expect their child to achieve. As with the student samples, we found that both aspirations and expectations, reported by cohort parents/guardians, improved from Year 1 to Year 2 (see Figure 8). The differences were both statistically significant, and the effects were small.⁷

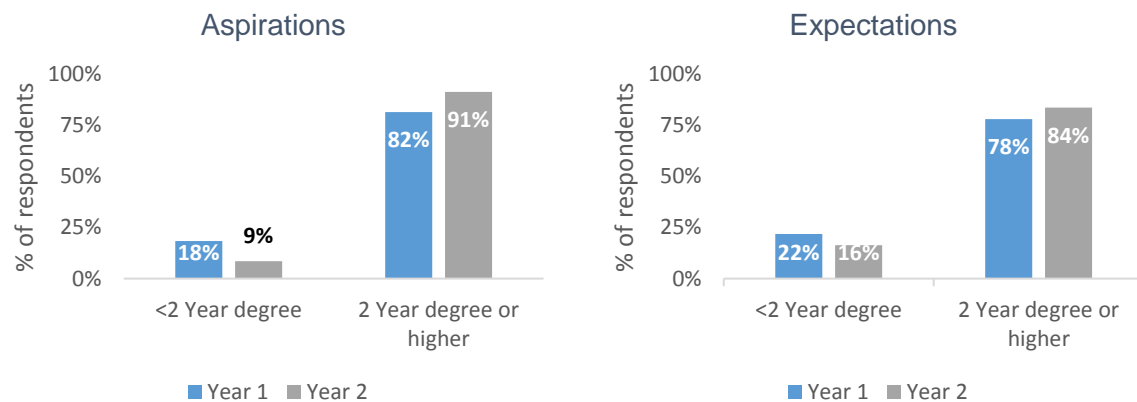


Figure 8. Parents/Guardians Aspirations and Expectations of Highest Level of Education Achieved by Child

Parental views about college. Next, we asked whether parents/guardians had talked to their child about attending college. Almost all parents/guardians in Year 2 indicated that they had (96%), a statistically significant but very small change from Year 1 in which 94% said they had.⁸ We next asked parents/guardians to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that (a) attending college is important to their child's career goal and future and (b) that it is too early to think about their child going to college. In Year 2, about 95% of parents/guardians either

⁷ $\chi^2(1) = 53.13, p < .001$ ($\phi = .14$) and $\chi^2(1) = 13.05, p < .001$ ($\phi = .07$) for aspirations and expectations, respectively.

⁸ Talked about college : $\chi^2 = 7.9, p < .05$ ($\phi = .05$)

agreed or strongly agreed with the first statement, and 92% either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the second. While there was a statistically significant difference between the two years for the second statement, the effect size was extremely small.⁹

1.2.2 College Entrance Requirements, Cost, and Financial Aid

Interaction with school/GEAR UP staff. We asked students whether they had spoken with anyone from GEAR UP or their school about college entrance requirements or the availability of financial aid to help pay for college. We found that students in Year 2 were much more likely than students in Year 1 to have spoken with someone about college entrance requirements ($\chi^2 = 548.55$, $p < .001$) and the availability of financial aid to help pay for college ($\chi^2 = 510.63$, $p < .001$). The difference was statistically significant for both items and the effect sizes were moderate, approaching strong for both topics ($\phi = .33$). Figure 9 shows the results.

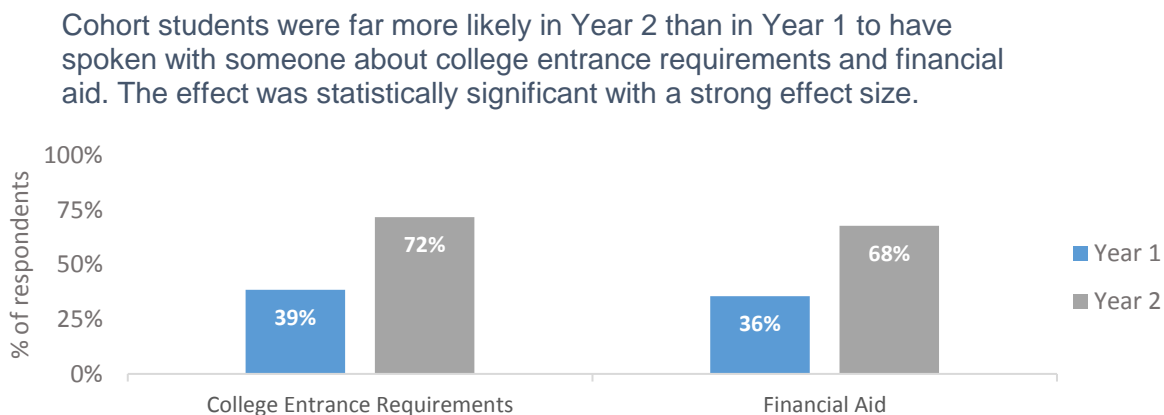


Figure 9. Percentage of Students Who Have Spoken with Someone about College Entrance Requirements and Financial Aid by Year

We also asked parents/guardians whether anyone from their child's school or GEAR UP had spoken with them about these topics. The number of parents/guardians who reported speaking to anyone from their child's school or GEAR UP about these topics increased by 17 and 16 percentage points, respectively, from Year 1 to Year 2. Approximately 25% of parents/guardians in Year 2 responded that they had spoken with someone about college entrance requirements and more than one-fourth of parents/guardians in Year 2 (26%) reported speaking with someone about financial aid. Both differences were statistically significant. Effect sizes were moderate.¹⁰ When examining those who responded "yes" to both questions, we found that only 7% responded affirmatively in Year 1, while 23% did so in Year 2. Figure 10 includes a graphical depiction of the changes over time.

⁹ Too early to talk about college: $\chi^2 = 19.6$, $p < .001$ ($V = .09$)

¹⁰ College entrance requirements: $\chi^2 = 135.4$, $p < .001$ ($\phi = .22$); Financial aid: $\chi^2 = 128.86$, $p < .001$ ($\phi = .22$)

Cohort parents were also much more likely in Year 2 than in Year 1 to have spoken with someone about college entrance requirements and financial aid. The effect was statistically significant with a moderate effect size.

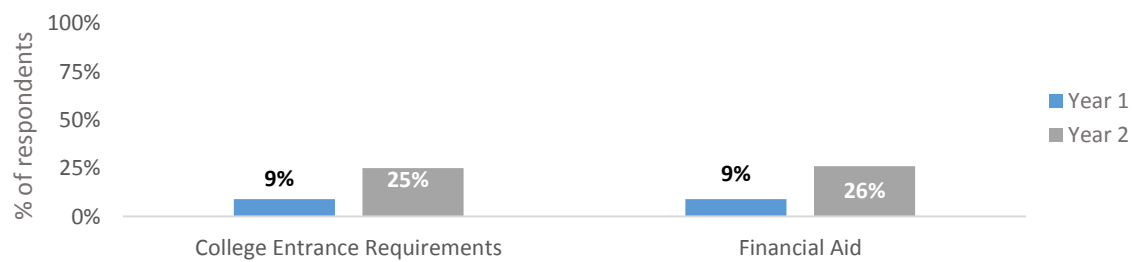


Figure10. Percentage of Parents/Guardians Who Have Spoken with Someone about College Entrance Requirements and Financial Aid

Perceived knowledge of financial aid/costs and benefits of college. Students in Year 2 were also more likely than students in Year 1 to respond affirmatively that they were knowledgeable about financial aid and the costs and benefits of going to college (61% vs. 72%). The difference was statistically significant ($X^2 = 68.12$, $p < .001$), but the effect size was small ($\phi = .12$).

Parents/guardians in Year 2 were also more likely than Year 1 parents/guardians to report that they knew about financial aid and the costs and benefits of their child pursuing a PSE (64% vs. 58%). This difference was statistically significant, but the effect size was again small.¹¹

Perceptions of affordability and cost. Next, we asked students and parents/guardians to indicate the extent to which they felt they could afford to attend three public PSE options: (1) a public four-year college, (2) a public community/technical college, and (3) a public career/technical center. Respondents used a five-point Likert-type response scale (i.e., 1 = *definitely not*, 2 = *probably not*, 3 = *not sure*, 4 = *probably*, 5 = *definitely*).

Using independent samples t-tests, we compared the average ratings among students on this scale for all three options across both Years 1 and 2 of implementation. We found students in Year 2, on average, reported more positive perceptions than Year 1 students about their ability to afford all three options (see Figure 11). Although all three differences were statistically significant,¹² the effect sizes were relatively small ($d = .25$ or lower).

Parents/guardians were also asked to respond to this question. The mean affordability ratings approached or exceeded 4.0 in both years for all three options (a rating of 4.0 corresponds with the perception they could “*probably*” afford each option). The average rating from parents/guardians increased on all three items in Year 2, but these increases were not statistically significant.

¹¹ Knowledge about financial aid and the cost/benefits of college: $X^2 = 12.88$ ($\phi = .07$)

¹² Four-year: $t(4,817) = -2.88$, $p < .01$, two-year: $t(4,750) = -3.59$, $p < .001$; career/tech: $t(4,746) = -3.23$, $p < .001$

Cohort students are more positive in Year 2 than in Year 1 about their ability to afford all three public postsecondary options.

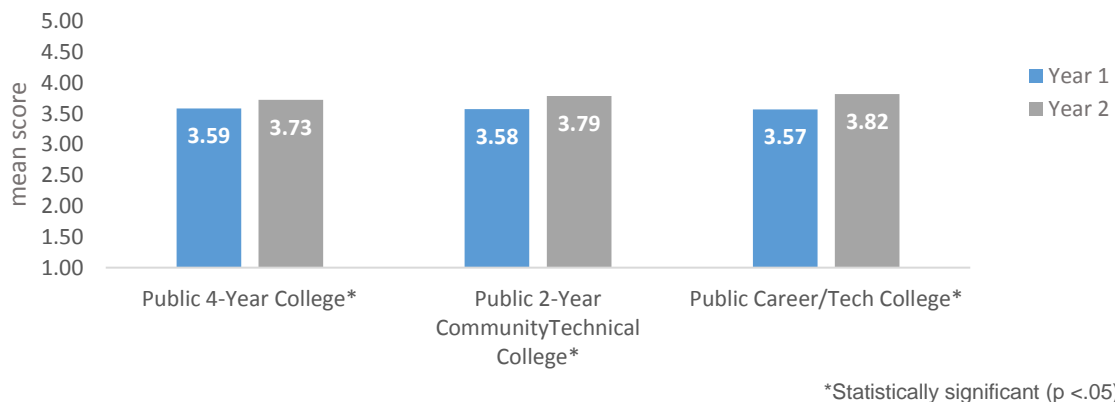


Figure 11. Average Affordability Ratings for Public Postsecondary Options by Group

Students and parents/guardians were next asked to estimate the average cost of tuition, excluding the cost of food, housing, and books, for two public college options in West Virginia: (a) a four-year public college/university, and (b) a public community/technical college. Seven response options were offered, ranging from 1 = *up to \$4,000* to 7 = *more than \$26,000*. According to the Commission, the correct estimates were as follows for the period in which the surveys were administered:

- **Four-year public college/university:** \$4,001-\$8,000
- **Public community/technical college:** Up to \$4,000

Overall, we found that only approximately 19% of students in Year 1, and approximately 18% in Year 2, were able to accurately estimate the costs associated with attending a four-year public college/university. Additionally, we found that 17% and 18% of students, in Year 1 and Year 2, respectively, were able to accurately estimate the costs associated with attending a public community/technical college. The differences were not statistically significant.

Only about 19% of parents/guardians in Year 2 estimated that a four-year public college/university would cost \$4,001-\$8,000; more than half estimated the cost to be greater. Similarly, only 20% of respondents in Year 2 correctly estimated the cost of public community/technical college to be up to \$4,000. There were no statistically significant differences in the percentages of parents/guardians from each year who correctly estimated these costs.

Awareness of PSE topics and importance of various sources in gathering information about PSE options. The Year 1 and Year 2 surveys asked students and their parents/guardians to indicate their awareness of 11 PSE education topics and the importance of 16 sources in providing information about PSE options. In both years, for both students and parents/guardians, the items used four-point Likert-type response scales (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = extremely). We calculated average awareness/importance ratings

for both scales by calculating the mean awareness score for all scale items. We also compared the average awareness/importance ratings for individual scale items.

When comparing Year 1 and Year 2 student survey results, we found that students in Year 2 reported significantly higher average awareness ratings than students in Year 1. The difference was statistically significant ($t(4,915) = -11.29, p < .001$), and the effect size was small ($d = .32$). Students in Year 2 also provided higher importance ratings than Year 1 students. The difference was again statistically significant ($t(4,904.76) = -13.75, p < .001$), and also approached the threshold for a moderate effect size ($d = .39$). See Figure 12.

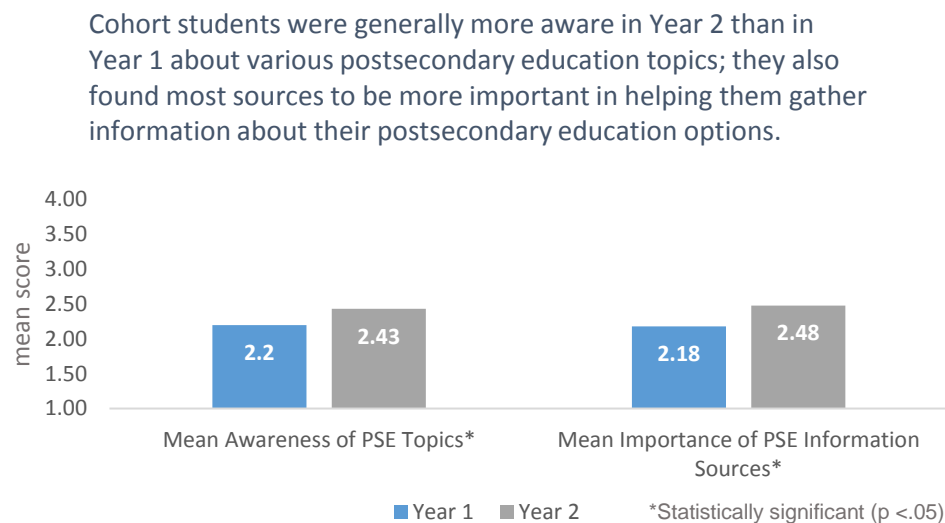


Figure 12. Student Self-Reported Awareness and Importance Ratings for Various Postsecondary Education Topics and Information Sources by Year

Parents/guardians in Year 2 also reported higher mean awareness and importance ratings than they did in Year 1. Although both differences in Table 1 were statistically significant,¹³ the effect sizes were considerably smaller than those observed for students.

	Awareness of PSE Topics			Importance of Information Sources		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Year 1	1,355	2.40	.82	1,286	1.86	.78
Year 2	1,317	2.49	.82	1,283	2.03	.76

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Surveys

Looking at individual topics, we found students showed statistically significant increases in their awareness of all 11 topics from Year 1 to Year 2 ($p < .01$). The largest differences were found for four topics: (1) ACT/SAT ($d = .41$), (2) FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) ($d =$

¹³ Awareness: $t(2,670) = -2.73, p < .05$ ($d = .11$); Importance: $t(2,567) = -5.35, p < .001$ ($d = .22$)

.35), (3) federal Pell grants ($d = .32$), and (4) federal student loans ($d = .30$). The effect sizes were small to moderate. See Table 2 for more details.

Topic	Awareness Rating Y1			Awareness Rating Y2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
The importance/benefit of a college education	2,387	2.76	1.11	2,462	2.97	1.01
High school graduation requirements	2,397	2.77	1.06	2,456	2.95	.97
Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or institutional)	2,389	2.72	1.06	2,468	2.90	.97
Requirements for college acceptance	2,381	2.46	1.04	2,454	2.67	.97
ACT/SAT	2,382	2.06	1.02	2,449	2.48	1.03
Federal student loans	2,392	2.19	.99	2,466	2.48	.97
WV Higher Education Grant	2,389	1.96	.97	2,457	2.25	1.01
College savings plan/529	2,387	2.02	.98	2,462	2.09	.96
Federal work-study	2,378	1.89	.98	2,460	2.08	.99
Federal Pell grants	2,390	1.65	.87	2,453	1.94	.97
FAFSA	2,407	1.62	.84	2,462	1.93	.92

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP Student Surveys

We also found parents/guardians increased their awareness ratings for all 11 topics in Year 2. The differences across the two years were statistically significant ($p < .05$) for all topics except federal Pell Grants, federal student loans, the importance/benefit of a college education, and high school graduation requirements. However, all effect sizes were very small ($d < .15$).

Students showed statistically significant increases in their importance ratings for all information sources from Year 1 to Year 2. The largest differences were with respect to (1) GEAR UP staff ($d = .85$), (2) CFWV.com ($d = .49$), and (3) school counselors ($d = .44$). We also found substantive differences in the importance ratings for (1) college fairs ($d = .32$), (2) college or university websites ($d = .30$), and (3) other college planning websites ($d = .30$). Each of these differences was statistically significant ($p < .01$) and in favor of the students in Year 2. See Table 3 for more details.

Topic	Year 1			Year 2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Family members	2,385	2.79	1.07	2,450	2.94	.98
GEAR UP staff	2,382	1.97	1.05	2,443	2.86	1.01
School counselor	2,394	2.26	1.08	2,452	2.73	1.04
College or university websites	2,411	2.32	1.05	2,466	2.63	1.01
College Foundation of WV Website (CFWV.com)	2,394	2.05	1.05	2,458	2.56	1.04
College admissions representatives	2,375	2.06	1.09	2,431	2.54	1.09
Television	2,406	2.43	1.03	2,464	2.51	.99
Brochures and pamphlets	2,382	2.18	1.03	2,464	2.47	.99
Signs, posters, or billboards	2,383	2.30	1.04	2,458	2.46	.99
Other college planning websites	2,384	2.08	1.02	2,447	2.38	1.00
College fairs	2,383	2.03	1.04	2,447	2.36	1.03
Magazines/newspapers	2,381	2.14	1.03	2,458	2.31	1.00
Radio	2,396	2.14	1.05	2,459	2.28	1.04
E-mail	2,389	2.04	1.07	2,459	2.24	1.07
Direct mail	2,389	2.04	1.07	2,460	2.20	1.07
Text messages	2,392	1.99	1.10	2,450	2.19	1.09

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP Student Surveys

We found that parent/guardian average ratings for all 16 sources also increased in Year 2. The differences were statistically significant ($p < .05$) for all topics except (1) television, (2) radio, (3) magazines/newspapers, and (4) text messages. As with cohort students, the effect for the Year 1 to Year 2 difference in parent/guardian importance ratings for GEAR UP staff was strong ($d = .62$). The next largest effects, although small, were for school counselors ($d = .28$) and CFWV.com ($d = .26$). All other effects were small ($d < .20$).

Because the survey revealed that parents/guardians continued to be relatively unaware of various PSE topics and found few information sources to be very important in building knowledge of their child's PSE options, we calculated and compared the proportion of parents/guardians in each year who rated each item as something they were either "not at all aware" of or that was "not at all important" to them. A decrease in these percentages from Year 1 to Year 2 would indicate an improvement in awareness/importance.

Table 4 and Table 5 illustrate clearly that parents/guardians increased their awareness of all PSE topics and that, with the exception of television, they found the information sources included on the survey to be more important in Year 2 than in Year 1. The largest decreases in the percentages of parents/guardians who were "not at all aware" mostly concerned financial aid: (1) college savings plan/529, (2) WV Higher Education Grant, (3) federal work-study, (4) FAFSA, and (5) ACT/SAT. We saw similar declines with respect to the percentages of parents/guardians who found various information sources "not at all important" in informing them of their child's PSE options (e.g., GEAR UP staff, school counselors, CFWV.com).

Table 4. Percentage of Parents/Guardians "Not at all" Aware of 11 PSE Topics by Group

Topic	Year 1	Year 2	Change
College savings plan/529*	47%	39%	-8%
WV Higher Education Grant*	44%	38%	-6%
Federal work-study*	49%	43%	-6%
FAFSA*	32%	27%	-5%
ACT/SAT*	18%	14%	-4%
Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or institutional)	26%	22%	-4%
Requirements for college acceptance	27%	23%	-4%
High school graduation requirements	12%	9%	-3%
Federal Pell Grants	30%	28%	-2%
The importance/benefit of a college education*	13%	11%	-2%
Federal student loans	24%	23%	-1%

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Surveys

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

Table 5. Percentage of Parents/Guardians Reporting 16 Sources to be “Not at all” Important in Helping Gather Information About Their Child’s PSE Options

Topic	Year 1	Year 2	Change
GEAR UP staff*	61%	31%	-30%
School counselor*	49%	34%	-15%
College Foundation of WV website*	51%	39%	-12%
College admissions representatives*	57%	46%	-11%
Brochures and pamphlets*	40%	30%	-10%
College or university websites*	33%	25%	-9%
Other college planning websites*	49%	40%	-9%
College fairs*	51%	42%	-9%
Direct mail*	53%	48%	-5%
E-mail	57%	53%	-4%
Signs, posters, or billboards	48%	44%	-4%
Text messages	70%	66%	-4%
Family members*	24%	20%	-4%
Magazines/newspapers	48%	45%	-3%
Radio	51%	50%	-1%
Television	37%	38%	+1%

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Surveys

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

1.2.3 Additional Supports Requested

The final survey item asked students and parents/guardians to select from among 13 additional supports that they would like to have to help them be more successful in school and more prepared for college. We found that the Year 1 and Year 2 student samples did not differ substantially on most items. However, students in Year 2 were significantly more likely than students in Year 1 to report that they wanted more information about advanced placement classes (46% vs. 52%), assistance with the college entrance process (45% vs. 50%), participation in GEAR UP events (42% vs. 49%), and leadership opportunities (42% vs. 46%). The effect sizes for these differences were all small. Table 6 includes all 13 items.

Table 6. Percentage of Students Requesting 13 Additional Supports by Group

Topic	Year 1	Year 2	Change
Information about participating in GEAR UP events*	42%	49%	+7%
More advanced classes (e.g., AP) *	46%	52%	+6%
Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA)*	38%	44%	+6%
Assistance with the college entrance process*	45%	50%	+5%
Leadership opportunities*	42%	46%	+4%
Opportunities to participate in college visits	62%	64%	+2%
Information about college entrance requirements	60%	62%	+2%
Information about college financial aid/scholarships	58%	60%	+2%
Career exploration activities	53%	55%	+2%
Test preparation	50%	52%	+2%
Tutoring	39%	41%	+2%
Information and events presented in other languages (e.g., Spanish)	31%	31%	--
Summer activities	37%	36%	-1%

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP Student Surveys

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

Parents/guardians did not differ substantially across years for most items. However, we did find that parents/guardians were significantly less likely to report that they wanted more information about participating in GEAR UP events in Year 2 (72% vs. 65%) and more likely to report they wanted more information on opportunities to participate in college visits in Year 2 (70% vs. 74%). The effect size for both of these differences was moderate. Table 7 includes additional details for all 13 items.

Table 7. Percentage of Parents/Guardians Requesting 13 Additional Supports by Group

Topic	Year 1	Year 2	Change
Opportunities to participate in college visits*	70%	74%	+4%
Test preparation	66%	69%	+3%
More advanced classes	39%	41%	+2%
Career exploration activities	63%	65%	+2%
Assistance with the college entrance process	62%	64%	+2%
Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA)	61%	63%	+2%
Information about college financial aid/scholarships	79%	80%	+1%
Summer activities	43%	44%	+1%
Leadership opportunities	43%	43%	--
Information and events presented in other languages (e.g., Spanish)	15%	15%	--
Tutoring	43%	42%	-1%
Information about college entrance requirements	74%	73%	-1%
Information about participating in GEAR UP events*	72%	65%	-7%

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Surveys

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

1.3 Year 1 to Year 2 Outcomes for School Personnel

The following section describes the trends in Year 1 to Year 2 survey results for school personnel.

1.3.1 Participation in and Satisfaction with GEAR UP

Participation. We asked school personnel how often they had participated in GEAR UP activities. Five response options were provided (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). A total of 794 respondents answered the question in Year 2 (98%). Of those, nearly one-third (31%) indicated they “never or seldom” participated in GEAR UP events, 35% indicated they “sometimes” participated, and 33% indicated they “often or always” participated. Respondents were more likely in Year 2 to have participated in GEAR UP activities ($X^2 = 64.41$, $p < .001$). The difference was statistically significant. The size of the difference was small, but approached the threshold for a moderate effect ($V = .20$). Figure 13 shows the results. Notably, only 13% of respondents indicated that they had never participated in GEAR UP events in Year 2, compared with 29% in Year 1.

School personnel were more likely to participate in GEAR UP activities in Year 2 than Year 1.

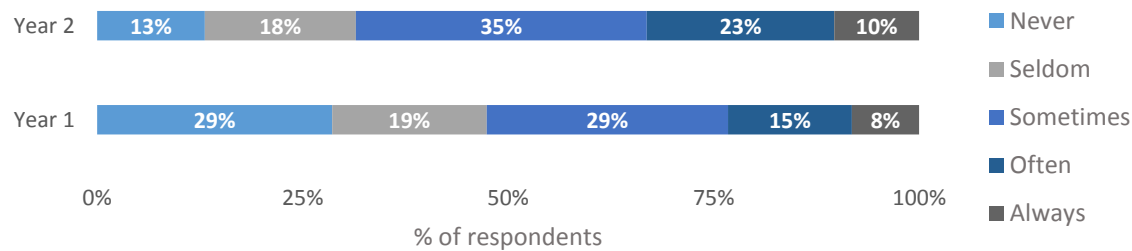


Figure 13. School Personnel Participation in GEAR UP Activities by Year

The survey also included an open-ended item asking respondents to describe the types of GEAR UP activities in which they participated. A total of 370 of 805 respondents answered the question, and in some cases indicated multiple themes in one response. Responses were coded into six overarching themes: (1) student activities, (2) academic support, (3) college visits, (4) financial aid events, (5) family and community involvement, and (6) frequency of participation. Examples of comments within these themes are presented in Table 8. Furthermore, three of these themes (student activities, academic support, and frequency of participation) include sub-themes that are described in more detail.

Table 8. Examples of Year 2 GEAR UP Activities Reported by School Personnel

Theme	Sample Response
Student activities	<i>I attend various activities that are held after school and before ball games.</i>
Academic support	<i>The way that I feel I am most involved is through helping students academically to pull their grades up, and to foster interest and learning so that when they reach high school hopefully all will either choose college or a vocational school track.</i>
College visits (e.g., parent night)	<i>I usually chaperone the field trips to the universities and colleges and the college day fair.</i>
Financial aid events (e.g., College Goal Sunday)	<i>I have attended the GEAR UP training with my school counselor. I found it extremely beneficial...The training also made me aware of the student aid available, of which I was unaware.</i>
Family and community involvement	<i>As principal, I attended the parent involvement nights. I spoke to students about their future plans and the importance of setting high goals.</i>
Frequency of participation	<i>Any time there is an activity that I can participate in, I always volunteer.</i>

Source: Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

Respondents were most likely to indicate having participated in some type of student activity ($n = 136$), provided academic support ($n = 101$), attended a college visit or field trip ($n = 75$), attended a financial aid event ($n = 38$), or described a general level of participation in all GEAR UP activities ($n = 173$). Several GEAR UP activities listed as sub-themes are discussed in more detail below:

- Within the overarching theme of **student activities**, school personnel provided descriptions of specific events aimed at improving the college-going attitude of students. These activities included after-school events ($n = 34$), the Student Success Summit ($n = 20$), college week ($n = 18$), college application week ($n = 18$), dissemination of college testing requirement information ($n = 16$), and college/career day ($n = 30$). Two respondents noted:

Any time a GEAR UP activity is planned in conjunction with an after-school activity or athletic event, I attend and participate.

I have participated in schoolwide events like the college week... talking to students about my college experience and encouraging them to attend college.

- Three main sub-themes have emerged from GEAR UP **academic support** activities, including overall academic preparation ($n = 40$), tutoring ($n = 41$), and mentoring workshops ($n = 20$). Regarding mentoring, one respondent commented:

I was supposed to only work with 10 students. After really getting to know the current eighth grade class, I found that there were more than 20 students who fit the criteria and I couldn't just ignore them. So, I chose to work with them all. I feel I have successfully encouraged and motivated students to pursue additional education after high school who would otherwise not do so.

- Many respondents only indicated their **frequency of participation in GEAR UP** activities at their school, as mentioned in Table 8 above. The frequency of their participation is categorized as either often ($n = 86$), occasional ($n = 84$), or never ($n = 3$). Responses included examples such as:

During my time here I was not aware of any activities offered.

I have attended several GEAR UP events.

Satisfaction. We also asked school personnel survey respondents about the extent to which they agreed with two statements about the services provided through GEAR UP: (1) *I think GEAR UP is making a positive impact on students in my school*, and (2) *GEAR UP activities are likely to be sustained after the grant ends*. Respondents had five response options for these items (0 = not applicable, 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree). Once again, we found respondents were mostly positive about GEAR UP services. Figure 14 shows that very few respondents indicated they disagreed or strongly disagreed with these items (4% vs. 2% in Year 1 and Year 2, respectively). Nearly all respondents strongly agreed (48%) or agreed (46%) that GEAR UP is making a positive impact on students at their school in Year 2. Additionally, Year 2 personnel were less likely than Year 1 personnel to choose the “not applicable” option (4% vs. 11%, respectively). Personnel were also more likely in Year 2 to strongly agree and agree with this statement (94% vs. 85%, respectively). Differences were statistically significant ($X^2 = 36.99$, $p < .001$) but the effect size was relatively small ($V = .15$).

Lastly, when responding to the item “*GEAR UP activities are likely to be sustained after the grant ends*” respondents were less likely in Year 2 than in Year 1 to choose the “not applicable” option (7% vs. 14%, respectively) ($X^2=32.04$, $p<.001$). But again, the effect size was small ($V=.14$). Additionally, respondents in Year 2 who agreed with the statement (67%) were more likely to strongly agree than they were in Year 1 that GEAR UP activities would be sustained after the grant ends (24% vs. 17%).

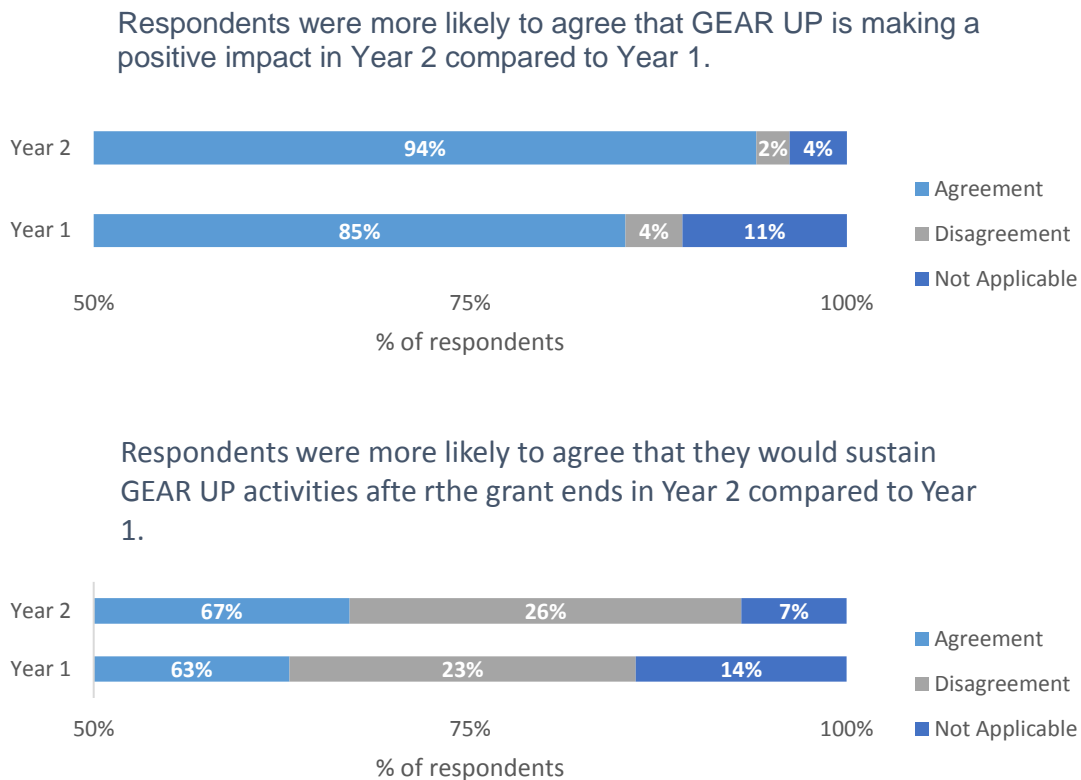


Figure 14. School Personnel Perceptions about the Impact of GEAR UP from Year 1 to Year 2

Effectiveness. In Year 2, we asked school personnel to (a) indicate whether or not they participated in 11 GEAR UP-sponsored activities and (b) rate the effectiveness of the activities in helping students to succeed in school and prepare for college. Six response options were provided for each activity (1 = it was not offered/does not apply, 2 = I did not attend, 3 = not at all effective, 4 = slightly effective, 5 = moderately effective, 6 = extremely effective).

Table 9 illustrates that personnel participated the least in summer activities, followed by teacher professional development. Furthermore, personnel found opportunities to participate in college visits and career exploration to be the most effective GEAR UP-sponsored activities in terms of helping students succeed in school and prepare for college. Notably, more than half of all respondents also found the following activities moderately or extremely effective: (1) providing information about college entrance requirements, (2) tutoring, (3) assistance with FAFSA, (4) college application week, (5) test preparation, (6) assistance with the college entrance process, and (7) mentoring opportunities.

Additional analysis showed that the reported effectiveness of certain activities did differ by school type at a level of $p < .01$. Specifically, tutoring ($X^2 = 26.80$) (88% - middle school, 75% - high school, 79% - middle/high school), providing information about college entrance requirements ($X^2 = 19.15$) (74% - middle school, 87% - high school, and 85% - middle/high school), and assistance with FAFSA ($X^2 = 19.02$) (82% - middle school, 93% - high school, 90% - middle/high school). For all items, the effect size was small ($V \leq .20$).

Table 9. Year 2 School Personnel Participation and Effectiveness Ratings for 11 GEAR UP-Sponsored Activities

Scale Item	N	Was not offered/ does not apply	Did not Attend	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
Opportunities to participate in college visits	789	6%	10%	0%	7%	33%	44%
Career exploration activities	787	7%	10%	1%	11%	37%	33%
Provide information about college entrance requirements	781	13%	11%	1%	12%	30%	32%
Tutoring	789	14%	11%	2%	12%	34%	27%
Assistance with FAFSA	785	21%	12%	2%	5%	24%	36%
College application week	787	16%	12%	1%	11%	29%	31%
Test preparation	785	19%	10%	2%	9%	30%	29%
Assistance with the college entrance process	786	22%	11%	1%	8%	29%	29%
Mentoring opportunities	784	19%	11%	2%	10%	34%	24%
Teacher professional development	782	24%	12%	2%	13%	29%	19%
Summer activities	783	22%	19%	3%	14%	26%	17%

Source: Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

1.3.2 Perceptions of College-Going Culture in Schools and Classrooms.

We asked all respondents—teachers, administrators, and counselors—to rate their schools on 19 items representing two CGC components: (1) expectations/rigor and (2) visual cues/material resources. We allocated each of the 19 items to one of the two components. Notably, there was a reduction of four items from the Year 1 survey instrument to the Year 2 instrument. The evaluation team confirmed that this change had no major bearing on the strength of the factor loadings for each component. However, this necessitated recalculating CGC scores for Year 1.

The expectations/rigor component contains items such as, “*The curriculum appropriately challenges most students*,” “*Students are learning effective problem solving skills*,” and “*All students have the ability to succeed academically*.” The visual cues/material resources component contains items such as, “*Teachers are provided information about the school’s college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates*,” “*College pennants, banners, and posters are*

visible,” and “School staff are provided with professional development on the topics of college readiness and success.”

In years 1 and 2, the survey asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the 19 items using a four-point Likert-type response format (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree). Teachers responding to the survey were also asked to rate their agreement relative to their own classroom.

Using independent samples t-tests, we first compared the average ratings on the CGC scale for both components across Year 1 and Year 2. We found Year 2 respondents, on average, reported more positive perceptions of CGC than Year 1 respondents. This was true for both the rigor/expectations and visual cues/material resources components¹⁴ (See Figure 15). Both differences were statistically significant with small-moderate effects, but the visual cues/material resources had a slightly higher effect size ($d = .35$ and $.45$). The differences for classroom CGC were also statistically significant.¹⁵ The effect sizes were also moderate ($d = .41$ and $.36$, for expectations/rigor, and visual cues/material resources, respectively).

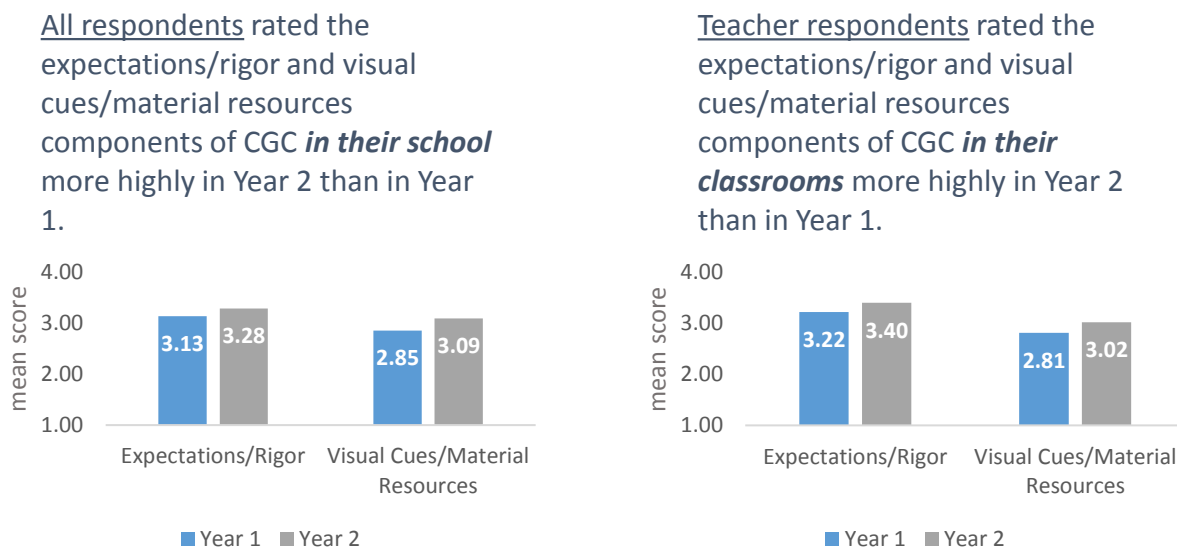


Figure 15. Changes in Mean College-Going Culture Ratings by Dimension and Year

1.3.3 College-Going Culture in My School

Rigor/expectations. Table 10 shows each of the 10 items assigned to the rigor/expectations component, and the descriptive statistics for the entire sample of school personnel. We also calculated the findings from an independent sample t-test to determine differences between Year 1 and Year 2 respondent scores for each item. For all but two scale items, personnel reported significant gains. Notably teachers reported no significant changes in their perceptions about how the curriculum appropriately challenges most students. Personnel perceived the

¹⁴ Rigor/expectations: $t(1533) = -6.69$, $p < .001$ and visual cues/material resources: $t(1517) = -8.48$, $p < .001$

¹⁵ Rigor/expectations: $t(1320) = -7.29$, $p < .001$ and visual cues/material resources: $t(1328) = -6.37$, $p < .001$

greatest gains in their perceptions that students care about learning and getting a good education ($t(1,596.18) = -7.76, p < .001$). The effect size approached the threshold for a moderate effect ($d = .38$).

Table 10. CGC Items by Component: Expectations/Rigor

Scale Item	Year 1			Year 2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Students are encouraged to do their best.*	798	3.42	.56	802	3.57	.58
Students are encouraged to set future college and career goals.*	790	3.25	.54	800	3.42	.57
Teachers regularly talk to students about the importance of college.*	795	3.22	.57	801	3.41	.59
Creativity and original thinking are highly valued.*	797	3.17	.61	804	3.4	.61
All students have the ability to succeed academically.*	791	3.22	.67	802	3.37	.65
The curriculum appropriately challenges most students.	799	3.17	.58	797	3.2	.63
Teachers are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum.*	795	3.12	.61	799	3.18	.64
Students are learning effective problem solving skills.*	797	3.00	.54	805	3.17	.62
All students have the potential to succeed in college or other postsecondary training.*	793	2.95	.65	801	3.14	.71
Students care about learning and getting a good education.*	794	2.74	.68	805	3.00	.68

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

Visual cues/material resources. Table 11 shows average school personnel perceptions of the visual cues/material resources component of CGC in their schools. We calculated averages and conducted an independent sample t-test to determine differences between Year 1 and Year 2 respondent scores for each item. Once again, we found that for all but two scale items, school personnel reported significant gains from Year 1 to Year 2. Respondents reported no significant changes in their perceptions that (1) teachers are equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college and (2) teachers engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness. Personnel perceived the greatest gains in the perception that college pennants, banners, and posters are visible ($t(1,599) = -11.95, p < .001$), and teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience ($t(1,592) = -10.06, p < .001$). The effect sizes were moderate-strong ($d = .60$ and $d = .50$, respectively).

Table 11. CGC Items by Component: Visual Cues/Material Support

Scale Item	Year 1			Year 2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college attendance decisions.*	790	3.06	.61	797	3.27	.65
Teachers are equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college.	792	3.05	.67	795	3.02	.73
Parents are included in the college preparation process.*	789	2.97	.67	800	3.27	.64
Teachers engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness.	789	2.87	.71	795	2.89	.78
College pennants, banners, and posters are visible.*	797	2.84	.83	804	3.31	.72
Teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience.*	791	2.82	.70	803	3.17	.69
Teachers are provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates.*	787	2.68	.80	797	3.01	.80
School staff are provided with professional development on the topics of college readiness and success.*	794	2.67	.72	796	2.92	.76
College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances.*	790	2.66	.70	798	2.89	.76

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

1.3.4 College-Going Culture in My Classroom

Rigor/expectations. Table 12 shows each of the 10 items assigned to the rigor/expectations component, and descriptive statistics for the teacher respondents. We calculated the findings from an independent samples t-test to determine differences between Year 1 and Year 2 teacher respondent scores. We found that the Year 1 and Year 2 samples differed significantly in terms of their self-reported perceptions of CGC in their classroom for every item on the expectations/rigor component. Effect sizes ranged from small to moderate, with the greatest effect for the increases in teachers' self-reported perceptions of how their classroom encourages students to do their best ($t(1385.16) = -7.56$, $p < .001$). The Year 2 score ($M = 3.68$; $SD = .51$) was higher than the Year 1 score ($M = 3.46$; $SD = .56$). The effect size was moderate ($d = .41$).

Table 12. CGC Items by Component: Expectations/Rigor

Scale Item	Year 1			Year 2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Students are encouraged to do their best.*	706	3.46	.56	688	3.68	.51
Students are encouraged to set future college and career goals.*	698	3.29	.54	688	3.45	.56
All students have the ability to succeed academically.*	700	3.19	.67	694	3.41	.65
I regularly talk to students about the importance of college.*	706	3.28	.57	692	3.42	.61
Creativity and original thinking are highly valued.*	697	3.41	.61	693	3.60	.53
The curriculum appropriately challenges most students.*	707	3.24	.58	689	3.40	.59
I am able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum.*	703	3.26	.61	687	3.37	.60
Students are learning effective problem solving skills.*	706	3.21	.54	690	3.35	.58
All students have the potential to succeed in college or other postsecondary training.*	702	2.99	.65	692	3.23	.67
Students care about learning and getting a good education.*	703	2.83	.68	691	3.10	.68

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

Visual cues/material resources. Table 13 illustrates that teacher perceptions of CGC related to visual cues/material resources in their classrooms also improved from Year 1 to Year 2. All items showed significant gains except two: (1) teachers are equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college and (2) teachers engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness. Teachers reported the greatest gains in classroom CGC in terms of the visibility of college pennants, banners, and posters ($t(1391.71) = -9.15$, $p < .001$), with a moderate effect size ($d = .49$).

Table 13. CGC Items by Component: Visual Cues/Material Support

Scale Item	Year 1			Year 2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college attendance decisions.*	699	3.01	.62	684	3.17	.69
Teachers are equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college.	702	3.11	.70	681	3.12	.74
Parents are included in the college preparation process.*	691	2.81	.67	683	3.05	.71
Teachers engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness.	701	2.87	.71	685	2.90	.80
College pennants, banners, and posters are visible.*	705	2.70	.81	689	3.09	.78
Teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience.*	705	2.80	.75	687	3.07	.75
Teachers are provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates.*	705	2.64	.80	685	2.94	.82
School staff are provided with professional development on the topics of college readiness and success.*	701	2.67	.74	685	2.87	.81
College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances.*	699	2.67	.72	683	2.88	.80

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

*Differences were statistically significant level of $p < .05$

Most important aspect of building a CGC. Respondents were next asked to provide a description of the most important aspect of building a CGC in their school. In Year 2, 503 of 805 individuals responded. Of these, 15 comments could not be coded into any of the overarching themes identified. Table 14 shows the categorization of other responses by theme, sub-theme if applicable, and count. Academic support ($n = 129$) was the most frequently identified theme followed by student activities ($n = 105$), technology and teacher resources ($n = 70$), family and community involvement ($n = 30$), college visits ($n = 26$), and financial aid events ($n = 13$).

Table 14. Thematic Analysis of Additional Survey Comments by Respondents

Theme	Sub-Themes	Count of Responses
Academic support	Academic preparation	88
	Tutoring	4
	Mentoring	37
	TOTAL	129
Student activities	After-school events	1
	Student Success Summit	6
	College week	1
	College/career day	25
	General college/career exposure	70
	College testing requirements	18
	Total	121
Technology and teacher resources	Total	70
Family and community involvement	Total	30
College visits	Total	26
Financial aid events	Total	13

Source: Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

Of the 129 respondents who provided comments related to **academic support**, a majority noted that students should understand the benefits and importance of college, be involved in rigorous curriculum throughout high school, and understand all of the options and requirements following high school. For example, one respondent stated,

The most important aspect in building a college-going culture is the growing emphasis on AP and dual credit classes. When students achieve college-level successes while still in high school, they begin to believe they can succeed in a college setting after high school.

In other cases, respondents spoke about the importance of mentoring relationships and other role modeling activities as critical aspects to building a CGC. Among those 37 who responded about **mentoring**, one commented:

I believe that building personal relationships with students helps give them the efficacy to further their goals.

One hundred twenty one respondents made comments that we coded under the theme, **student activities**. In most cases, respondents indicated a need to expose students to the many college or career opportunities in and out of the community. Some respondents mentioned the importance of vocational school, or the need to fill jobs within the community that would not necessarily require a traditional four-year college degree. One respondent commented:

I honestly think that trade schools should also be one of the most important aspects to building a professional culture at my school. Not every student is going to be a fit for college. This is why trade schools are so important.

In most other cases respondents spoke about positive attitudinal changes in students, toward believing it was realistic to plan to attend college, citing activities such as college week and

college/career day. One respondent reflected on the broad importance of these activities and their contribution to the perceptions students have of college attainability, stating:

The more opportunities they have to see what is available to them, the more they realize that life isn't just coal mining and blue collar jobs. They need to know that an education is the ticket out of poverty.

Seventy respondents commented on the need for **technology and teacher resources**. Many of these respondents specifically mentioned the importance of teachers using resources to share their experiences with students, promoting the value of a college education even more. One respondent commented:

Having teachers who are excited about college is so very important to causing the student body to being interested in college. Having college students to visit and encourage is another plus for students.

Thirty comments spoke to **family and community involvement** within the school. Most comments concerned the need for parents/guardians to participate more in their child's educational and college decision-making processes, as well as the need to inform both parents/guardians and students about the career opportunities that come with earning a college education. These sentiments were reflected in comments like:

[The most important aspect of building a college going culture is] getting parents involved and getting appropriate information to students and parents.

Finally, we coded 26 comments under **college visits** and 13 under **financial aid events**. College visits, as perceived by many respondents, inform students about opportunities in the local community and across the state. According to one comment:

Students need to see the value of college and they need to continue to have the opportunity to visit colleges to help them lessen their fear of leaving a small rural community.

Financial aid events—specifically those pertaining to FAFSA, scholarships, and other loans—also need to be widely available according to respondents. These workshops would ideally offer step-by-step information for students and parents/guardians on attending college and securing the financial support to do so. According to one respondent:

It is important to let them know, at a younger age, that they can go regardless of the ability to pay for it out of pocket, through loans, financial grants, and scholarships.

1.3.5 Knowledge of PSE Topics and Involvement in College-Related Activities

Two items on the school personnel survey asked respondents to rate their level of comfort with their knowledge to assist students with five college-related topics (comfort/knowledge items) and to rate their own involvement in several college-related activities at their school.¹⁶

¹⁶ Six topics were included in the Year 1 survey, but we revised and moved the item "I participate in GEAR UP activities" to a different section of the Year 2 survey.

Respondents had four response options for comfort/knowledge items (1 = not at all comfortable, 2 = slightly comfortable, 3 = moderately comfortable, 4 = extremely comfortable). Five response options were included for involvement items as well (1 = never, 2 = seldom, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, 5 = always). A sixth option (*rather not say* or *not applicable*) was included on each scale, but these options were not used to calculate average ratings.

Comfort/knowledge. Average comfort/knowledge levels increased for all topics from Year 1 to Year 2. All gains were statistically significant except for the modest increase in the comfort that personnel reported with their knowledge of the importance and benefits of college education. Importantly, we found the largest gains for four financial aid topics: (1) college savings plan/529 ($d = .28$), (2) WV Higher Education Grant ($d = .24$), (3) federal grants, loans, and work-study ($d = .22$), and (4) scholarships ($d = .22$). All remaining effect sizes were small.

Table 15. Mean Comfort Levels Reported by Respondents with their Knowledge of Ten College-Related Topics by Year

Scale Item	Year 1			Year 2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Importance/benefit of college education	767	3.55	.72	780	3.60	.66
High school graduation requirements*	777	3.16	.88	784	3.28	.82
ACT/SAT*	778	2.87	.92	787	3.02	.88
Requirements for college acceptance*	782	2.86	.93	783	3.02	.90
FAFSA*	790	2.65	.99	796	2.85	.95
Scholarships*	787	2.58	.97	785	2.79	.95
College selection (match and fit)*	786	2.50	1.06	787	2.71	1.01
Federal grants, loans, and work-study*	781	2.48	.98	789	2.7	.97
WV Higher Education Grant*	782	2.21	1.01	785	2.45	1.02
College savings plan/529*	785	1.97	.94	787	2.24	.99

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

*Year 1 to Year 2 change is statistically significant.

As we did in Year 1, we calculated an overall comfort/knowledge score for each participant. This score was operationalized as the sum of participant self-ratings for each of the 10 items on the scale. The range for this variable was 0-40 points, and a score of 30 points would indicate “moderate” comfort with the 10 college-related topics. When viewed in aggregate, the mean comfort/knowledge score for Year 1 was 26.35 ($SD = 7.35$), and for Year 2, 28.15 ($SD = 7.21$). Notably, the Year 2 average score approached 30 points, and the difference from Year 1 to Year 2 was statistically significant ($p < .001$). The effect size was small ($d = .25$). See Figure 16.

Overall, school personnel were more comfortable with their knowledge to assist students with college-related topics in Year 2 than in Year 1.

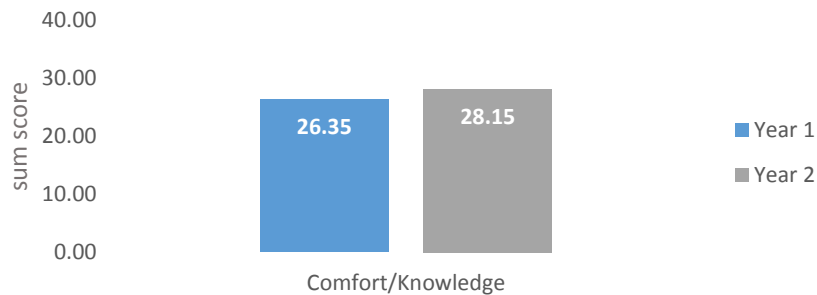


Figure 16. Changes in Comfort/Knowledge Ratings of School Personnel by Year

Involvement. Involvement ratings also increased for all activities from Year 1 to Year 2. However, only one item showed a statistically significant increase: *“I talk with parents about their ability to help prepare their students for postsecondary education.”* While this increase was statistically significant, the effect size was relatively small ($d = .14$).

Table 16. Mean Involvement Levels of Respondents in Five College-Related Activities

Scale Item	Year 1			Year 2		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
I talk with students about their plans for college or work after high school.	785	3.89	.85	789	3.97	.77
I have individual discussions with students about what they want to do with their futures.	781	3.88	.86	789	3.93	.81
I offer students supplemental instructional support to prepare them for postsecondary options.	737	3.31	1.08	759	3.40	1.03
I talk with parents about their ability to help prepare their students for postsecondary education.*	734	2.84	1.13	750	3.00	1.10
I participate in the college preparation activities of my school, e.g., chaperoning college visits.	665	2.77	1.20	713	2.90	1.25

Source: Year 1 and Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

*Year 1 to Year 2 change is statistically significant

As we did in Year 1, we calculated an overall involvement score for each participant. This score was operationalized as the sum of participant self-ratings for each of the five items on the scale. The range for this variable was 0-25 points, and a score of 15 points indicated being involved “sometimes” with the five college-rated activities. When viewed in aggregate, the mean knowledge/comfort score for Year 1 was 15.70 ($SD = 4.65$) and 16.55 for Year 2 ($SD = 4.40$). Notably, the Year 2 average score exceeded 15 points, and the difference from Year 1 to Year 2 was statistically significant ($p < .001$). The effect size was small ($d = .19$). See Figure 17.

Overall, school personnel involvement in college-related activities increased from Year 1 to Year 2, but the effect size was relatively small.

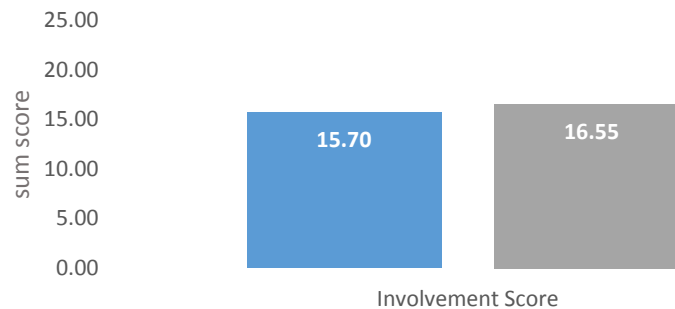


Figure 17. Changes in Involvement Ratings of School Personnel by Year

1.3.6 Perceptions Reported by School Personnel of Student College-Going Efficacy

In Year 2, we asked school personnel for the first time to respond to several items that would measure their perceptions of student efficacy related to college-going topics (e.g., *I can go to college after high school*). Items came from Gibbons (2005) and utilized a four-point Likert-type response scale (1 = not at all sure, 2 = somewhat sure, 3 = sure, 4 = very sure). The option of *not applicable* was also offered, but not included in averaging item scores.

The top three efficacy items included that students (1) know enough about computers to get into college, (2) can choose the high school classes needed to get into a good college, and (3) can go to college after high school. Personnel reported the lowest ratings when asked if (1) the majority of students will not attend college but will seek a job or enter the military and (2) when asked about the ability of students to earn A's and B's in college. (See Table 17). Since these are new survey items, we will closely monitor these trends as personnel perceptions of students change over time.

TABLE 17: PERCEPTIONS REPORTED BY SCHOOL PERSONNEL OF STUDENT COLLEGE-GOING EFFICACY

How sure are you that students will be able to do the following?	N	M	SD
Know enough about computers to get into college	783	2.88	.84
Can choose the high school classes needed to get into a good college	781	2.64	.82
Can go to college after high school	784	2.58	.84
Will be eligible to apply to a postsecondary institution	772	2.55	.81
Can get good grades in high school science classes	779	2.51	.76
Can make an educational plan that will prepare them for college	769	2.49	.82
Can get good grades in high school math classes	781	2.43	.79
Could finish college and receive a college degree	774	2.43	.82
Could get A's and B's in college	780	2.29	.82
Will not attend (college) but will seek a job or enter the military	766	2.00	.81

Source: Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

1.3.7 Sustainability of GEAR UP Activities

In Year 2, we asked school personnel in middle schools that would no longer continue in GEAR UP during SY2016-17 to respond to 10 items designed to measure their perceptions about the sustainability of GEAR UP activities (e.g., mentoring, tutoring, college visits, and so forth). We asked participants to use a four-point Likert-type response scale to indicate the extent to which they believed their schools would continue to promote each of the 10 activities next year (1 = not at all, 2 = slightly, 3 = moderately, 4 = extremely). A fifth option *does not apply* was also offered, but not included in calculating mean ratings.

As noted in Table 18, respondents reported most confidence about their school's ability to sustain (1) academic support ($M = 4.29$; $SD = .88$), (2) family involvement ($M = 4.02$; $SD = .93$), (3) mentoring ($M = 3.93$; $SD = 1.01$), (4) community support ($M = 3.87$; $SD = 1.00$), and (5) life skills development ($M = 3.91$; $SD = .99$). They were least confident that they would be able to sustain financial aid literacy ($M = 3.02$; $SD = 1.30$) and college application week activities ($M = 3.05$; $SD = 1.42$).

Also, notably, almost 60% of respondents felt moderately or extremely confident that their school could sustain college visits. Nearly 55% felt similarly about their ability to sustain partnerships with higher education and 52% about maintaining access to college professionals.

	N	Does Not Apply	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
Family involvement	305	3%	3%	17%	44%	33%
Mentoring	304	4%	4%	17%	44%	31%
Academic support	302	2%	2%	9%	38%	48%
Financial aid literacy	301	20%	12%	25%	32%	11%
Partnership with institutions of higher education	303	13%	8%	24%	37%	18%
Community support	303	4%	5%	19%	46%	27%
College visits	303	6%	10%	26%	39%	20%
Access to college professionals	303	10%	12%	26%	35%	17%
Life skills development	302	4%	4%	21%	41%	30%
College application week	302	23%	12%	20%	28%	17%

Source: Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

1.3.8 Additional Comments

The final item on the school personnel survey asked respondents to provide any additional comments. In Year 2, 76 respondents out of 805 responded. Of these, four stated they had nothing further to add and seven provided a response that could not be categorized. We divided the remaining 65 responses into four overarching themes. Table 19 shows the categorization of responses by theme, sub-theme, and count. **Academics** was the most frequently identified theme ($n = 21$), followed by **helpfulness** and **motivation** ($n = 18$), and **concerns** ($n = 8$).

Table 19. Thematic Analysis of Additional Survey Comments

Theme	Sub-Themes	Count of Responses
Helpfulness	GEAR UP is helpful	10
	GEAR UP is not helpful	2
	Need better communication about the GEAR UP program	6
	Total	18
Motivation	Motivation among staff	2
	Motivation among students	16
	Total	18
Concerns	At-risk students	1
	Funding	5
	Higher education saturation	2
	Total	8
Academics	Rigor of classes	5
	Academic preparation	2
	Special education	4
	Culture change	10
	Total	21

Source: Year 2 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey

The 21 respondents who commented on **Academics** noted room for improvement in the CGC and overall rigor in advanced and AP courses. In addition, a few comments conveyed the perception that the local culture was not supportive of academic rigor. For example, two respondent stated:

Academic success is not stressed by families in many households,

The expectations are lowered to accommodate the pressure teachers feel to make sure students graduate. This may result in students having a false sense of their level of college preparedness.

Eighteen respondents mentioned **motivation** in terms of going to, or encouraging students to, attend college. Two comments referred to GEAR UP staff and 16 to students. In most cases, respondents indicated that they believed students had the ability to achieve a college education, but questioned whether or not they understood the importance of college to their futures. One respondent noted:

Our students have the ability and the tools, but sometimes don't see the need to get a degree and make life easier for themselves.

The two comments related to staff applauded the efforts to build a CGC. As one respondent noted,

Our counselors really work with students to help them build a schedule that will prepare them for college. We offer after-school tutoring in multiple subjects to help students with their current classes and ACT/SAT prep.... Our administrators bring in lots of guest speakers throughout the year.

Twelve respondents commented on the **helpfulness** of the GEAR UP program, 10 of whom agreed that the program had a positive impact on their school and its students. Most respondents specifically mentioned the importance of GEAR UP funding for their school's activities. One respondent said,

Without GEAR UP my school would not be able to keep going with all of the programs GEAR UP offers because of not having the funding to provide them.

The other two comments detailed a sense of unfamiliarity with GEAR UP, stating that they were not sure which activities were GEAR UP-funded, and whether they were relevant to the goal of increasing college readiness. One respondent commented,

Our school does a lot of these activities but I am unsure if they are GEAR UP activities. Only a select group of teachers know about GEAR UP, and most of us are unaware of what they do and what they do at our school.

2. Year 2 Focus Group Results

Our second set of analyses summarizes the results of site and county coordinator focus group interviews conducted during Year 2 of the program (2015-16). We categorized the results under seven major theme areas: (1) communication, roles, and resources; (2) tutoring, mentoring, and academic preparation; (3) college awareness services; (4) school support and buy-in; (5) GEAR UP partners; (6) impact and sustainability; and (7) perceptions of GEAR UP activities.

2.1 Communication, Roles, and Resources

2.1.1 Resources and Training

Site coordinators reported great satisfaction with the resources provided by GEAR UP, especially the CFVW website and the work plan.

Being able to get those free resources from the CFVW site is amazing because you can order them for your whole eighth grade class and it doesn't cost a penny and you can give the kids financial aid brochures and college brochures.

Site coordinators offered very positive feedback about the work plan this year as well, noting specifics like how it functions as a checklist, shows the interconnections and staging of the work, keeps the work on budget, and facilitates assistance from other site coordinators.

Yes, because everything connects. It's like a big puzzle. It just has steps.

The chart is so easy to read. It was just very handy to go in and say, 'This is what I ...' because you got high school and middle. It laid it all out for every age group.

That's what's good about having the work plan is that we're all on the same page; we all roughly know what we need to do in order to get the GEAR UP thing accomplished. That's the best thing about it.

Several site coordinators also noted that the work plan process was much improved over the previous year (the first year of this grant). They noted specifically having more time to complete the plan, and that they had more experience, being more accustomed to the work plan and its timelines.

Many other resources were cited as helpful, including the GEAR UP website, the tool kit (“I use it all the time”), county coordinators, and the Commission staff.

All the emails that [our regional program director] sends us, tool kits, everything has been pretty much laid out. We've had everything we could possibly get our hands on.

During the focus groups, site coordinators discussed purchasing issues and options. That is, some coordinators stated that they were constrained to purchase only from West Virginia vendors; others reported that they were not. This confusion may relate to county procurement procedures rather than to GEAR UP:

I know that with my county, we had a huge road block with only being able to use West Virginia state businesses to order our electronics and stuff. For example, I just bought eight laptops. They were over \$700 apiece and the exact same equivalent laptop is \$250 at Walmart. So, because we went with our contracted person, we got outdated brand-new equipment with only like i3 processors in them.

Site coordinators offered some ideas for improvement. One group suggested that GEAR UP offer training to teachers to use the GEAR UP-purchased technology.

In the beginning, GEAR UP said we don't want the schools to have to pay for anything that's GEAR UP related but if you get new technology those teachers have to be trained on that technology and the training isn't included in the budget and ... so the school had to pay for the training on several of the things we purchased, and we don't have the money.

One coordinator suggested that it would be worthwhile for GEAR UP staff occasionally to visit the schools, offering a new face and enthusiasm to inspire educators and students.

It'd be cool, especially around the college and exploration week, for somebody to come in and get them all geared up for that.

County coordinators had several observations about the resources provided through the program, including the fact that GEAR UP helped purchase technology that would enhance the classroom, such as computers, iPads, calculators, and other items that students could use daily. Several schools purchased computers to enhance the capacity of the counseling office:

When students are coming in to do FAFSA, they can do it right there instead of having to beg a teacher for a classroom, or use a room that's maybe designated for something else.

They reported collateral benefits—the purchase of tablets can support a school's transition to all on-line textbooks, for example.

Participants also noted that purchasing technology may also help garner buy-in among teachers who were not otherwise receiving GEAR UP support. Especially within the cohort group, teachers benefit from classroom enhancements, the purchase of a tutoring program, and guidance on using the enhancements.

2.1.2 Roles, Relationships, and Communication

County coordinators generally felt that their role had not changed in the second year, or had perhaps become easier. Some were very positive about the preparation that GEAR UP had provided for this role:

The training makes me look good, and now it looks like I'm coming up with all of these ideas in my county, but really it's because of GEAR UP that that happened. Without GEAR UP, it would be a very different situation.

One stated that the preparation had been inadequate, noting however having to miss several meetings, and that having a mentor or some other way to gain information from the missed meetings would have been valuable.

All the county coordinators emphasized the financial elements of their role, signing requisitions for site coordinators, monitoring their budget plans, and keeping track of what site coordinators were spending. They noted interactions with site coordinators, including attendance at site coordinator meetings in Charleston, and communicating at least weekly about requisitions.

A lot of the things that I do is to make sure that they're following correct county procedures for budgeting, purchasing, making sure that all of the county policies are followed, and everything's done. I coordinate between the schools a lot of times...

They also noted the importance of their relationships with Commission regional staff, turning to them for answers and getting back to the site coordinators with clarifications.

County coordinators noted additional ways that they had provided assistance to site coordinators—helping to locate contacts, serving as a chaperone, providing technology assistance, and just being available.

If they're planning a college visit, and maybe they need help finding contacts at the specific college, or even if they need someone to go on the day of, if they come the day of and they're short an adult and they need that to meet the number of people who are chaperones, so really whatever they need.

They offered a few ideas for improving their role, including more access to the information that site coordinators send to the Commission coordinator, and more planned, formal meetings with the site coordinators. None reported any concerns about turnover in the site coordinator role.

County coordinators discussed their role as coordinator of the local access and success advisory council meetings. Several reported not having been able to hold all the required meetings, or not within the required timeline. They described their meeting agendas as primarily informational, concerning the work plan and scheduled events.

Each one's different The first one may be centered around the college application week, so we were saying what we were going to do with that, and what the members of the group were going to provide in the community, if they had signs, or if they were going to participate and wear their little badges and say that they graduated from such-and-such college, just so that they're involved.

Site coordinators spoke very positively about their relationships and interactions with the regional Commission program directors, commenting that they provide very good information and are responsive and engaged in the work.

I was going to list [our regional program director] as a resource.

[Our regional program director] is awesome, amazing.

I think [our regional program director] has visited all of our schools at least once this year, too.

A lot of times [our regional program director] will come to the event, which is a big support.

[Our regional program director] has never left us to wander or be alone. Always been there.

They noted a variety of ways that they interact: including daily emails, event planning, budgeting questions or revisions, reminders, or help with a question or problem.

Their perspectives on their relationships with county coordinators were more mixed, with some site coordinators having had less than ideal experiences. Those reporting sound relationships noted especially how their county coordinator had helped with financial issues, budgeting, and regular updates.

Our county coordinator's great, tries to help in any way possible.... our go-to person for the business office. Now financially everything that we spend has to go through [that] office but [our county coordinator] rubber-stamps it. If we have it in our budget, and we want to spend it, you just merely have to go by and get [the signature].

Another reported that their county coordinator was educated, informed, and accessible. Some coordinators also noted that the county coordinator could be very helpful in expediting matters when something had to go through the county bureaucracy.

We can get it done in two days instead of waiting the two weeks. That's the good thing about having the county coordinator is that anything that needs to go through the board will go through the board rather quickly because the county coordinator's there.

The site coordinators also appreciated being able to send all the paperwork through the county coordinator and know that it would be distributed to the appropriate places.

Some issues identified by site coordinators appeared to relate to specific individuals selected to fill the county coordinator role, as distinguished from the role itself.

Ours is not helpful. It's a continuation of last year's unhelpfulness. We pretty much bypass [the county coordinator] and send all of our stuff to our finance department and it gets taken care of that way.

Site coordinators also noted some issues inherent in the position. They thought that the fact the county coordinator position is not directly paid by the grant might discourage good candidates and discourage those in the position from giving the role a lot of attention:

Sometimes you get what you pay for so ... you know what I mean you don't have to put a lot of thought into it if you're not getting paid for it.

Another site coordinator noted that people in the role have other roles as well and that fact might result in less priority being given to the GEAR UP role.

Since some high schools did not serve priority group students during Years 1 and 2 of the program, they had no prior experience with GEAR UP. In these cases, some middle school site coordinators noted they had worked with the staff in those high schools to ensure a smooth middle-to-high school transition for cohort students in the coming year:

Our middle school counselors set up time with [the] high school counselors [who were going to be GEAR UP site coordinators next year].... The GEAR UP

coordinator was there, and we talked about what we've done here in our school, and this is what you can expect is going to happen once you get into high school with GEAR UP.

Some middle school site coordinators, however, did not take steps to actively facilitate this transition. In these instances, site coordinators reported that the high schools their students would be attending next year were unaware of GEAR UP. In one example, the students inquired about continuation of GEAR UP services:

What about our GEAR UP grant and when are we going to get this and where are you going to take us?' It was the first time they had ever heard the word GEAR UP and they looked at us, and they said what are you talking about?

Like the site coordinators, **county coordinators** spoke positively about their relationships with regional Commission staff. Several said their primary interactions with the Commission occurred at the Charleston site coordinator meetings, but others reported more frequent interaction and their responsiveness.

[Our regional program director] came down when we did our first meeting with our community stakeholders that we had, our advisory board. Came down and helped me with that. I attended a couple webinars online to understand about that group and what we needed to go over in that. I really have to say that a lot of the reason I feel like I help with GEAR UP and I know what I'm doing is because of [our regional program director]. Always there. A good teacher. If I just have questions about anything [our regional program director] immediately gets back with me and completely explains it.

In terms of interactions with site coordinators, several county coordinators reported that most of their interactions were by email, and some noted their interest in being more involved.

I'm not sure there's always a total communication ... I see their travel requests. I see their bus requests, but not always ... The very last activity that we had, I didn't know about it until it was over. It was a really good activity. I would love to have gone.

Those county coordinators who reported more interaction with site coordinators, and with the schools, seemed often to have another role that promoted that interaction, often by taking them out into the schools.

For me, my [other role in the county] has really helped, too. I helped a lot with . . . finding out what the needs were in the school, and what we did use as far as classroom enhancements.

GEAR UP flows so well with my regular job responsibilities that I don't, in my head, compartmentalize, "I am here for GEAR UP." I'm at the schools probably once a week.

Not surprisingly, given how positively **site coordinators** spoke of their relationships with Commission personnel, they commend the accessibility and responsiveness of their communication at all levels.

[Our regional program director] is always available. Always.

[Our regional program director]—every time I need anything always writes back with the answer ... very, very quickly.

By cell phone, email, or office phone. And if [our regional program director] doesn't pick up, I get a call back.

I even texted [a Commission employee] this morning and had a response in less than two minutes.

I've talked to [our regional program director] over spring break until 10:00 at night.

This kind of communication, they noted, also reflects the commitment of Commission staff to serving students.

In terms of communication with county coordinators, site coordinator perceptions—like those of their relationships in general—were mixed. On the one hand, a site coordinator reported:

We talk all the time.

Others noted continual issues:

Like when I was developing my budget, everything that I submitted was wrong.

Site coordinators stated that their opportunities to interact with other site coordinators were adequate. They noted that it was easy to reach out to other site coordinators with questions or seeking feedback, in particular from experienced coordinators. A couple of coordinators who were already business colleagues or friends found that those previous interactions facilitated their GEAR UP work.

A few site coordinators noted the positive impact of communicating among schools. Traveling with other schools on trips was helpful because it provided a foundation for eighth graders now going to high school, and a transition experience.

Most **county coordinators** spoke of their communication with site coordinators in terms of the processes of budget review and other financial processes. One coordinator suggested that a meeting with just the county coordinators might be a good way to start the year. One complained about the perceived lack of communication from site coordinators, and their resistance to the county procedure that checks are written only once a month.

2.2 Tutoring, Mentoring, and Academic Preparation

2.2.1 GEAR UP Tutoring/Academic Services

Site coordinators spoke extensively about tutoring, several with great regret about the anticipated loss of tutoring support next year.

I hate we're going to lose our tutoring next year.

We have tutoring for the math and the English, and when this grant leaves, I don't have anybody that's going to volunteer four hours a week to sit and hang out with kids and work on their math and English before or after school.

They also had specific comments about what had worked for their situations and what had not. Several coordinators noted how difficult it had been to ensure that students attended after-school tutoring. Many had commitments like sports teams; other simply wanted to do other things and not delay often lengthy bus rides home in rural areas. Some schools could not offer the delayed bus service. As a result, a few schools offered tutoring during the day:

We did ours in the morning, and every tutor session we had at least 10 kids in it every day. Especially in the morning, because then our sports guys could come in. As soon as they got off the bus, they could eat breakfast in there. We don't have any other form of tutoring at all. Some of our kids we even had to sign contracts to help them say, okay, if I don't do these things and don't try, I am going to fail this year. One of the things on there to help them was, you can go to this teacher, these times, for your tutoring.

Some site coordinators turned to technology as an option. One school purchased a technology-based tutoring program and offered it during the day. Math classes used it with all eighth grade math students once a week, but students more in need of tutoring also worked with it every day, mid-day.

County coordinators commented on the issues with after-school tutoring, generally noting problems rather than successes.

We still have the after-school tutors, which is not a very successful program. We pay adults to come, we pay adults to stay. We also have another after-school program that meets the same day and kind of eases the transportation issues, but for high school kids staying after school, it's not always the best option, especially in a rural county where it takes you an hour to get home.

2.2.2 Transition to High School

Site and county coordinators observed that in various ways GEAR UP had definitely played a role in helping students prepare for their transition to high school.

The GEAR UP U! camp is going to be excellent because all our schools are going to be down there. Eight students from each school. They're going to make those friendships and carry over.

Several site coordinators noted the importance of eighth grade orientation. It provides a venue for introductions:

So I'm going to present myself as their cohort coordinator for next year.

The high school principal's coming in and meeting with the eighth grade to introduce himself... the high school counselor will be their GEAR UP counselor next year.

Site coordinators reported that they had explained some of what GEAR UP would offer in high school:

I go into the classrooms that have eighth graders, and I tell them what we're going to be doing next year when they're in ninth grade. You know, college visits and all that.

Others reported lecturing students about the importance of “hitting the ground running” if they hope to pursue a college education.

They just gave them more knowledge of what they need to be doing when they're in high school, keep their grades up, just reinforces what teachers tell their kids no matter what.

At least one site coordinator was a little uncertain about the role next year:

I feel a little clueless about what I'm being handed next year other than just talking to the current cohort coordinator and seeing what that coordinator has done. I'll be interested to see our work plan and that kind of thing.

Both site and county coordinators commented on arranging visits by eighth graders to the high schools where they met staff members, toured the halls, and saw different career programs in action.

At [a GEAR UP high school], for example, they bring each [middle] school [to the high school] on one day. They have an assembly with some of the faculty members, and tell them about programs. They eat lunch there. They get to choose three CTE programs that they might be interested in, that they could do later as a sophomore or junior, and they actually get to go in those classes and spend 30 minutes. They spend the entire day, so that piques their interest about high school. It's exciting for them.

We do make sure that all of our eighth graders get into the career technical center. We do work with [a regional college] to make sure that they either come in to each of our middle schools or we get a visit with them. Of course, a lot of that was done with tech-prep money—that we no longer get through the state.

Another approach noted by a county coordinator was “transition days” that high schools hosted for eighth graders. It was also pointed out that schools housing grades 7 through 12 may already have a structure in place for the transition. One county coordinator noted that their previous experience with the program made it unlikely that transition would be a problem.

We were in the old grant, so we've done it before. I think the transition is going to be easy. I really haven't planned a lot, because they know what's coming, and they've done it before.

2.2.3 Mentoring

Both site and county coordinators offered positive reflections on mentoring. Site coordinators reported that the presence of WV GEAR UP had significantly enhanced the mentoring programs already in place.

It's not that we didn't have that person but knowing that we had the work plan The mentor did extra activities with them after school The mentor has developed a really close rapport with this eighth grade, more so than, I think, in the past.

For others, the mentoring program was new to the campus. Site coordinators were asked to nominate mentor candidates, and the selection and training was handled by the supervisors.

At the beginning of the school year, site coordinators were asked to choose a mentor, somebody that we knew would be reliable and available to the students and those mentor candidates were passed on to our supervisors and then they kind of took it from there.

On one campus, the mentors played an important role in boosting awareness and buy-in. Each month, the mentors contacted a different college, which led to the dean of a historically black institution of higher education making a visit to the school.

Both site and county coordinators stated that they could sustain the mentoring beyond GEAR UP:

We can sustain a mentoring program. The teachers who are already mentors, that's at no cost. They can do that during the day, so I can see mentoring being something that you could sustain.

2.3 College Awareness Services

Site coordinators and county coordinators identified college visits and financial aid workshops as the most common college awareness services with GEAR UP students, with college visits the best received by students. Many site coordinators also pointed out the value of more informal marketing and information efforts, such as college-themed bulletin boards that prompted discussions among students and between students and teachers.

2.3.1 College Visits

Visits were the most frequently cited college awareness activity and also the most popular with students. Many county and site coordinators indicated it was important for students to have more than one visit per academic year.

They're not just going to one college but they're going to different ones across the state. I think it gives the kids an opportunity to see that there's more than one school to go to.

Site and county coordinators also believed the best college visits do far more than visit vacant classrooms and cover the basics about college. After failing to make inroads at a college admissions office, one site coordinator worked directly with a contact in that college's health science school. The result was a detail-rich visit in which students dusted for latent prints at a simulated crime scene and practiced CPR on dummies at the medical school. Two coordinators mentioned the value of interactive activities, such as college visits that included a student performance or visits to robotics and radiology labs. Added a county coordinator:

Some colleges want to try to make sure that students see not just the curricular side but also some of the other things that entice students to come to a college.

One site coordinator said the Commission was a valuable conduit in setting up college visits. This coordinator explained how a GEAR UP regional director helped locate a charter bus for a long trip to a college when the alternative was a less comfortable school bus. Two county coordinators also believed college visits would not have been possible without Commission funding.

Without GEAR UP, we would not be able to send our students on as many eighth grade college visits.

Two site coordinators were concerned about costs that they had to pay up front as part of college visits. This issue mainly occurred in districts where coordinators paid for food and incidentals for college visits and waited for reimbursement. In one district facing budget reductions, a coordinator noted there was a longer-than-expected wait to receive reimbursement.

2.3.2 Financial Aid Awareness

Site and county coordinators cited a variety of activities on financial aid awareness, including guest speakers and workshops for students and parents/guardians. One activity frequently noted was presentations on 529 accounts to parents/guardians of grade 8 students. However, some site coordinators believed these were not effective, as parents/guardians believed eighth grade was too late to open these accounts. In some cases, parents/guardians expressed interest, but only for their younger elementary-grade children. More successful in the view of site coordinators were workshops that examined the differences between grants and loans and discussed scholarships. Another site coordinator witnessed many college-related conversations between students and their parents/guardians during financial aid events.

2.3.3 Low-Cost Activities

Site coordinators said that more informal activities at schools can have a major effect on building a college-going culture. Examples were college-themed bulletin boards in central locations around the school. One school developed a map showing where various teachers and administrators attended college, which served as a starting point for discussions between teachers and students. Another school created a college bulletin board of the month, spotlighting a specific institution and contacting that institution to provide information. Several site coordinators also said they used the CFWV website and resources to build their knowledge of expectations for college.

2.3.4 College Days

Other GEAR UP activities cited by schools included college decision days and senior award days. Some site coordinators sought to involve colleges in these events, with mixed success. Coordinators believed that larger colleges were less likely to send representatives. Looking to the future, one county coordinator said the district is planning to expand its college day as a result of its GEAR UP experiences.

We're moving college day from a single school into the local armory, and we're inviting parents. It will be a much bigger and I think more useful event.

Some coordinators noted that college awareness activities produced unexpected results, particularly at K-8 schools, as even elementary-grade youngsters learned about college. Some districts also invited younger students to college decision days with GEAR UP priority students. A county coordinator found that these activities had ripple effects on elementary-grade students.

We are no longer just talking to high school students about college and going to college. We are starting with kindergarten, and we're talking about college all the time, so kids are exposed to that a lot more than what we used to do. I think that's the biggest impact that I have seen in our county, from GEAR UP, is just the knowledge and awareness is reaching many more students.

2.3.5 Services for Priority Students

Site coordinators working with high school seniors cited college visits and FAFSA assistance as the most prevalent GEAR UP activities. One site coordinator tried to offer one college visit per month for these students, which required the coordinator to work closely with the school board and to pay for some costs and then await reimbursement. Other site coordinators sought to provide seniors with two or more visits. One challenge, however, is that in many cases priority students began with little or no understanding of PSE.

FAFSA completion was another major activity, as site coordinators said they had certain targets to meet in the percent of seniors with a completed federal form. As one stated, there is “*more of a deadline*” with seniors because of the need to finish applications and financial aid forms. One county coordinator said technology purchased through the grant was another success factor for schools. Several schools purchased computers for the counseling office so that students could have a convenient way to complete FAFSA instead of having to find a makeshift space or computers in a less private area such as a classroom. Another county coordinator cited a FAFSA completion rate of 75% for priority students and credited the progress largely to financial aid workshops. Said this coordinator:

Students now know the importance of FAFSAs, and staff have done a phenomenal job.

At one school with priority students, the GEAR UP site coordinator encouraged parents/guardians to attend college decision days although parents/guardians of seniors rarely participated in other activities. Another site coordinator scheduled financial aid and other workshops on evenings before school basketball games, with some success.

2.4 School Support and Buy-In

Many focus group participants believed that buy-in at their schools increased in Year 2 of the grant. Some credited this trend to principal and administrator leadership while others said an increase in program activities spurred greater knowledge and buy-in among staff. County coordinators stated:

I think it has [increased] because more people are understanding what GEAR UP is and what the purpose of it is by just the activities that are actually going on.... Summer schools are actually doing tutoring through GEAR UP funds. Parents know that, I think. Teachers know that.

The principals were directly involved with GEAR UP and directly involved with setting everything up. They saw first-hand the difference it made, and the climate change in their building as far as pro-postsecondary education.

Site coordinators agreed that school staff were more engaged in Year 2. One noted that GEAR UP provided teachers with packets of lessons on college and career readiness, which teachers and counselors used. Another cited more informal conversations that took place between students and teachers about college.

I come from a small school so it's hard for me to judge that because all my teachers really do work together as a family... but as far as buy-in, I think they

[teachers] have more conversations with students than they did before, especially about their own experiences in college.

However, the consensus on improved buy-in was not universal. One county coordinator said whole-school buy-in was still lacking, even though those who work with the GEAR UP cohort were more involved.

Especially within the cohort group, I think there's teacher buy-in. I think where we may lack, I would say, is the rest of the school; getting the other teachers that aren't a part of the cohort group, and getting them to buy in as a whole school, because that's what you need for the long-term sustainability, is beyond just those ... For us, it's probably four or five core teachers that are in that particular grade level.

Site coordinators had mixed views on whether parent involvement had increased in Year 2 of the grant. One identified a core of parents/guardians active in the program, but stated that lack of parent understanding of PSE can be a barrier. Many coordinators cited low turnout at events, including financial aid nights.

Another challenge is that students often do not tell parents/guardians about GEAR UP activities; some site coordinators said that they had to call families to get last-minute permission for students to attend field trips. Asked to identify successful strategies, several said that scheduling parent activities alongside other events—such as a basketball game or music/drama performance—was an effective way to get parents/guardians to the school to hear about GEAR UP. Another site coordinator found success in posting GEAR UP information on the school's Facebook page.

Last year, it was like beating my head against the wall—I didn't have anybody showing up. This year parents would follow the Facebook page and that's how I was able to get the word out.

Only a few coordinators cited teacher professional development as a mechanism to build buy-in. In addition to the packets of college and career readiness information cited above, one county plans to add FAFSA and discussion of the new SAT in professional development sessions for counselors and teachers, respectively. These additions were made in part due to information provided by GEAR UP.

2.5 GEAR UP Partners

Overall, most county and site coordinators cited progress in the past year as community and university partners became more knowledgeable about the program. These findings reflected progress in establishing GEAR UP as a critical component of a district or school's efforts to promote college and career readiness. As one site coordinator stated:

We don't have to explain what GEAR UP is anymore. When I talk to them they know what it is.

Despite these gains, some coordinators cited challenges. Chief among them were a lack of community partners in isolated rural areas and college and career advisory councils that convened only occasionally during the year.

2.5.1 College/University Partners

Working to set up college visits was the primary connection between GEAR UP programs and postsecondary institutions. Site coordinators believed that GEAR UP was often the driving force in creating these links, although some colleges were active partners in scheduling effective, engaging visits. Some colleges welcomed the idea of tailoring college visits to the grade 8 cohort. Said a site coordinator:

I have talked to many colleges. They've bent over backwards. I would really think that they'd be looking at juniors and seniors, but the mindset in higher ed is to target these middle school kids. That's where the research and all the trend is, is to target this younger audience. Everybody that I've talked to, and we've been a lot of places, they've bent over backwards to help us.

One site coordinator cited a state university that provided tours of its aviation center as part of the GEAR UP student visit, while another described how a college health science center developed hands-on activities for those interested in medicine. Overall, most county and site coordinators could cite examples of at least one postsecondary institution active in GEAR UP beyond college visits. Most had established relationships with at least one college that would answer their questions and visit schools for college decision days and other events. Said one county coordinator:

If I have questions, just general questions about school or any requirements or any of those type things, I can just pick up the phone and call them, and they're very beneficial as far as being an information resource for us.

These more in-depth relationships were important for schools with GEAR UP priority students, as some site coordinators said they could call their college contacts to ask virtually any question in the college application and decision process. Said one site coordinator:

It's important if your kids are going to a particular school that you can direct them to one specific person as opposed to, "Well, here's the admissions office. Just call their 800 number and hope for the best." You need that direct connection for our kids.

A county coordinator described an in-depth partnership with a college that provides professional development to district teachers as well as teacher education graduates for possible employment. In this case, a professional development specialist from the college also sits on the county's college and career advisory board.

We send them kids, and we get teachers from them. We've just always had a really, really great relationship.

This positive view of college partners was not universal, however. Two site coordinators said they did not have any colleges in their counties, which required long trips for any college visits. In these cases, except for occasional college visits, there were no college partners for the school. Two coordinators also were unhappy that a major university in the state would not send representatives to attend college days or senior award ceremonies.

2.5.2 Community and Other Partners

Site and county coordinators had mixed views on the extent of community partner involvement in GEAR UP. Those with strong involvement listed partners such as a county extension office, banks, and small businesses as active in their programs. However, some cited little or no community involvement, and this situation was most prevalent in isolated rural areas where a small number of businesses are often asked to help numerous causes. Typical were these comments from coordinators:

There's only a few [businesses], and they tend to get spread very thin because they're on every council known to man.

We don't have a lot of businesses, plus we're a coal county, which just shut down Our local businesses are stretched like rubber bands. Everybody hits them up.

Others said business and community involvement was moderate to strong. Two site coordinators described community involvement in a “*reality game*” in which students had to confront various challenges they would face as adults, including selecting jobs and managing budgets.

Everybody was broke after half an hour. One student said, “I'm taking my kids to work with me. I can't afford daycare.” I'm like, “You can't do that.”

Coordinators asked community partners to participate on local college access and success advisory board councils in each county. Yet many coordinators said they had difficulty gaining participation at regular meetings. One county coordinator convened a new council in the 2015-16 school year to try to build more support. Others cited some success by communicating program information and seeking input via e-mail and social media, in addition to more formal meetings.

We've got an advisory board that doesn't meet as much as we should because of the organization of it and lack of time on my part.... That's the truth. We need to meet more.

People are stretched to the limits. To get everyone to come together at the same time and asking them to give up their time... it's difficult to get everyone there. I don't need everyone at the same time, but we'd like for everyone to be on the same page.

Other coordinators were mixed or positive about the experience of their councils. One said advisory council members attended FAFSA events and college nights. Another noted that members of the council were easy to reach, even if they could not make meetings.

2.6 Impact and Sustainability

2.6.1 Impact: What is Success in GEAR UP?

We asked focus group participants to identify what success in GEAR UP looked like at their schools. Building a schoolwide CGC, improved student attitudes, and improved college knowledge/planning were among the major impacts cited by participants. Some also said GEAR UP expanded the school's capacity in school counseling.

Many site coordinators believed that the schoolwide college culture impacted not only the GEAR UP cohort but students at lower grades, including elementary grades for those schools with a K-8 focus. As two site coordinators commented:

If an older student... wears a college t-shirt, I've heard little kids talking, "She has a Concord shirt on," or, "He has a WVU shirt." I've just observed that they do that and I hadn't noticed that before. I think they're more aware that there are schools out there.

I think it's just impacted the whole school, because everyone's involved and elementary, K to 4 teachers, especially during college exploration, those children are talking now about different colleges. Even though they may not know exactly what college is, they know the words Marshall, WVU, or Concord.

But for students in the GEAR UP cohort, and for GEAR UP priority students, staff have recognized a greater interest among students in planning for the future. This may occur in casual conversations about colleges and careers as well as in the overall behavior of students in middle or high school. As one site coordinator stated:

I've seen a change in students.... [citing one student] He was not the kind of kid that was ready to accept the fact that he would go to college. Now he has changed his mind.

Site coordinators noted the value of college visits and their capacity to build relationships between students and teachers/administrators. They said that the visits prompted new and richer discussions about the future.

Kids now realize that college is something that they can do. There's all these different options out there. It's not that you have to go to school for four years, there's other options. They're more aware of their options.

Another benefit of GEAR UP is that it aligns closely with the state goal that middle schoolers develop a college and career plan. As a result, grade 8 students often learn about the types of courses they should take in high school to position themselves for college attendance. In at least one district, this alignment helped increase attendance at high school transition meetings for families last year. As site coordinators noted:

I don't think I'd have the turnout for transition night as I did if it weren't for GEAR UP. Had we not been planning for an entire two years, and I was talking about career clusters, they wouldn't have a clue what I was talking about.

Students already say, “If I want to do health science, I’m going to have to take biology, chemistry, anatomy, and physiology. And if I want certain scholarships then I probably need to take honors classes.” They’re more aware now with what it’s going to take.

One site coordinator also believed that GEAR UP’s integration with the College Foundation of West Virginia had a major impact on students and schools. This coordinator, also a school counselor, had a basic understanding of CFWV.com but gained increased knowledge through GEAR UP that deepened this understanding and the ability to convey information to students and families.

It’s really enhanced my counseling because I was already doing the CFWV... but I know more about the site now and there’s so much on there that I didn’t know before and I can use it... and it’s really helped me in my profession. I will continue many of the things that we have done.

A county coordinator also saw a positive impact of GEAR UP on counseling because the counselors have become more adept at advising students about PSE and financial aid options. Said one counselor:

I’ve seen [a school counselor] become a different person over the last two years, and not only in relating to the students, but the services offered to them.

2.6.2 Sustainability of Services for Future Non-GEAR UP Students

Site and county coordinators said that they hoped that some activities such as college visits will continue at their middle or K-8 schools after the GEAR UP cohort departs for grade 9, as these activities were most popular among students. The challenge is to find funding for transportation and food for students. Site coordinators also cited other activities that might continue, including use of the CFWV.com website and resource use by counselors at two schools, a mentoring program at one school, and a “reality store” game at another school in which students examined career and other challenges in adulthood.

However, many coordinators said that, given budget challenges, activities that cost little or no money were the most likely events to continue at their schools. These include door decoration contests and college t-shirt/sweatshirt days, where teachers wear apparel from their college alma maters. Several indicated that recent budget cuts had affected many aspects of school budgets:

Money-wise, it’s just not happening for us to continue this work.

We’re not going to have the budget to continue many activities with students.

Other challenges impacting sustainability include lack of time among staff and loss of institutional memory about GEAR UP. One coordinator noted that if teachers leave their jobs, they take their knowledge of GEAR UP with them. One also cited competing demands as a challenge for sustainability, stating that the past two years there was a “mandate” to provide services and that will disappear.

2.7 Perceptions of GEAR UP Activities

2.7.1 What is Working Well?

Focus group participants felt that GEAR UP activities expanded greatly in Year 2 as programs became more established within public schools. Many believed there was a rush to launch activities in the first year of the grant, but that staff had more time to plan the 2015-16 school year programming to reflect student and school priorities as well as project goals. Two county coordinators cited the difference between Year 1 and Year 2:

Everyone was kind of just thrown into it [last year]. “You have this money, we need a budget.” They felt really uncomfortable. Once we knew what to expect, I think everyone just felt much more comfortable this year.”

Last year I felt like we were totally rushed, and we put some things together. This year, we were more calculated and were able to have more events than we did last year.

This added time for planning also yielded unexpected results, such as a college-is-possible culture that extends from elementary school to high school in some counties. Some site coordinators also credited the Commission with providing assistance along with a framework for student success.

The overwhelming majority of site coordinators and county coordinators described college visits as a successful activity. They believed that these visits enabled GEAR UP cohort and priority students to learn about college options, observe classrooms, and in some cases participate in hands-on activities in laboratory settings. Coordinators believed these experiences were helpful because many participants would be the first in their families to attend college. Prior to GEAR UP, students may go on visits to a local technical institute, but these college visits provided students with a breadth of experiences. This comment reflected the views of many coordinators:

They’re not just going to one college, but they’re going to different ones across the state. I think it gives the kids an opportunity to see that there’s more than one thing out there or one school to go to.

Another topic cited by site and county coordinators was career awareness, as students in some districts were researching careers. Two site coordinators also listed technology, as tablets for seventh graders and iPads for eighth graders had a significant impact with daily use.

Regarding priority students, site coordinators identified FAFSA workshops as essential to ensure that seniors apply for and attend college. They also described college decision day as an important milestone at high schools, as it culminated a year’s worth of activities focused on college applications and college readiness. Said one coordinator:

We could tell a difference in our kids. They were excited to get up there and let people know that they were making a commitment to further their education.

One site coordinator also spoke of the value of having a dedicated GEAR UP contact within each participating school and a county coordinator charged with implementing activities. This structure worked well because there was a point person to coordinate activities within every

school building plus a county-level official responsible for ensuring implementation. As one coordinator stated:

It helps to let at least one person own it. I like the fact that there is a person on the county level that is at least responsible for things that happen.

2.7.2 What Needs Improvement?

County and site coordinators described budget challenges and tutoring as areas most in need of improvement. At least three site coordinators expressed concerns about the budget process, with one asking for more assistance and another unsure of the money remaining in the school's GEAR UP program. One particular concern was the purchase order process. One coordinator living near the Virginia border would go to Virginia to make credit card purchases for the program, because West Virginia businesses would not take the district's purchase orders. Said another site coordinator:

You have to do a purchase order for this and a purchase order for that... and I've never done a purchase order in my life.

A K-8 school coordinator said that it took time to learn the budget requirements and now the program is ending at the school.

The first year, you just feel your way through and then the second year, when you get to know how it works, the program is gone.

Three site coordinators cited tutoring, a required activity, as a program component needing improvement. Two called it "wasted money" because students did not want to participate, while others would like more flexibility to spend this money in other ways that would promote academic achievement and college awareness. Typical were the comments of this site coordinator:

I could not get anyone [for tutoring], even though they needed it.... I couldn't get them to do it so there's thousands of dollars there that could not be spent for anything else.

Most site coordinators were not pleased with the level of parent involvement in GEAR UP. This issue is a "sore spot with everyone," one noted. Some cited success in scheduling parent activities prior to sporting events, and another described success in connecting with students via the school Facebook page.

Two site coordinators believed the Commission should re-examine its FAFSA target completion rates for schools. At one school, the coordinator believed some priority students who completed FAFSAs were never added to the school's total. At another school, foreign exchange students were in the priority group totals, but the coordinator said these students should not count in the percentage of students with completed FAFSAs.

Communication also was cited as a challenge by three site coordinators. One noted that the school had different coordinators for priority and cohort students, making coordination difficult, and another felt the GEAR UP county coordinator was not responsive. For their part, two county coordinators wanted more time during the week to devote to GEAR UP. Said one:

I feel stretched really thin. I want to do more, but I don't have the time to do more. For myself, just having another person at the county level [to assist me would be helpful].

V. Discussion

This section of the report provides selected highlights observed by the evaluation team across the first two years of WV GEAR UP implementation. Key findings are organized by the four study components proposed by the evaluation team: (1) implementation, (2) outcomes, (3) impact, and (4) sustainability.

Implementation

In Year 2 of the project, cohort group students and families were much more engaged in GEAR UP services than in Year 1. Implementation findings also illustrate the level of commitment that GEAR UP staff and school personnel have made to deliver and sustain activities over the first two years of the project. For example, personnel reported increased confidence and comfort related to their roles and responsibilities in assisting students. In addition, school personnel reported important gains in their level of access to visual and material resources to support an enhanced CGC within their schools and individual classrooms.

Buy-in. As predicted, Year 2 yielded much better results in terms of buy-in and involvement related to GEAR UP activities. Program delivery was executed with more confidence and within pre-established timelines. In focus groups, county and site coordinators cited increased buy-in to GEAR UP, in part because the program was more firmly established in Year 2 and offered more activities. As a result, teachers and administrators were more involved and knowledgeable. Coordinators stated that they had more time in Year 2 to schedule and complete tasks, as well as more experience with college-going activities. They also offered positive feedback about the work plan this year, noting that it functions as a checklist, shows the interconnections of the work, and helps the work stay on budget.

School personnel increased their involvement in GEAR UP activities to the extent that more than two-thirds reported participating at least sometimes in GEAR UP activities, a significant increase from Year 1. They most often cited involvement in GEAR UP college visits and academic support activities. Site and county coordinators also suggested that successful implementation of college visits and other awareness activities prompted more in-depth discussions among students and between students and teachers.

Mixed views on tutoring. School personnel reported a slight increase in involvement in providing supplemental instructional support to students, but the gains were not significantly different than the previous year. Approximately 75% of school personnel respondents reported participation in tutoring. However, in focus groups, site coordinators expressed varied opinions on this aspect of the program, with some noting few students took advantage. This situation was exacerbated by the rural nature of many participating schools, which meant that attending after-school tutoring presented transportation and logistical challenges for students. Some site coordinators were displeased that tutoring represented a sizable, required budget item.

Community involvement. Fostering business partnerships and relationships with college personnel required some GEAR UP coordinators to expand efforts to include contacts outside of their own community. For example, focus group participants said they had trouble finding community partners, and available partners—particularly businesses in lower-income communities—were stretched thin. Coordinators expressed more positive views of colleges and universities, particularly those that went out of their way to design visits that engaged students in hands-on activities. Coordinators offered mixed perspectives on the Local College Access and Success Advisory Board Councils, as meetings were sporadic, and councils were reorganized in some communities. In addition, parent involvement also remained a challenge. Scheduling parent events in conjunction with other activities—such as before a basketball game or music/drama performance—was viewed as a somewhat effective strategy. One site coordinator found success in posting GEAR UP information on the school’s Facebook page.

Relationships. Focus groups affirmed that critical to the success of implementation was the relationship between the Commission and the county and site coordinators. Specifically, Commission staff ensured that coordinators were well-informed and communication streamlined, cited as a factor in accomplishing key goals. Commission staff helped locate contacts, served as chaperones, provided technology assistance, and made themselves available for guidance. Site coordinators expressed diverse views of their county coordinators. Although many reported that their county coordinator was accessible, others found the county coordinator was difficult to reach and provided minimal assistance. However, because county coordinators vary in their experience with GEAR UP, county responsibilities, and availability, it is not surprising that their relationships with county coordinators and site coordinators would also vary.

Outcomes

GEAR UP has made great strides over the past two years in supporting student and parent outreach. The program has helped build students’ perceptions about their academic ability, knowledge of PSE-related topics, and laid a solid foundation for their college-going self-efficacy and outcomes-expectations. GEAR UP staff have become one of the most important resources for students making informed college decisions. The program has also helped build a positive college-going culture in participating schools and has promoted increased knowledge outcomes for school personnel. However, findings still show room for improving important outcomes like students’ and families’ knowledge of the true costs of college. There also still exists a gap between educational aspirations and expectations.

Interaction with GEAR UP staff. Communication among GEAR UP staff, other school staff, and cohort students and parents/guardians has increased. We found substantial and statistically significant gains from Year 1 to Year 2 in the percentage of cohort students and parents/guardians who reported that they had spoken with someone from GEAR UP or their school about college entrance requirements and financial aid. Slightly more than one-third of students responded affirmatively about both topics in Year 1. In Year 2, nearly three-quarters of cohort students reported they had spoken with someone about college entrance requirements, and two-thirds about financial aid. Effects were smaller for parents/guardians but still showed substantial increases for both topics. Nearly one-quarter of parent respondents reported talking with GEAR UP staff compared

to less than 10% in Year 1. More school personnel also reported that “parents are included in the college preparation process” across years, yielding a moderate effect size.

Changes in these outcomes were among the largest observed for both groups and reflect the considerable outreach efforts that occurred in the first year of the project. They show the program is off to a good start and laying the foundation for more distal outcomes. Nevertheless, work remains to be done: between one-quarter and one-third of cohort students in Year 2 reported not having spoken with anyone from GEAR UP or their school about these topics, and nearly three-quarters of parents/guardians had not.

Academic confidence. The self-reported academic confidence of cohort students decreased slightly from Year 1 to Year 2 in all areas except science and English/language arts. As noted in this report, decreases were very small in terms of their practical significance. It is notable, however that the largest decrease concerned how students perceived their ability to do well in college courses in the future. Although on the surface this may seem like a negative outcome, it may be symptomatic of a natural decline that occurs as all students progress through school and become more aware of the real effort required to succeed in college courses. It is also possible that participation in GEAR UP may play an additional role in tempering their confidence levels. That is, students in the cohort group are arguably more likely than other students to have experienced college visits or discussed and researched PSE options. This experience could contribute to more realistic or reserved expectations about their ability to succeed in college. A healthy sense of modesty may help them prepare for success by addressing any perceived academic deficits. To determine the likelihood of these explanations, it will be important to continue monitoring these outcomes, especially when the evaluation team has amassed longitudinal data for comparison group students who are not participating in GEAR UP.

Educational aspirations and expectations. Cohort students and their parents/guardians both showed increases from Year 1 to Year 2 in their educational aspirations and expectations. Although the year-to-year differences were generally small, they were larger for parents/guardians in both areas. Interestingly, however, educational expectations still tend to lag behind aspirations for both groups. The percentage of students aspiring to achieve at least a two-year degree after high school was 79% in Year 1, but the corresponding expectation was 74%, a gap of five percentage points. The same degree of gap persisted in Year 2, as the corresponding percentages increased to 83% and 78%, for aspirations and for expectations, respectively.

For parents/guardians, the gap actually widened slightly from only four percentage points in Year 1 to seven percentage points in Year 2. It is unclear why this occurred, especially since both students and parents/guardians tend to report relatively favorable perceptions about their ability to afford various public college options. GEAR UP could have an important role to play here, especially in educating parents/guardians about various options to ensure that their child is able to attain the level of education they desire.

Affordability and cost of college. Cohort students and their parents/guardians reported a modest increase in their confidence in their ability to afford three public college options from Year 1 to Year 2. However, the percentage of students and parents/guardians who could accurately estimate the cost of tuition has not changed over this same period. Just under one-fifth of cohort students and their parents/guardians could accurately estimate tuition costs in both years. Both groups still include a significant proportion of individuals who drastically overestimate the cost of tuition. This issue could potentially contribute to the aspiration/expectation gaps described above.

Awareness and knowledge of PSE topics. GEAR UP provides information, services, and resources to support increased awareness and knowledge of various college topics, especially for financial aid. Cohort students showed a small increase in their overall awareness of all 11 PSE topics included on the student survey. Parents/guardians also showed an increase in overall awareness, but the effect was smaller. Most importantly, when examining individual items, we found that both groups showed the largest gains in their awareness of financial aid topics. Effects ranged from small to moderate for students, and were relatively small for parents/guardians. Despite the smaller effects for parents/guardians, the percentage of parents/guardians who were “not at all aware” of each PSE topic decreased from Year 1 to Year 2. The largest decreases were for financial aid-related topics (e.g., college savings plan/529, WV Higher Education Grant, federal work-study, FAFSA, and ACT/SAT). These findings are potentially attributable to the outreach conducted by GEAR UP staff during the first year of the project. In addition, many county and site coordinators noted that counselors were influenced by the increased CGC in their schools and gained new knowledge as a result of GEAR UP and their use of resources such as CFWV.com. School personnel also showed substantial gains in their average comfort/knowledge levels of PSE-related topics, specifically those related to financial aid (e.g., college savings plan/529, the WV Higher Education Grant, etc.).

Importance of information sources. Students and parents/guardians reported increases in the importance of various information sources in helping inform them about PSE options. Both groups reported very strong increases in their importance ratings for GEAR UP staff. In fact, as of Year 2, GEAR UP staff were the second most highly rated information source for students, surpassed only by family members. This finding is very important for the program and reflects the intense efforts made by GEAR UP staff in the first year of the project.

Notably, we also found moderate student-level effects for the importance of school counselors and CFWV.com. The corresponding effects were small for parents/guardians. As was true for awareness ratings, the percentage of parents/guardians who found each postsecondary information source to be “not at all important” decreased from Year 1 to Year 2. The decreases were most dramatic for GEAR UP staff and school counselors.

Effectiveness of GEAR UP activities. Of GEAR UP activities, school personnel participated most often in college visits and also found this activity to be the most effective in supporting students. Site and county coordinators reported in focus groups

that activities like career exploration and college visits prompted discussions that led to personnel, students, and parents/guardians increasing their knowledge about college options. Personnel reported the least participation in teacher professional development and summer activities, because not all schools offered these activities as part of GEAR UP. This fact might also be reflected in their having the lowest ratings in terms of effectiveness as well.

Impact

School personnel and coordinators held high expectations for the long-term impact of GEAR UP on participating schools, including increased awareness of PSE options, improved CGC, and increased postsecondary enrollment rates. As GEAR UP transitions into its third year of implementation, foundational outcomes associated with these impacts, such as school culture and buy-in, are already apparent. Specifically, school personnel and site and county coordinators reported stronger CGC, greater support and buy-in from school leaders and improved dialogue with families about college. School personnel also overwhelmingly agreed that GEAR UP is making a positive impact on their school.

Increased buy-in. As noted previously, school buy-in appeared to increase in Year 2, according to site and county coordinators. This shift may have resulted from several factors: improved and increased GEAR UP activities in Year 2, more support from principals and other school leaders, and greater recognition among school staff that college awareness activities can improve the knowledge and motivation of students.

Shifts in CGC. Focus groups and personnel surveys provide confirmation of an intensified sense of CGC as reported by school personnel. In fact, teachers agreed they experienced a more pervasive CGC related to visual cues/material resources and rigor/expectations, both in their individual classrooms and schoolwide. Notably, the visual cues/material resources component of CGC, which represents how well schools integrate messaging to communicate a vision of the importance of PSE, and the extent to which schools provide or receive support and professional development to further that vision, showed the greatest gains and the strongest effect size.

In fact, site coordinators believed that the schoolwide CGC had improved through the presence of GEAR UP, and that this shift had an impact not only on cohort or priority students, but also students in lower grades, including the elementary grades in K-8 schools. Several site coordinators noted how GEAR UP's "college-is-possible" message filtered down to younger students and to the faculty working with these students. T-shirt/sweatshirt days and college decision days also generated interest across multiple grades. These visible messaging and material resources provided a consistent message that led to increased buy-in and college knowledge.

Sustainability

A majority of school personnel respondents not continuing with the grant are confident that they will continue some of the GEAR UP services and activities in their schools next year.

College visits may continue. Many coordinators stated in focus groups that they wanted to continue college visits because of their popularity and effectiveness in engaging students with college and career. In the school personnel survey, over half of

respondents also identified college visits as an activity that is likely to continue with future students not in GEAR UP. Site coordinators considered college visits to be most effective when they provided students with opportunities for hands-on activities in a lab or similar setting.

Value of low-cost activities. Even those site coordinators who cited budget pressures at their schools thought that lower-cost college awareness activities could continue with students after GEAR UP ended. Common examples were college t-shirt/sweatshirt days, use of the CFWV.com website, and college-themed bulletin boards around the school. One school created a map to show the colleges attended by teachers and administrators, which served as a starting point for discussions between teachers and students. Another school established a college bulletin board of the month, spotlighting a specific institution and contacting that institution for information. Several site coordinators also said that they had used the CFWV.com website and resources to build their knowledge of expectations for college. All these activities were considered sustainable steps for continuing to build and maintain a CGC in future years.

Perceptions of sustainability. Despite the mixed feelings reported about tutoring, school personnel perceived academic support as the most likely service to be sustained. Perhaps because teachers constitute the majority of respondents to the school personnel survey, and many believe that they are already providing rigorous academic support, it does not seem as resource-intensive to maintain that level of instruction. In addition, personnel rated family involvement and mentoring as the next most sustainable services, and both are services that many school staff believe they should provide in any case. Despite its critical importance to navigating PSE options, school personnel were least likely to mention financial aid literacy as a sustainable service. Several indicated this activities was “not applicable” to them, a sentiment also expressed in one of the focus groups. It is unclear why this aspect was viewed by staff as least sustainable, but additional attention may be warranted if school and county staff wish to promote continued use of these activities in the absence of GEAR UP.

VI. Recommendations

The evaluation team provides the following seven recommendations for the Commission to consider.

Recommendation 1. As the cohort group moves into high school, GEAR UP program staff should ***continue to emphasize and carry out visible outreach activities, especially to parents/guardians.*** Emphasize the topics of college entrance requirements, financial aid, and college cost to improve outcomes even further.

Recommendation 2. ***Link successful college visits and career exploration activities to continued efforts to educate or provide information about actual college costs and financial aid opportunities.*** GEAR UP staff should continue to emphasize the myriad financial aid options available to families and educate parents/guardians about the true cost of going to college and ways that their child can realistically attain a college education. These efforts could help reduce the aspiration/expectation gap and increase correct estimates of college tuition costs.

Recommendation 3. GEAR UP staff are viewed as a very important source of information for issues related to PSE—second only to family members in the eyes of cohort students. The Commission should ***continue to emphasize and leverage the important role of GEAR UP staff as front-line ambassadors for the program.*** Doing so will continue to improve student exposure to college-related information.

Recommendation 4. The Commission and GEAR UP staff across West Virginia should ***continue to emphasize financial aid topics and encourage students to have related conversations with their parents/guardians as early as possible.*** Doing so could have the potential to improve perceptions of affordability and again, debunk myths and reduce the aspiration/expectation gap.

Recommendation 5. College visits were clearly the most popular GEAR UP activity among students, and many staff said that these visits promoted new discussions among students, teachers, and counselors. In addition, a majority of school personnel identified this issue as one they would like to sustain at their schools. As a result, it may be appropriate for the Commission to communicate these findings to ***county coordinators*** and ask that they ***maintain contact with K-8/middle schools so that college visits and similar activities may continue.***

Recommendation 6. Some site coordinators did not view after-school tutoring as successful, but others believed that tutoring during the regular school day had proved useful. Given that high school students may be even less likely than middle school students to attend after-school tutoring, ***GEAR UP may want to consider expanding in-school tutoring programs to reach students in need of academic assistance.*** Software and online tutoring options, when offered during the school day, also may offer better options for GEAR UP sites going forward.

Recommendation 7. Focus group participants expressed varied opinions on the work and value of Local College Access and Success Advisory Board Councils at the county level. Given that the cohort's move to ninth grade may bring major changes in several aspects of the program, ***Year 3 is also an opportunity for the Commission and counties to re-examine the work of these councils.*** Adding new members and/or re-focusing attention on high school issues are two strategies that may be appropriate in certain counties at this natural transition point.

VII. References

Gibbons, Melinda M. (2005). *College-going beliefs of prospective first-generation college students: Perceived barriers, social supports, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations*. Directed by L. DiAnne Borders. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Retrieved from <http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/umi-uncg-1049.pdf>

VIII. Appendix - Consent Forms/Instruments

Year 2 Adult Interview and Focus Group Consent Form

Year 2 Parent/Guardian Permission Form

Year 2 County Coordinator Focus Group Guide

Year 2 Site Coordinator Focus Group Guide

Year 2 School Personnel Survey

Year 2 Parent/Guardian Survey

Year 2 Student Survey

West Virginia GEAR UP Student Survey 2015-16 Parent/Guardian Permission Form – GRADE 8

Date: November 5, 2015

Dear Parent or Guardian:

*We are writing to ask you to complete a short survey and to give your permission for your child to complete a short survey during school this year. The surveys are about education and training after high school. **If you DO NOT give your permission for your child to take the survey, please sign and return the form attached to this letter.***

Who is doing the surveys and why? The reason for these surveys is that your child's school is part of the West Virginia (WV) GEAR UP program. GEAR UP stands for *Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs*. It is a program that helps students get ready for education and training after high school. To learn more about WV GEAR UP, please visit www.wvgearup.org.

A company called ICF International is doing a study of WV GEAR UP for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV HEPC) to learn if GEAR UP is achieving its goals.

Who is involved in WV GEAR UP? GEAR UP works with 50 schools in 10 counties in WV. This includes your child's school. Only some grades in your child's school are getting GEAR UP support this year, because the money for GEAR UP is limited. The child who brought this letter home is in a grade that is part of GEAR UP. That means you and your child can get free help to get ready for college or other training programs after high school.

What is the Student Survey? GEAR UP is asking all students in your child's grade to do a 15- to 20-minute survey every year. This year, we are doing the student survey from December 2015 to January 2016. The student survey will be given at school by your child's teachers or other school staff. It asks questions about what your child knows and thinks about college. It asks what they think about other options after high school. It asks about your child's goals for high school and beyond. It also asks if your child uses tutoring programs or attends other school events. Knowing about your child's plans for college helps us know if GEAR UP is working.

Who else is doing the Student Survey? We are asking all students in your child's grade to complete the student survey.

Is there a Parent/Guardian Survey? Yes! In early December 2015, your child will bring home a link to an online parent/guardian survey. Your child may also bring home a paper copy of the survey so you do not have to do the survey on the computer. No matter which version of the survey you do, we ask you to complete it by December 31, 2015.

How long does the parent/guardian survey take? What is it about? The parent/guardian survey asks questions just like the ones on the student survey and takes 15 to 20 minutes. Having your feedback lets us know if there are ways we can do more to support families.

Will you keep the information we provide private? Yes! We have to keep your information private. We will only write reports about groups of students and parents. We never write about individuals. The survey does not ask for your name or your child's name. We only ask for your child's student identification number (lunch/WVEIS number). We will NEVER link this number to your name or to your child's name. The reason we ask for it is to make sure we can check that we get surveys back from the same students and parents each year. We also use it to connect student and parent surveys to each other. We may also use the number to connect surveys to other information from your child's school.

West Virginia GEAR UP Student Survey 2015-16 Parent/Guardian Permission Form – GRADE 8

Right now, we are only asking for your permission to give your child the surveys. Any other information we might ask for in the future would be collected from the West Virginia Department of Education or your county school district. We will follow all the privacy laws that protect you if we request this information. We will ask for your permission if it is needed.

Are there any risks or benefits to participating in the surveys? There are no risks. We will not identify parents/guardians or children who take the surveys. The only risk is that the surveys may take some time from your day and your child's normal school day. We made the surveys short to avoid this problem. If you decide to give your permission for your child to take the survey, it will help us figure out how to support students better. If you take the parent/guardian survey, it will help us support families. WV GEAR UP schools might also use the surveys to change their programs.

Are the surveys required? No. Both surveys are voluntary. That means you can decide if you or your child want to take them or not. There are no penalties to you or your child if you decide not to take the parent/guardian survey or if you don't give your permission for your child to take the student survey. There are also no penalties if you give your permission, but your child decides not to take the student survey. You and your child will not give up any support or programs you would normally get. You can still get free help to get ready for college or other after high school options even if you do not do the surveys.

Even if you give your permission for your child take the survey, he or she can decide if they want to do it. He or she can skip questions or stop at any time without penalties. The same is true for parents/guardians who take the parent/guardian survey.

What do I need to do? Right now we are asking for your permission to give your child the student survey this school year. If your child stays in a GEAR UP school, we will ask you for permission to do the survey every year. We hope you will let your child take the survey.

If you give your permission for your child to participate in the survey, you *DO NOT* need to respond to this letter.

If you **DO NOT** give your permission for your child to complete the survey, just complete and sign the form on the next page and return it to your child's school by *November 30, 2015*. If you sign this form, our team will work with the school to ensure that your child does not complete the survey.

What if I have questions? If you have any questions about the survey, you can contact Nate Hixson. He is a researcher working on the study. You can call him at (304) 342-0037 or email him at nate.hixson@icfi.com. If you have questions about the WV GEAR UP program, please contact Dr. Adam Green. He is in charge of GEAR UP. You can call him at (304) 558-0655 or email him at adam.green@hepc.edu. Thanks for helping make GEAR UP a success!

Sincerely,
Dr. Adam S. Green, Vice Chancellor
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission

West Virginia GEAR UP Student Survey 2015-16
Parent/Guardian Permission Form – GRADE 8

* * * * *

If you give your permission for your child to take the December 2015/January 2016 GEAR UP survey, you do not need to do anything with this form. Just keep it for your records. If you **DO NOT** give your permission for your child to complete the survey, please complete, sign, and return this form to your child's school no later than *November 30, 2015*.

I DO NOT WANT my child, _____, (please print full student name) to participate in the West Virginia GEAR UP survey in December 2015/January 2016.

Name of your child's school: _____

Parent/Guardian name (please print): _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

WV HEPC signature: _____ Date: _____

ICF International signature: _____ Date: _____

West Virginia GEAR UP Student Survey 2015-16 Student Assent Form

Welcome!

Your school is part of a program called West Virginia GEAR UP that helps middle and high school students get ready for college or other education options after high school. The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV HEPC) has asked a company called ICF International to do a study of the program.

Because GEAR UP has a limited amount of money, only a few grades in your school are getting GEAR UP support this year. If you are a grade 8 students, your grade is part of GEAR UP. That means you can get free services to help you get ready for college or other training after high school!

What are you asking me to do? We are asking you to take a 15-20 minute online survey during the school day. The survey asks questions about what you know about college. It asks what you think about other options after high school too. It asks about your goals for high school and beyond. It also asks if you go to tutoring or after school events.

Why are you doing the survey? Knowing about your plans for college helps us know if GEAR UP is working.

Who else is doing the student survey? We are asking all students in your grade to do the survey.

Please read the rest of this message carefully. When you are done, you can decide if you want to take the survey.

Will you keep the information I provide private? Yes! We have to keep your information private. We will only write reports about groups of students. We will never write a report about your personal survey answers. The survey does not ask for your name. We only ask for your lunch/WVEIS number. We will NEVER link this number to your name. We ask for your lunch/WVEIS number so we can make sure the same student takes the survey over time. We also use it to connect your survey results to your parents' results. We might also use it to connect your results to other information like class grades.

Right now, we are only asking you to take a survey. If we ask more information about you in the future, we will make sure everything is private. We will ask for your parents' permission if needed.

Are there any risks or benefits to taking the survey? There are no risks. We will not identify students who take the survey. So, the only risk is that the survey may take some time from your school day. We made the survey short to avoid this problem. If you take the survey, it will help us figure out how to help more students. Your school might also use surveys to change their programs.

Do I have to take the survey? No. This survey is voluntary. That means you can decide if you want to take it or not. There are no penalties to you if you decide not to take it. Your school will not take away any support or programs if you decide not to. You will still be able to get free help from GEAR UP to get ready for college or other after high school training even if you don't take the survey. You can also skip any questions you do not want to answer. You can stop taking the survey at any time. There are really no penalties.

Does my parent or guardian know about this? Yes. We sent your parent or guardian a letter telling them that we would ask you to do a survey at school. We told them to send our letter back if they did not want you to take the survey. If you are reading this message, it means your parent or guardian did not return our letter. That means you can take the survey.

What if I have questions? If there is a teacher or program coordinator helping you take the survey, you can always raise your hand and ask questions if you have technical problems. If you have any questions about the study, you can call

West Virginia GEAR UP Student Survey 2015-16
Student Assent Form

Nate Hixson. He is a researcher who is in charge of the survey. You can call him at (304) 342-0037. You can also email him at nate.hixson@icfi.com. If you have questions about GEAR UP, you can call Dr. Adam Green. He is the person in charge of GEAR UP. His phone number is (304) 558-0655. You can also email him at adam.green@hepc.edu.

Thanks for helping make GEAR UP a success!

If you agree to participate in this survey, please click the "I agree to take this survey" button below.

- ☐ I agree to take this survey.
- ☐ I do not agree to take this survey.



West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

Adult Interview and Focus Group Consent Form

West Virginia postsecondary leaders and public schools in 10 counties are participating in a federal grant to implement and assess the effectiveness of the GEAR UP program to promote college awareness and enrollment among low-income students across the state. The grant's fiscal agent, the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV HEPC), has contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of this grant program to better understand strategies used to meet program goals. As part of this important research, you are being asked to participate in an interview or focus group that should take approximately 45-60 minutes. The discussion will include questions about your opinions and experiences with GEAR UP. Please consider the details below prior to deciding to participate in this interview:

- **Confidentiality:** The session will be recorded either by audio files or written notes. The recordings of what you share will only be used by researchers. Data will be stored in a secure area accessible only to the researchers. Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential. Summary reports may indicate particular individuals by the roles they describe but all information collected via interviews and focus groups will be reported confidentially.
- **Risks:** The study presents only minimal risk to you. You will not be required to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer and reports will not identify you by name. If you feel uncomfortable while answering questions you may cease participation at any time without penalties and without loss of any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.
- **Benefits:** Study participation helps build knowledge in the state and nationally about how to support students in building momentum for postsecondary education success. Where appropriate, WV HEPC and participating schools can use the information learned to adjust GEAR UP programming.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Your participation is voluntary, meaning that you do not have to participate in this interview or focus group if you do not want to; you may stop participating at any time. We hope you will participate in the conversation, but you do not have to share information that makes you feel uncomfortable. Your decision to participate or withdraw from the study at any time will not affect your employment status or performance review. By answering questions and signing below, you are consenting to participate.

If you have any questions about the study or your rights as a study participant, you may contact Nate Hixson, ICF International, at (304) 342-0037.

To indicate your consent to participate in this interview, please sign your name below in black/blue ink pen.

Sign your name here

Date

Clearly print your name here



West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

School Personnel Survey Consent Form

Welcome! You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by ICF International (ICF). ICF is an external research organization that has been contracted by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV HEPC) to provide an evaluation of the WV GEAR UP program. WV GEAR UP is a program designed to promote college awareness and enrollment among low-income students in 10 participating counties across the state of WV. Certain schools in each participating county, including your school, are participating in this project. As part of this important research, all teachers of grades 6-12 in your school are being asked to participate in a survey that should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey includes questions about your opinions and experiences in promoting a college-going culture at your school and about your participation in GEAR UP. Please consider the details below prior to deciding whether or not to participate in this survey.

This evaluation study has been reviewed and approved by ICF's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB reviews all studies to ensure the rights of research participants are protected. There are no risks associated with participation in this study greater than those encountered in the course of a normal day, and there are no direct benefits to you for participating. However, your feedback may be used to learn more about how to improve college-going culture in WV schools and to improve GEAR UP services to counties and schools. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time, and your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. No individuals will be identified in reports.

The evaluation will provide a written report to WV HEPC in October 2016. Certain data from the report may also be reported to the United States Department of Education. All data collected as part of this study will be treated with confidentiality, and all reports will be made in the aggregate.

Should you have questions about your participation in WV GEAR UP, you may contact Adam Green (green@hepc.wvnet.edu) at WV HEPC. If you have questions about this survey, you are encouraged to contact the study's principal investigator, Nate Hixson (nate.hixson@icfi.com) before proceeding.

Please note, we ask that you complete this survey no later than **June 10, 2016**.

Your completion of this survey indicates your consent to participate in the study as described above.

Thank You!

West Virginia GEAR UP Student Survey - 2015-16 School Year

Grade 8

Directions: Please respond to all questions by completely filling in the circle for each answer.

Like this: ☒ Not like this: ☐ ☐ ☐

Section I: About You

1. Please write your 9-digit lunch/WVEIS number in the spaces below. Fill in the bubbles to match each number. The example on the left shows how to fill in your lunch/WVEIS number. If there are zeroes at the beginning of your number, please include them.

This is an Example: lunch/WVEIS number: 009132567

0 _0_ _9_ _1_ _3_ _2_ _5_ _6_ _7_

<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your lunch/WVEIS number:

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Are you currently a grade 8 student? ☐ Y ☐ N
3. What is your gender?
☐ A Male ☐ B Female ☐ C Other
4. What is your race?
☐ A White ☐ D American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ B Black or African American ☐ E Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ C Asian ☐ F Two or more races
5. What is your ethnicity?
☐ A Hispanic or Latino ☐ B Not Hispanic or Latino
6. What is the main language you speak at home?
☐ A English ☐ B Spanish ☐ C Other

7. How much money do you think your family made (before taxes) during the past 12 months? As you think about it, please include any money you earned from working and all the money you think the people living in your house made.

\$30,000 or less	\$30,001- \$60,000	\$60,001- \$100,000	\$100,001 or more	Don't know or I'd rather not say
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)

8. What is the highest level of education of your **father or male guardian** (bubble only one answer)?

(A) Some high school
 (B) High school diploma/GED
 (C) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
 (D) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
 (E) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
 (F) Master's degree
 (G) Ph.D. or higher
 (H) Don't know

9. What is the highest level of education of your **mother or female guardian** (bubble only one answer)?

(A) Some high school
 (B) High school diploma/GED
 (C) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
 (D) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
 (E) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
 (F) Master's degree
 (G) Ph.D. or higher
 (H) Don't know

10. If you have brothers or sisters, how many have attended college in the past or are in college now?

0	1	2	3	4	5 or more	I don't have brothers or sisters
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)

Section II: Your Educational Goals

11. As you think about your current skills, how confident are you of your ability in the following areas?

	Not Confident	Confident	Very Confident	Don't Know
Math	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
English/Language Arts	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Science	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Study skills	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Ability to pass the end-of-year tests (e.g., Smarter Balanced Assessment)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Ability to do well in college level courses in the future	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

12. Do you plan to continue your education after high school? ☐ Y ☐ N

13. If you answered "no" to question 12, what are the main reasons you do not plan to continue your education (bubble all that apply)?

- ☐ My grades aren't good enough ☐ Family issues
☐ It costs too much/I can't afford it ☐ I plan to enlist in the military
☐ I need to work ☐ Other (please write in reason):
☐ I want to work

14. What is the highest level of education that you would like to get (bubble only one answer)?

- ☐ (A) High school or less
☐ (B) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
☐ (C) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
☐ (D) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
☐ (E) More than a 4-year college degree

15. What is the highest level of education that you expect to get (bubble only one answer)?

- ☐ (A) High school or less
☐ (B) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
☐ (C) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
☐ (D) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
☐ (E) More than a 4-year college degree

16. How sure are you about being able to do the following?

	Don't Know	Not at all Sure	Somewhat Sure	Sure	Very Sure
I can find a way to pay for college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can get accepted to a college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can have family support for going to college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can choose a good college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can get a scholarship or grant for college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can make an educational plan that will prepare me for college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can make my family proud with my choices after high school.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can choose college courses that best fit my interests.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can pay for college even if my family cannot help me.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can get good grades in my high school math classes.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can get good grades in my high school science classes.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can choose the high school classes needed to get into a good college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I know enough about computers to get into college.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
I can go to college after high school.	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)

17. **If you do go to college**, how sure are you about being able to do the following?

	<i>Don't Know</i>	<i>Not at all Sure</i>	<i>Somewhat Sure</i>	<i>Sure</i>	<i>Very Sure</i>
I could pay for each year of college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could get A's and B's in college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could get my family to support my wish of finishing college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could take care of myself in college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could fit in at college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could get good enough grades to get or keep a scholarship.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could finish college and receive a college degree.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could care for my family responsibilities while in college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could set my own schedule while in college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could make friends at college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could get the education I need for my choice of career.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could get a job after I graduate from college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I would like being in college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could be smart enough to finish college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could pick the right things to study at college.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
I could do the classwork and homework assignments in college classes.	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)

Section III: College Entrance Requirements, Cost, and Financial Aid

18. Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about...

College entrance requirements? (Y) (N)

The availability of financial aid to help you pay for college? (Y) (N)

19. Are you knowledgeable about financial aid and the cost and benefits to you of going to college?

(Y) (N)

20. Do you think that you could afford to attend one of the following types of colleges using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?

	<i>Definitely Not</i>	<i>Probably Not</i>	<i>Not Sure</i>	<i>Probably</i>	<i>Definitely</i>
A public 4-year college	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
A public community/technical college	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)
A public career/technical center	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)

21. On average, how much do you think it costs for one year of in-state tuition at a **4-year public college in West Virginia** (*bubble only one answer; your estimate should not include the cost of food, housing, or books*)?

Up to \$4,000	\$4,001- \$8,000	\$8,001- \$11,000	\$11,001- \$16,000	\$16,001- \$21,000	\$21,001- \$26,000	More than \$26,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)

22. On average, how much do you think it costs for one year of in-state tuition at a **public community/technical college in West Virginia** (*bubble only one answer; your estimate should not include the cost of food, housing, or books*)?

Up to \$4,000	\$4,001- \$8,000	\$8,001- \$11,000	\$11,001- \$16,000	\$16,001- \$21,000	\$21,001- \$26,000	More than \$26,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)

23. How aware are you about the following topics?

	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
College savings plan/529	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
ACT/SAT	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
WV Higher Education Grant	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Federal Pell Grants	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Federal student loans	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Federal work-study	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or Institutional)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Requirements for college acceptance	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
The importance/benefit of a college education	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
High school graduation requirements	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

24. How much money **per academic year** do you think you can get to help pay for college if you qualify for a **Federal Pell Grant** (*bubble only one answer*)?

Up to \$1,000	\$1,001- \$2,000	\$2,001- \$3,000	\$3,001- \$4,000	\$4,001- \$5,000	\$5,001- \$6,000	\$6,001- \$7,000	More than \$7,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)

25. How much money **per academic year** do you think you can get to help pay for college if you qualify for a **West Virginia Higher Education Grant** (*bubble only one answer*)?

Up to \$1,000	\$1,001- \$2,000	\$2,001- \$3,000	\$3,001- \$4,000	\$4,001- \$5,000	\$5,001- \$6,000	\$6,001- \$7,000	More than \$7,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)

26. How much money **per academic year** do you think you can get to help pay for college if you qualify for a **PROMISE Scholarship** (*bubble only one answer*)?

Up to \$1,000	\$1,001- \$2,000	\$2,001- \$3,000	\$3,001- \$4,000	\$4,001- \$5,000	\$5,001- \$6,000	\$6,001- \$7,000	More than \$7,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)

27. How important have the following resources, individuals, or tools been in gathering information about your options for college?

	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>College or university websites</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com)</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Other college planning websites</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>College fairs</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Television</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Radio</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Direct mail</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>E-mail</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Brochures and pamphlets</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Magazines/newspapers</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Signs, posters, or billboards</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Text messages</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>School counselor</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Family members</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>GEAR UP staff</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>College admissions representatives</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

28. Which of the following do you need from your school or GEAR UP to help you be more successful in school and more prepared for college (bubble all that apply)?

- More advanced classes (e.g., AP)* ☐
Information about participating in GEAR UP events ☐
Tutoring ☐
Opportunities to participate in college visits ☐
Information about college entrance requirements ☐
Information about college financial aid/scholarships ☐
Leadership opportunities ☐
Summer activities ☐
Career exploration activities ☐
Test preparation ☐
Assistance with the college entrance process ☐
Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA) ☐
Information and events presented in other languages (e.g., Spanish) ☐
Other ☐

Thank you for your time!

Please return this survey to your teacher or school.

West Virginia GEAR UP Parent Survey - 2015-16 School Year

Directions: Please respond to all items by completely filling in the circle for each answer:

Like this: ● Not like this: (✓) (X) (✓)

Note: Many of the questions on this survey ask about "your child." If you have more than one child, please complete this survey in reference to the child who brought the survey home.

ICF Use Only

Section I: About You and Your Child

1. Please write your child's 9-digit lunch/WVEIS number in the spaces below. Fill in the bubbles to match each number. The example on the left shows how to fill in the lunch/WVEIS number. If there are zeroes at the beginning of your child's number, please include them.

This is an Example: lunch/WVEIS number: 009132567

0	0	9	1	3	2	5	6	7
●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
①	①	①	●	①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②	●	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	●	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	●	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	●	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	●
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	●	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

Your child's lunch/WVEIS number:

○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②	②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

2. Is the child who brought this survey home currently a grade 8 student? (✓) (N)

3. What is your gender?

(A) Male (B) Female (C) Other

4. What is your relationship to the child who brought this survey home?

(A) Parent or guardian (C) Grandparent
(B) Step or foster parent (D) Other

5. What is your race?

(A) White (D) American Indian or Alaska Native
(B) Black or African American (E) Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
(C) Asian (F) Two or more races

6. What is your ethnicity?

(A) Hispanic or Latino (B) Not Hispanic or Latino

7. What is the main language you speak at home?

- (A) English (B) Spanish (C) Other

8. Which of the following options best describes your family's total income (before taxes) during the past 12 months? Please include income for yourself and all your family members living with you during this time.

\$30,000 or less

\$30,001-\$60,000

\$60,001-\$100,000

\$100,001 or More

Don't know or I'd rather not say

(A)

(B)

(C)

(D)

(E)

9. What is the highest level of education of your child's **father or male guardian** (*bubble only one answer*)?

- (A) Some high school
(B) High school diploma/GED
(C) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
(D) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
(E) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
(F) Master's degree
(G) Ph.D. or higher
(H) Don't know

10. What is the highest level of education of your child's **mother or female guardian** (*bubble only one answer*)?

- (A) Some high school
(B) High school diploma/GED
(C) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
(D) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
(E) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
(F) Master's degree
(G) Ph.D. or higher
(H) Don't know

11. If you have other children, how many have attended or are currently attending college?

0

1

2

3

4

5 or more

I don't have other children.

(A)

(B)

(C)

(D)

(E)

(F)

(G)

Section II: Your Child's Educational Goals

12. Have you talked with your child about attending college? (Y) (N)

13. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
<i>Attending college is important to my child's career goal and future.</i>	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)
<i>It's too early to think about my child going to college.</i>	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)

14. What is the highest level of education that you **would like** your child to get (*bubble only one answer*)?

- ☐ (A) High school or less
- ☐ (B) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
- ☐ (C) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
- ☐ (D) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
- ☐ (E) More than a 4-year college degree

15. What is the highest level of education that you **expect** your child to get (*bubble only one answer*)?

- ☐ (A) High school or less
- ☐ (B) Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)
- ☐ (C) 2-year college degree (Associate's)
- ☐ (D) 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)
- ☐ (E) More than a 4-year college degree

Section III: College Entrance Requirements, Cost, and Financial Aid

16. Has anyone from your child's school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about...

- College entrance requirements?* ☐ (Y) ☐ (N)
- The availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?* ☐ (Y) ☐ (N)

17. Do you know about financial aid and the cost and benefits to your child of pursuing a postsecondary education (e.g., going to college)?

- ☐ (Y) ☐ (N)

18. Do you think that your child could afford to attend one of the following types of colleges using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?

	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
<i>A public 4-year college</i>	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
<i>A public community/technical college</i>	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)
<i>A public career/technical center</i>	<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)

19. On average, how much do you think it costs for one year of in-state tuition at a **4-year public college in West Virginia** (*bubble only one answer; your estimate should not include the cost of food, housing, or books*)?

Up to \$4,000	\$4,001- \$8,000	\$8,001- \$11,000	\$11,001- \$16,000	\$16,001- \$21,000	\$21,001- \$26,000	More than \$26,000
<input type="radio"/> (A)	<input type="radio"/> (B)	<input type="radio"/> (C)	<input type="radio"/> (D)	<input type="radio"/> (E)	<input type="radio"/> (F)	<input type="radio"/> (G)

20. On average, how much do you think it costs for one year of in-state tuition at a **public community/technical college in West Virginia** (*bubble only one answer; your estimate should not include the cost of food, housing, or books*)?

Up to \$4,000	\$4,001- \$8,000	\$8,001- \$11,000	\$11,001- \$16,000	\$16,001- \$21,000	\$21,001- \$26,000	More than \$26,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)

21. How aware are you about the following topics?

Not at All Slightly Moderately Extremely

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
College savings plan/529	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
ACT/SAT	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
WV Higher Education Grant	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Federal Pell Grants	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Federal student loans	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Federal work-study	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or Institutional)	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
Requirements for college acceptance	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
The importance/benefit of a college education	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
High school graduation requirements	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

22. How much money **per academic year** do you think your child can get to help pay for college if he or she qualifies for a **Federal Pell Grant** (*bubble only one answer*)?

Up to \$1,000	\$1,001- \$2,000	\$2,001- \$3,000	\$3,001- \$4,000	\$4,001- \$5,000	\$5,001- \$6,000	\$6,001- \$7,000	More than \$7,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)

23. How much money **per academic year** do you think your child can get to help pay for college if he or she qualifies for a **West Virginia Higher Education Grant** (*bubble only one answer*)?

Up to \$1,000	\$1,001- \$2,000	\$2,001- \$3,000	\$3,001- \$4,000	\$4,001- \$5,000	\$5,001- \$6,000	\$6,001- \$7,000	More than \$7,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)

24. How much money **per academic year** do you think your child can get to help pay for college if he or she qualifies for a **PROMISE Scholarship** (*bubble only one answer*)?

Up to \$1,000	\$1,001- \$2,000	\$2,001- \$3,000	\$3,001- \$4,000	\$4,001- \$5,000	\$5,001- \$6,000	\$6,001- \$7,000	More than \$7,000
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)	(H)

25. How important have the following resources, individuals, or tools been in gathering information about your child's options for college?

Not at All Slightly Moderately Extremely

<i>College or university websites</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com)</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Other college planning websites</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>College fairs</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Television</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Radio</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Direct mail</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>E-mail</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Brochures and pamphlets</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Magazines/newspapers</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Signs, posters, or billboards</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Text messages</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>School counselor</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>Family members</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>GEAR UP staff</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)
<i>College admissions representatives</i>	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)

26. Which of the following do you need from your child's school or GEAR UP to help your child be more successful in school and more prepared for college (bubble all that apply)?

- More advanced classes (e.g., AP)* ☐
- Information about participating in GEAR UP events* ☐
- Tutoring* ☐
- Opportunities to participate in college visits* ☐
- Information about college entrance requirements* ☐
- Information about college financial aid/scholarships* ☐
- Leadership opportunities* ☐
- Summer activities* ☐
- Career exploration activities* ☐
- Test preparation* ☐
- Assistance with the college entrance process* ☐
- Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA)* ☐
- Information and events presented in other languages (e.g., Spanish)* ☐
- Other* ☐

Thank you for your time!

Please ask your child to return this survey to her/his school.

WV GEAR UP Year 2 School Personnel Survey

We are looking for your feedback about the college-going culture—that is, promoting a school culture that encourages all students to consider any “college” options including certificate programs, two-year degree programs, four-year degree programs, or military training after high school graduation and prepares them to make informed decisions about these and other available postsecondary educational opportunities—at your school.

1. What is your current primary position at your school? ☐ Administrator ☐ Counselor ☐ Teacher
2. What current grade level(s) do you serve (check all that apply)? ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8 ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12
3. In which school do you primarily work? [Dropdown List]
4. Are you a GEAR UP site coordinator? ☐ Yes ☐ No
5. For items a - s, please rate your level of agreement twice for each of the statements below: once for your level of agreement that the statement accurately reflects your SCHOOL and once for your level of agreement that the statement accurately reflects your own CLASSROOM (Note: classroom items asked only of teachers).

	In My School				In My Classroom			
	SA	A	D	SD	SA	A	D	SD
a. Creativity and original thinking are highly valued.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
b. All students have the ability to succeed academically.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
c. Students are encouraged to do their best.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
d. Teachers regularly talk to students about the importance of college.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
e. Students care about learning and getting a good education.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
f. Students are encouraged to set future college and career goals.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
g. All students have the potential to succeed in college or other postsecondary training.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
h. Students are learning effective problem solving skills.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
i. Teachers are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
j. The curriculum appropriately challenges most students.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
k. College pennants, banners, and posters are visible.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
l. Parents are included in the college preparation process.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
m. School staff are provided with professional development on the topics of college readiness and success.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
n. Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college attendance decisions.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
o. Teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience (e.g., posters, pennants).	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
p. Teachers are provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
q. College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
r. Teachers engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
s. Teachers are equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college.	4	3	2	1	4	3	2	1
Note: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree								

- 6 How comfortable do you feel about your level of knowledge to assist students with the following college topics?

	Not at all Comfortable	Slightly Comfortable	Moderately Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable	Rather not say
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	1	2	3	4	99
College savings plan/529	1	2	3	4	99
ACT/SAT	1	2	3	4	99

WV GEAR UP Year 2 School Personnel Survey

<i>WV Higher Education Grant</i>	1	2	3	4	99
<i>Federal grants, loans, and work-study</i>	1	2	3	4	99
<i>College Selection (Match and Fit)</i>	1	2	3	4	99
<i>Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or Institutional)</i>	1	2	3	4	99
<i>Requirements for college acceptance</i>	1	2	3	4	99
<i>The importance/benefit of a college education</i>	1	2	3	4	99
<i>High school graduation requirements</i>	1	2	3	4	99

7 Please rate the level of your involvement in the college-related activities presented below.

	<i>Not Applicable</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
<i>I participate in the college preparation activities of my school (e.g., chaperoning college visits).</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I have individual discussions with students about what they want to do with their futures.</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I talk with students about their plans for college or work after high school.</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I offer students supplemental instructional support to prepare them for postsecondary options.</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>I talk with parents about their ability to help prepare their student(s) for postsecondary education.</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5

8 In your opinion, what is the most important aspect to building a college going culture at your school?

9 Please indicate how effective participation in GEAR UP sponsored activities available at your school has been in helping your students to succeed in school/prepare for college?

	<i>Was Not Offered / Does Not Apply</i>	<i>I Did Not Attend</i>	<i>Not at All Effective</i>	<i>Slightly Effective</i>	<i>Moderately Effective</i>	<i>Extremely Effective</i>
<i>Tutoring</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Opportunities to participate in college visits</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Summer activities</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>College application week</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Provide information about college entrance requirements</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Career exploration activities</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Test preparation (e.g., ACT/SAT)</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Assistance with the college entrance process</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA)</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Teacher professional development about college awareness and success strategies</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5

WV GEAR UP Year 2 School Personnel Survey

	<i>Was Not Offered / Does Not Apply</i>	<i>I Did Not Attend</i>	<i>Not at All Effective</i>	<i>Slightly Effective</i>	<i>Moderately Effective</i>	<i>Extremely Effective</i>
<i>Mentoring opportunities</i>	99	1	2	3	4	5

10 In general, how often do you participate in GEAR UP activities?

<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Often</i>	<i>Always</i>
1	2	3	4	5

Please elaborate:

11 The next set of items ask about your level of agreement related to the overall experience provided to you through GEAR UP.

	<i>Not Applicable</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Strongly Agree</i>
<i>I think GEAR UP is making a positive impact on students in my school.</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>GEAR UP activities are likely to be sustained after the grant ends.</i>	99	1	2	3	4

12 How sure are you that the majority of students...

	<i>Not Applicable</i>	<i>Not at All Sure</i>	<i>Somewhat Sure</i>	<i>Sure</i>	<i>Very Sure</i>
<i>Will not attend college, but will seek a job or enter the military</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Will be eligible to apply to a postsecondary institution</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Can make an educational plan that will prepare them for college</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Can get good grades in their high school science classes</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Can get good grades in their high school math classes</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Can choose the high school classes needed to get into college</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Know enough about computers to get into college</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Can go to college after high school</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Could get A's and B's in college</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Could finish college and receive a college degree</i>	99	1	2	3	4

WV GEAR UP Year 2 School Personnel Survey

- 13 Thinking about the next year when GEAR UP services and activities are no longer at your school, to what extent will your school promote the following elements related to a college-going culture?

	<i>Does Not Apply</i>	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>Family involvement</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Mentoring</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Academic support</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Financial aid literacy</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Partnership with institutions of higher education</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Community support</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>College visits</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Access to college professionals</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>Life skills development</i>	99	1	2	3	4
<i>College application week</i>	99	1	2	3	4

- 14 Please use this space for additional comments, questions, or concerns:

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

Focus Group Guide for Site Coordinators at Middle / K-8 Schools

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and colleagues as representatives of ICF International and describe your roles (i.e., facilitator, note taker).
- Briefly discuss the focus group's purpose: Explain that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) has contracted with ICF International to conduct an independent evaluation of the West Virginia GEAR UP program. The purpose of this focus group is to learn more about the program's operation and activities. Explain that this is not an evaluation of site coordinators, their schools, or other GEAR UP personnel. They can agree or disagree with comments, but only one person speaks at a time. The session will take approximately 55-60 minutes.
- Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: Remind them (1) The focus group is voluntary; (2) they can decline to answer any questions or stop participating at any time without any consequences; (3) the information will be held in confidence, to the extent permitted by law, by the evaluation team, who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) ICF maintains focus group data in secure areas; and (5) please respect each other's confidentiality by not sharing any information outside of this focus group.
- Ask if they have any questions before you begin. Hand out consent forms, review, and ask them to sign before the focus group begins.
- Ask permission to record the focus group: State that: *"In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If at least one person chooses not to have the focus group recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes. Any information that can be used to identify an individual will be removed from transcripts prior to being shared."* **START RECORDER NOW!**
- Each focus group should have six to 10 participants. The focus group is for site coordinators at middle / K-8 schools during the 2015-2016 school year.

Materials

- Pen and index card for each participant

Time	Questions	Facilitator's Activity
2 min	INTRODUCTION Please introduce yourself, your school, how long you've been with GEAR UP, and your role at the school in addition to GEAR UP (teacher, counselor, etc.).	Probe for other responsibilities of site coordinators and how these relate to GEAR UP.
5-7 min	IMPLEMENTATION Could you talk about how GEAR UP is going in your school this year? The services provided to students, parents, and teachers? (1A, 1C, 1E, 2C, 2D, 2F) How have you built awareness and buy-in throughout your school for GEAR UP activities and initiatives? Has this improved since the first year of the grant?	Probe for financial literacy and awareness activities, student leadership academy, college visits, tutoring. Probe for trends across sites and any barriers/challenges. Probe for lessons learned on school buy-in.

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation
Focus Group Guide for Site Coordinators at Middle / K-8 Schools

5 min	<p>WORKPLAN</p> <p>What resources have helped you organize your work to meet the goals and objectives of GEAR UP?</p> <p>Has the workplan helped you organize to meet the goals of GEAR UP? Do you fully understand your role in the workplan?</p> <p>Is the GEAR UP workplan relevant and purposeful in building the college-going culture in your school? How?</p> <p>If you were continuing in GEAR UP, what changes, if any, would you like to see to the current workplan?</p>	<p>Probe for clarity and understanding of the workplan and its usefulness in achieving GEAR UP goals.</p> <p>Probe for weaknesses or issues in regard to the current workplan.</p>
5 min	<p>INTERACTION</p> <p>How do you interact with HEPC personnel (e.g., regional program directors, internal evaluator, project director)?</p> <p>How do you interact with your county coordinator? Has this changed since the first year of the grant?</p> <p>How satisfied are you with the information and resources you receive?</p> <p>How have you shared any resources with others in your school? (1D, 1E)</p>	<p>Identify common threads across the schools.</p> <p>Probe whether contact is ongoing and consistent.</p> <p>Probe for differences in participant views and possible reasons for this.</p>
5 min	<p>PARTNERS</p> <p>How are local <i>college and university</i> partners involved in GEAR UP at your school? What resources, if any, have they provided? (1D)</p> <p>What other <i>community partners</i> do you work with on GEAR UP, and what resources have they provided? (1D)</p> <p>To what extent have your relationships with these partners developed since the first year of the grant? What is still missing?</p>	<p>Probe for satisfaction with level and extent of involvement by postsecondary partner institutions as well as any other partners.</p> <p>Probe for differences in how partners may engage with priority students compared with cohort students.</p>
3-5 min	<p>PARENT INVOLVEMENT</p> <p>How involved are parents in GEAR UP at your school? How, if at all, has this improved since the first year of the grant? How satisfied are you with this level of involvement? (1A-E, 2C) What methods are you employing to increase parent participation?</p>	<p>Probe for strategies perceived as effective or ineffective.</p> <p>Probe for current methods to increase parent participation.</p> <p>Probe for additional methods.</p>

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

Focus Group Guide for Site Coordinators at Middle / K-8 Schools

10 min	<p>PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>With the pen and index card, take two minutes to write a few things that you think are “working well” in West Virginia GEAR UP on the left side. Then write a few things on the right side that could be improved.</p> <p><u>TIME THE ACTIVITY.</u> (1A, 1B, 1E, 1F, 2F)</p>	<p>After 2 minutes, <i>ask everyone to share at least one item</i> “working well” and <i>at least one item</i> “to improve,” and why they selected these items. Ask if others agree with each item and identify any consensus.</p>
5-7 min	<p>IMPACT</p> <p>At the end of the day, what will success in GEAR UP look like for your school? What is the cumulative impact of having GEAR UP at your school the past two years? Is your school different because of GEAR UP?</p> <p>Looking across all the GEAR UP services we discussed earlier, how will we know whether they have had an impact? (2A-E, 3A-B)</p> <p>Please describe the personal impact that GEAR UP has had on you and your work. How has it changed your role in the school?</p>	<p>Probe for views on the impact on homework completion, test scores, course completion, grades, high school graduation, etc.</p> <p>Probe for other impacts (financial aid knowledge among students, impact on staff/faculty, interactions/support from district, parent involvement, etc.)</p>
5 min	<p>HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION</p> <p>What role has GEAR UP played in helping students prepare for the transition to high school?</p> <p>Have you coordinated with the regional program director, county coordinator, or GEAR UP high school site coordinators on high school transition?</p> <p>Will students be introduced to a high school GEAR UP coordinator? When?</p>	<p>Probe for GEAR UP role in high school visits, reviewing high school curricula, learning about high school graduation requirements, registering for courses.</p> <p>Probe for any interaction with GEAR UP high school site coordinators.</p> <p>Probe for lessons learned and promising practices.</p>
5-7 min	<p>SUSTAINABILITY</p> <p>Will your school continue to build a college-going culture after the GEAR UP cohort leaves for high school? In what ways?</p> <p>How will GEAR UP’s work be sustained for future students?</p>	<p>Identify any potential best practices.</p> <p>Probe for sustainability of tutoring, college visits, technology upgrades, financial aid/workshops, guest speakers, parent involvement, CFVW website, community partners.</p>
2 min	<p>CLOSING</p> <p>Is there anything else we should know to understand the GEAR UP program at your school?</p>	

Thank you very much for your time.

[Collect index cards.]

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

Focus Group Guide for Site Coordinators at High Schools and Grade 6-12 Schools

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and colleagues as representatives of ICF International and describe your roles (i.e., facilitator, note taker).
- Briefly discuss the focus group's purpose: Explain that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) has contracted with ICF International to conduct an independent evaluation of the West Virginia GEAR UP program. The purpose of this focus group is to learn more about the program's operation and activities. Explain that this is not an evaluation of site coordinators, their schools, or other GEAR UP personnel. They can agree or disagree with comments, but only one person speaks at a time. The session will take approximately 55-60 minutes.
- Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: Remind them (1) The focus group is voluntary; (2) they can decline to answer any questions or stop participating at any time without any consequences; (3) the information will be held in confidence, to the extent permitted by law, by the evaluation team, who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) ICF maintains focus group data in secure areas; and (5) please respect each other's confidentiality by not sharing any information outside of this focus group.
- Ask if they have any questions before you begin. Hand out consent forms, review, and ask them to sign before the focus group begins.
- Ask permission to record the focus group: State that: *"In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If at least one person chooses not to have the focus group recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes. Any information that can be used to identify an individual will be removed from transcripts prior to being shared."* **START RECORDER NOW!**

Each focus group should have six to 10 participants. The focus group is for site coordinators at Grade 6-12 schools or at high schools serving priority students during the 2015-2016 school year.

Materials

- Pen and index card for each participant

Time	Questions	Facilitator's Activity
2 min	INTRODUCTION Please introduce yourself, your school, how long you've been with GEAR UP, and your role at the school in addition to GEAR UP (teacher, counselor, etc.).	Probe for whether site coordinators' schools serve cohort, priority, or both groups of students.
5 min	IMPLEMENTATION Could you talk about how GEAR UP is going in your school this year? The services provided to students, parents, and teachers? How do GEAR UP services differ for cohort and priority students? (1A, 1C, 1E, 2C, 2D, 2F) How have you built awareness and buy-in throughout your school for GEAR UP activities and initiatives? Has this improved since the first year of the grant?	Probe for college application week, financial aid/ awareness workshops, student leadership academy, college decision days, tutoring. Probe for trends across sites and any barriers/challenges. Probe for lessons learned on school buy-in.

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

Focus Group Guide for Site Coordinators at High Schools and Grade 6-12 Schools

5 min	<p>WORKPLAN</p> <p>What resources have helped you organize your work to meet the goals and objectives of GEAR UP?</p> <p>Has the workplan helped you organize to meet the goals of GEAR UP? Do you fully understand your role in the workplan?</p> <p>Is the GEAR UP workplan relevant and purposeful in building the college-going culture in your school? How?</p> <p>What changes, if any, would you like to see to the current workplan?</p>	<p>Probe for clarity and understanding of the workplan and its usefulness in achieving GEAR UP goals.</p> <p>Probe for weaknesses or issues in regard to the current workplan.</p>
5 min	<p>INTERACTION</p> <p>How do you interact with HEPC personnel (e.g., regional program directors, internal evaluator, project director)?</p> <p>How do you interact with your county coordinator? Has this changed since the first year of the grant?</p> <p>How satisfied are you with the information and resources you receive?</p> <p>How have you shared any resources with others in your school? (1D, 1E)</p>	<p>Identify common threads across the schools.</p> <p>Probe whether contact is ongoing and consistent.</p> <p>Probe for differences in participant views and possible reasons for this.</p>
5 min	<p>PARTNERS</p> <p>How are local college and university partners involved in GEAR UP at your school? What resources, if any, have they provided? (1D)</p> <p>What other community partners do you work with on GEAR UP, and what resources have they provided? (1D)</p> <p>To what extent have your relationships with these partners developed since the first year of the grant? What is still missing?</p>	<p>Probe for satisfaction with level and extent of involvement by postsecondary partner institutions as well as other partners.</p> <p>Probe for differences in how partners may engage with priority students compared with cohort students.</p>
3-5 min	<p>PARENT INVOLVEMENT</p> <p>How involved are parents in GEAR UP at your school? How, if at all, has this improved since the first year of the grant? How satisfied are you with this level of involvement? (1A-E, 2C) What methods are you employing to increase parent participation?</p>	<p>Probe for strategies perceived as effective or ineffective.</p> <p>Probe for current methods to increase parent participation.</p> <p>Probe for additional methods.</p>

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

Focus Group Guide for Site Coordinators at High Schools and Grade 6-12 Schools

10 min	<p>PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>With the pen and index card, take two minutes to write a few things that you think are “working well” in West Virginia GEAR UP on the left side. Then write a few things on the right side that could be improved.</p> <p><u>TIME THE ACTIVITY.</u> (1A, 1B, 1E, 1F, 2F)</p>	<p>After 2 minutes, <u>ask everyone to share at least one item</u> “working well” and <u>at least one item</u> “to improve” and why they selected these items. Ask if others agree with each item and identify any consensus.</p>
5-7 min	<p>IMPACT</p> <p>At the end of the day, what will success in GEAR UP look like in your school? What early impacts do you think GEAR UP has had on your school so far?</p> <p>Looking across all the GEAR UP services we discussed earlier, how will we know whether they have had an impact? (2A-E, 3A-B)</p> <p>Please describe the personal impact that GEAR UP has had on you and your work. How has it changed your role in the school?</p>	<p>Probe for views on the impact on homework completion, test scores, course completion, grades, high school graduation, etc.</p> <p>Probe for other impacts (financial aid knowledge, impact on staff/faculty, interactions/support from district, parent involvement, etc.)</p> <p>Probe for impact on priority as well as cohort students.</p>
5-7 min	<p>PRIORITY STUDENTS</p> <p>For coordinators currently working with high school seniors, how have services for priority students evolved in the second year of GEAR UP? What strategies have worked/not worked?</p>	<p>Probe for promising practices and lessons learned.</p>
5-7 min	<p>HIGH SCHOOL TRANSITION</p> <p>For coordinators at Grade 6-12 schools, what role has GEAR UP played in helping students prepare for the transition to high school?</p> <p>How will your role change as the GEAR UP cohort moves into 9th grade, if at all? Will you continue as the GEAR UP site coordinator? If not, how are you preparing for the transition to a new coordinator?</p> <p>For coordinators at high schools currently serving priority students, how is your school preparing for the incoming GEAR UP cohort?</p> <p>For all coordinators, have you worked with your county coordinator and/or regional program director on high school transition? If so, how?</p>	<p>Probe for GEAR UP role in reviewing high school curricula, registering for courses, learning about high school graduation requirements.</p> <p>Probe for lessons learned and best practices.</p>
2 min	<p>CLOSING</p> <p>Is there anything else we should know to understand the GEAR UP program at your school?</p>	

Thank you very much for your time.

[Collect index cards.]

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

County Coordinator Focus Group Guide

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and colleagues as representatives of ICF International and describe your roles (i.e., facilitator, note taker).
- Briefly discuss the focus group's purpose: Explain that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (HEPC) has contracted with ICF International to conduct an independent evaluation of the West Virginia GEAR UP program. The purpose of this focus group is to learn more about the program's operation and activities. Explain that this is not an evaluation of county coordinators or other GEAR UP personnel. They can agree or disagree with comments, but only one person speaks at a time. The session will take approximately 45-50 minutes.
- Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: Remind them (1) The focus group is voluntary; (2) they can decline to answer any questions or stop participating at any time without any consequences; (3) the information will be held in confidence, to the extent permitted by law, by the evaluation team, who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) ICF maintains focus group data in secure areas; and (5) please respect each other's confidentiality by not sharing any information outside of this focus group.
- Ask if they have any questions before you begin. Hand out consent forms, review, and ask them to sign before the focus group begins.
- Ask permission to record the focus group: State that: *"In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If at least one person chooses not to have the focus group recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes. Any information that can be used to identify an individual will be removed from transcripts prior to being shared."* **START RECORDER NOW!**
- Each focus group should have six to 10 participants. The focus group is for county coordinators during the 2015-2016 school year.

Materials

- Pen and index card for each participant

Time	Questions	Facilitator's Activity
2 min	INTRODUCTION Please introduce yourself, your county, how long you've been with GEAR UP, and your role in the district in addition to GEAR UP.	
5 min	COUNTY COORDINATOR ROLE Can you talk about your responsibilities as a county GEAR UP coordinator? What is your involvement with individual schools? (1A, 1D) How and when do you interact with HEPC personnel? (1D) How and when do you interact with GEAR UP site coordinators? How if at all, has your role or your understanding of your role changed in the second year of the grant?	Probe for similarities /differences in how they approach their roles and reasons for this. Probe for any training and its perceived value. Probe whether contact is ongoing and consistent.

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation

County Coordinator Focus Group Guide

6-8 min	<p>IMPLEMENTATION</p> <p>How is GEAR UP operating in your county this year? What services are provided to students, parents, and teachers? (1B, 1C, 1E, 2D, 2F) What successes and challenges can you report?</p> <p>If any of your schools serve high school students, what is your perception of these services? How, if at all, do services differ for middle and high schools participating in GEAR UP?</p> <p>What differences are you seeing in how your schools are implementing the project this year, when compared to last year?</p> <p>How have you gained county and school buy-in for GEAR UP activities and initiatives? How has this improved since the first year of the grant?</p>	<p>Probe for trends across counties.</p> <p>Probe for satisfaction with activities / services.</p> <p>Probe for what is / is not working at the school level.</p> <p>Probe for potential best practices.</p>
5-7 min	<p>PARTNERS</p> <p>How are local college and university partners involved in GEAR UP in your county? What resources, if any, have they provided? (1D)</p> <p>What other community partners do you work with through GEAR UP, and what resources do they offer? (1D)</p> <p>What has been the focus of your local College Access and Success Advisory Council during the past year? How have you been able to use it to leverage support?</p> <p>To what extent have your relationships with these partners developed since the first year of the grant? What is still missing?</p>	<p>Probe for satisfaction with postsecondary partner institutions.</p> <p>Probe for plans to recruit new partners and their anticipated role/resources.</p> <p>Probe for challenges and GEAR UP support to address challenges.</p> <p>Probe for details about the extent of advisory council implementation and their perceived effectiveness.</p>
10 min	<p>PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVENESS</p> <p>With the pen and index card, take two minutes to write on the left side a few things that you think are “working well” in GEAR UP. Then write a few things on the right side that could be improved. <u>TIME THE ACTIVITY.</u> (1A, 1B, 1E, 1F, 2F)</p>	<p>After 2-3 minutes, <u>ask everyone to share at least one item</u> “working well” and <u>at least one item</u> “to improve” and why they selected these items. Ask if others agree with each item and identify any consensus.</p>
5 min	<p>IMPACT</p> <p>At the end of the day, what will success in GEAR UP look like for your county? What do you think is the cumulative impact of having GEAR UP in the county so far?</p>	<p>Probe for views on the impact on homework completion, test scores, course completion, grades, student/parent knowledge of college, etc.</p> <p>Probe for other impacts (financial aid</p>

2

West Virginia GEAR UP Evaluation County Coordinator Focus Group Guide

	Looking across the array of GEAR UP services, how will we know whether they have had an impact? (2A-E, 3A-B)	knowledge, impact on staff/faculty, interactions/support from district, parent involvement, etc.)
5 min	SUSTAINABILITY For middle/K-8 schools leaving the program after this year, what long-term benefits has GEAR UP provided? To what extent can these schools sustain GEAR UP activities into the future? What specifically will the district do to help them achieve sustainability?	Probe for patterns across K-8/middle schools around sustainability.
5 min	LOOKING AHEAD How are high schools in your district preparing for their incoming GEAR UP cohorts? What more could GEAR UP do to make this transition successful? What suggestions, if any, do you have to enhance the county coordinator role or your relationship with GEAR UP staff? How could GEAR UP gain improved superintendent buy-in? Improved district/school buy-in?	Probe for consensus about suggestions.
2 min	CLOSING Is there anything else we should know to understand the GEAR UP program in your county?	

Thank you very much for your time.
[Collect index cards.]