



West Virginia GEAR UP Year 6 Annual Evaluation Report

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Policy Commission

Submitted by:
ICF External Evaluation Team

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I. Introduction

The West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC) has implemented its second consecutive Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant since 2014. The state recently completed Year 6 of a seven-year grant, with goals to help students prepare for, access, and succeed in postsecondary education. These goals are ambitious for the 10 counties served by West Virginia (WV) GEAR UP in a state where many households face a stagnant economy, pervasive poverty, low rates of educational attainment, and an accelerating opioid epidemic that threatens families and entire communities.

According to the most recent available U.S. Census Bureau data (2019a), West Virginia's per capita income was \$25,479 in 2018 with a state poverty rate of 17.8%. In comparing county-level data for three economic indicators—three-year average unemployment rate, per capita market income, and poverty rate—with national averages, the Appalachian Regional Commission (2020) classified 18 counties in West Virginia as economically distressed. Another nine counties were considered “at-risk.” Of the 10 counties in the state's GEAR UP program, eight were classified as economically distressed and the other two were classified as at-risk.

West Virginia's educational attainment rates also remain below the U.S. average, which may prevent some from earning family-sustaining wages. Based on the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data, compared to national averages, West Virginia has a higher share of adults with no education beyond a high school degree and a lower share of adults with postsecondary education. Of West Virginians aged 25 years and older, 40.5% had only a high school degree (compared to 27.1% nationally), 18.6% had some college (compared to 20.6% nationally), 7.1% had an Associate's degree (compared to 8.4% nationally), and 20.3% had a Bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 31.5% nationally) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b). Nationally, Bureau of Labor Statistics data show that, through 2028, jobs requiring a Bachelor's degree, Associate's degree, or postsecondary nondegree award will grow at triple the rate of jobs requiring only a high school diploma (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020a).

The difficult economic circumstances of many West Virginians are compounded by the opioid crisis. The National Center for Health Statistics reported in 2020 that West Virginia had the highest rate of death due to drug overdose in the nation (51.5 per 100,000), which was far ahead of the next most-affected state, Delaware, at 43.8 per 100,000 (National Center for Health Statistics, 2020). One significant impact of this crisis is its effect on children. In 2018, among all states, West Virginia had the highest rate of children and youth in foster care (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019), with 19 placements per 1,000 children.

Another concern facing West Virginia's school-age children is food insecurity. Statewide, one of seven individuals—including one of every five children—struggle with hunger (Feeding America, 2020). Overall, children are present in 37.3% of West Virginia households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Such trends may have long-term implications for children's futures, as the problems of hunger and food insecurity affect both child health and their outlook toward school and their futures, including any goals to continue their education after high school.

Finally, a complicating factor for GEAR UP in Year 6 was the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced all schools in the state to close after March 13, 2020 and to operate virtually for the remainder of the academic year. This move from in-person to online classes affected virtually all aspects of the state education system. In response, GEAR UP also moved many of its activities online and

sought to stay in touch with students. As the WV GEAR UP cohort were seniors during 2019–20, the impact of COVID-19 on the GEAR UP population was a significant issue for school leaders and program staff during spring and summer 2020. COVID-19 and related closures also have impacted other aspects of the West Virginia economy. Overall, unemployment statewide increased from 4.9% in February 2020 to 10.5% in June 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020b), a trend likely to affect families seeking to fund postsecondary education.

The state's economic, educational, and public health challenges all underscore the importance of the WV GEAR UP grant, the important work of the WVHEPC to increase access to and success in higher education, and the achievements made thus far. For example, the state's four-year high school graduation rate in 2018–19 was 91.4%, an increase of 12 percentage points from the 79.3% rate in 2011–12 (West Virginia Department of Education, 2020). Additionally, the graduation rate of students with disabilities increased in 2019 to 78.8%, reflecting a 10% increase in the past five years (West Virginia Department of Education, 2019). Gains are evident in higher education as well, as the total number of degrees and credentials awarded at the state's public postsecondary institutions increased from 15,733 in 2010 to 17,916 in 2019, an increase of 13.9% (WVHEPC, 2020).

While GEAR UP supports these trends in its participating counties, the WVHEPC, the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, and the College Foundation of West Virginia (CFWV), with support of the Lumina Foundation, are collaborating on a campaign to increase college access and success statewide. West Virginia's Climb has set a goal that at least 60% of West Virginians have a postsecondary credential by 2030 (West Virginia's Climb, 2018).

Another recent beneficial change was implementation of the new West Virginia Invests (WV Invests, 2020) program during 2019–20. WV Invests will pay the last-dollar cost of tuition and mandatory fees for certificate and associate degree programs in high-demand fields identified by the West Virginia Department of Commerce. Ten public institutions with 27 campuses across the state are participating in WV Invests. The program is open to individuals who graduated a public, private, or homeschool program (or passed a high school equivalency test); are legal residents of West Virginia for at least one year; and are U.S. citizens or non-citizens eligible for Federal financial aid. The program is managed by the West Virginia Council for Community and Technical College Education.

As 'last-dollar' aid, WV Invests pays for tuition and fees not covered by other Federal and state financial aid programs for those who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students can receive aid to study for certificates in areas such as allied health and applied technology, including programs such as coding specialist, 3D printing, and industrial maintenance. WV Invests also will cover last-dollar aid for associate degree programs in areas such as allied health, business management, culinary arts, engineering design technology, and other technical fields.

Given this background, the WVHEPC has worked with ICF to design a comprehensive, mixed-methods evaluation plan for GEAR UP. The design of this evaluation and the purpose of this Year 6 report are outlined in further detail below.

2. GEAR UP Evaluation Design

WVHEPC contracted with ICF to provide an external program evaluation of WV GEAR UP. ICF's evaluation framework includes four components: (1) a program **implementation study** to



assist the WVHEPC in determining the fidelity with which program activities were delivered and to inform the WVHEPC of any facilitators or barriers to implementation; (2) a summative **outcomes study** to ascertain the extent to which data-informed benchmarks, identified in concert with the WVHEPC, are achieved; (3) various **impact studies** with quasi-experimental (QED) and randomized control trial (RCT) designs to address selected program outcomes and impacts; and (4) a **sustainability study** to inform the WVHEPC about how the GEAR UP program could continue to have an impact after the grant ends.

3. Purpose of this Report

The main purposes of this report are to provide an update on evaluation findings from the analysis of data collected through surveys, interviews, and focus groups through Year 6 and to interpret these findings with evidence-informed recommendations for program improvement. The emphasis of this report is on findings from the most recent surveys of GEAR UP cohort students and their parents, a survey of school personnel in WV GEAR UP schools, and trends evident in focus groups of site and county coordinators conducted during the 2019–20 school year.

The goal of the student survey is to measure their perceived academic ability, educational goals, and college-going self-efficacy (CGSE) and college-going outcomes-expectations (CGOE). The parent survey measured parent/guardian knowledge of college-related topics, parent/guardian perceptions of their child's educational goals, and their own expectations for their child. This report examines the Year 6 findings compared to earlier findings, particularly from Year 5.

The primary goal of the school personnel survey is measuring the adoption and use of practices that support a positive college-going culture among faculty and staff. This includes adherence to high standards or academic rigor and high expectations for students and the presence of visual cues and provision of resources and support that reinforce the view that postsecondary education is possible for all students. Thus far, the evaluation team has measured these concepts in Years 1–5 using an annual survey administered to all personnel in GEAR UP schools. In Year 3, when the cohort moved to high school, the survey was modified and administered to all personnel serving grades 9–12, as was the case again in Year 6.

Gathering ground-level perspectives about the program, facilitators and barriers to successful implementation, and bringing to the surface the experiences of program staff in their own words are critical components of the implementation study of WV GEAR UP. The primary information source for collecting this information is a series of annual focus groups conducted with site coordinators who are tasked with implementing GEAR UP in participating sites. In addition to this data collection, in Year 6, the evaluation team conducted a focus group with GEAR UP county coordinators providing general oversight of the program. A description of these data sources and evaluation methods, along with a summary and interpretation of findings from these interviews, are included in this report. Recommendations based on evaluation findings through Year 6 are provided at the end.

II. Data Sources

This report draws on data collected from students, parents/guardians, program staff, and school personnel through surveys and interviews. The instruments used to collect these data are described in further detail in this section. In this report, Year 6 refers to the year of the WV GEAR UP grant in which the research took place; it does not mean the sixth year in which such research was conducted.

2. Year 6 Grade 12 Student and Parent/Guardian Surveys

The Year 6 Grade 12 WV GEAR UP Student Survey included 38 items organized across three sections. Appendix A provides a reproduction of the survey. Eleven were demographic items designed to gather background information about respondents and their families. Eight items measured students' perceived academic ability, educational goals, and CGSE and CGOE. New questions related to the frequency in which students had a difficult time focusing or worried in the past 30 days and last 12 months were added in Year 6. Eleven items measured students' knowledge and awareness about college-related topics, the perceived cost of attending college, and various financial aid options. Of those, one item measured the importance of various information sources in helping students gather information about their postsecondary education options. Finally, eight questions assessed students' participation in college preparation activities such as the SAT/ACT, test preparation, the FAFSA, and college applications.

The Year 6 Grade 12 WV GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Survey included 23 items organized across three sections for all respondents. Appendix B provides a reproduction of the survey. Ten were demographic items designed to gather background information about respondents and their children. Four items measured parent/guardian perceptions of their child's educational goals and their own expectations for their child. Seven items measured parent/guardian knowledge and awareness of college-related topics, the perceived cost of attending college, and various financial aid options as well as the importance of various information sources in helping parents/guardians gather information about their child's postsecondary education options. Also included were two questions regarding FAFSA completion.

3. Year 6 School Personnel Survey

In Year 6, the school personnel survey included 27 items. Appendix C provides a reproduction of the survey. Five items were demographic questions designed to gather information about respondents' primary roles, school location, grade level(s) served, and number of years employed in school personnel. Two subscales measured faculty member perceptions of college-going culture in their schools and classrooms, with 10 prompts examining the rigor and expectations dimension of college-going culture, and 9 measuring the visual cues/material resources dimension. These items were consistent with Years 4 and 5 survey items.

Additional items asked school personnel survey 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, perceptions of student challenges, and to

rate how effective GEAR UP activities were in helping students to succeed in school and prepare for college. A series of items was also asked to measure school faculty members' perceptions of the college-going efficacy of the students in their schools. For the first-time, personnel were also asked items about the perceived cost of attending college, and various financial aid options. Also included were two questions regarding their perspectives of college-going culture. School members were also asked about the likelihood that various GEAR UP activities would be sustained after the grant ends. Finally, administrators were asked about their actions to promote college-going culture in their school.

4. Year 6 Site and County Coordinator Focus Group Protocol

The evaluation team developed a revised focus group facilitation protocol for site and county coordinators as part of the Year 6 evaluation of WV GEAR UP. The protocol included a facilitator script and informed consent form. Due to the COVID-19 school closings, participants could provide consent verbally or in writing if possible. Appendix D provides a reproduction of the focus group protocol. The Year 6 protocol included nine prompts with a series of sub-questions and probes. Prompts addressed topics including grant implementation and buy-in, interaction with the WVHEPC, partnerships, parent involvement, college visits/preparation, college-going climate, coordinator roles, services for the transition to college, impact and sustainability, and closing thoughts.

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.

2. Evaluation Participants and Data Collection Methods

2.2 Grade 12 Student and Parent/Guardian Survey

Year 6 surveys were administered online to all Grade 12 cohort students enrolled in WV GEAR UP schools during the 2019–20 school year as well as their parents/guardians (November 2019 through January 2020). Depending on their needs, individual schools utilized different settings for student survey administration. Some students completed surveys on their home computers and others on school computers or mobile devices utilizing the Standardized Collection and Reporting of Information Benefitting Education (SCRIBE) system. A total of 1,908 unique student survey cases were collected in Year 6 and included in analyses. The same SCRIBE system was utilized for the parent surveys. Survey links and scannable Quick Response (QR) codes were made available for the student and parent surveys and promotional materials/reminders were sent home to parents/guardians and publicized on the WV GEAR UP website. Parent/guardian surveys were also available in paper/pencil formats to a single parent/guardian for each student that was enrolled in Grade 12 at the participating schools during the 2019–20 (November 2019 through January 2020) school year. A total of 813 unique Grade 12 parent survey cases were collected in Year 6 and included in analyses.

2.3 School Personnel Survey

The WV GEAR UP school personnel survey was administered from May to June 2020. In Year 6, the survey was administered online to all Grade 9–12 teachers, counselors, site coordinators, and school administrators employed in WV GEAR UP schools. In Years 1 and 2, since the program served middle school students in the cohort group and Grade 12 students in the priority group, the survey was administered online to all Grade 6–12 teachers, counselors, site coordinators, and school administrators employed in WV GEAR UP schools. In Years 3–6, when cohort students had moved on to high school, the survey was administered online to the same three categories of educators, but only those who served students in Grades 9–12. For each year, the evaluation team utilized the 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. The link was also embedded on the WV GEAR UP website.

Ultimately, 562 personnel completed the survey in Year 6, a total of 497 completed the survey in Year 5, 600 completed the survey in Year 4, 563 completed the survey in Year 3, 805 completed the Year 2 survey, and a total of 800 school personnel members completed the Year 1 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 the surveys in multiple years.

2.4 Site and County Coordinator Focus Groups

Site and county coordinators from all GEAR UP schools were invited to participate in one of three focus groups during Year 6. Due to the COVID-19 school closures, ICF conducted these focus groups virtually in late April 2020. Two focus groups were held with site coordinators, with 24 participating; a third focus group sought views from five county coordinators. The evaluation team used the Microsoft Teams platform to reflect the security requirements set by ICF's Institutional Review Board. Coordinators participated by audio and/or video, and many also used the chat function of the platform to provide comments. Themes focused chiefly on program implementation and sustainability, with topics such as coordinator roles and responsibilities, college partners, parent involvement, and college-awareness activities. Participants also offered early input on the operation of GEAR UP during the COVID-19 school closures in spring 2020.

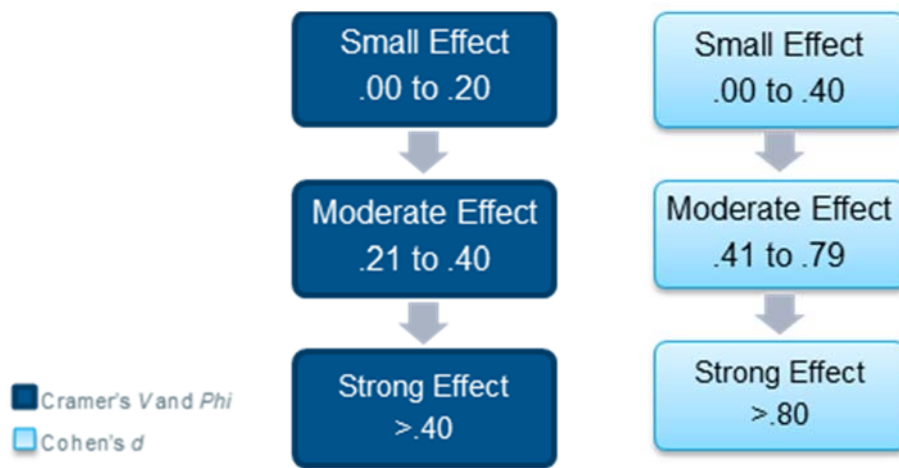
3. Analytic Approach

3.2 Survey Data

To examine changes in survey outcomes for students and parents from Year 5 to Year 6 and school personnel from Year 1 to Year 6 of WV GEAR UP, the evaluation team conducted longitudinal analyses of survey responses. The evaluation team used descriptive and comparative statistical analyses when examining trends in survey outcomes across time. Mean values for continuous outcomes and the frequency of responses for categorical outcomes are presented. To determine significant differences, the evaluation team used independent samples t-tests for continuous outcomes and chi-square analyses for categorical outcomes. For these analyses, the evaluation team interpreted statistically significant differences using common effect size calculations.

For chi-square analyses, the evaluation team interpreted *Phi* or *Cramer's V* as appropriate depending on the number of degrees of freedom in the categorical data. For independent samples t-tests, the evaluation team used Cohen's *d*. See Figure 1 for the interpretations used.

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



3.3 Focus Group Data

After completing all focus groups, the evaluation team transcribed the sessions and coded transcripts under themes that included implementation and buy-in, communication, college-related activities and college-going culture, parent involvement, success as a coordinator, transition-to-college services, and impact/sustainability. The evaluation team sought commonalities and differences between the site coordinators and county coordinators, highlighting areas of agreement and disagreement where applicable.

IV. Results

2. Grade 12 Student and Parent/Guardian Survey Outcomes

This section provides a variety of analyses from Year 6 surveys compared with Year 5 data. To examine changes in survey outcomes for program participants from Year 5 to Year 6 of WV GEAR UP, longitudinal analyses of cohort responses were conducted for both parents/guardians and students. All significant findings in this section have a small effect size unless otherwise noted.

2.2 Characteristics of Respondents

In Year 6, 78% of Grade 12 cohort students responded to the survey. As in previous years, the surveys included questions prompting students to report on their demographics, including race, ethnicity, gender, language spoken at home, family income, and the highest level of education

of their parents/guardians.¹ Overall, Year 6 students were similar to Year 5 students. The majority (at least 92%) of Year 6 students reported that they are White, non-Hispanic, and English speakers. Approximately 50% of students reported that they are male (52%) and do not have any other siblings in college or who have completed college (52%). Similar to Year 5, 11% of students reported that they *always* or *sometimes* did not have enough food to eat in the past 12 months; 9% said the same about the past 30 days.² Nearly two-thirds (63%) of student respondents reported that the highest level of education among their parents/guardians was at least some postsecondary education. The distribution of family income responses among students in Year 6 was significantly different than those reported in Year 5. The percentage of those who selected *I don't know* decreased from 36% to 31%; further the percentage who selected \$30,000 or less increased from 18% to 22% and the percentage that selected \$30,001 to \$60,000 increased from 20% to 23%.³ These changes may continue to demonstrate an increase in students' understanding of their families' economic status.

Overall, 33% of cohort parents/guardians responded to the Year 6 survey. Parents/guardians were asked similar demographic questions, including their relationship to the student, race, ethnicity, language spoken at home, number of children enrolled in or who had completed college, family income, and the highest level of education among the parents/guardians of the student. Overall, the background of Year 6 parents/guardians was similar to those in Year 5. Most respondents reported that they are parents (90%), White (97%), non-Hispanic (97%), speak English at home (99%), and did not have any children currently enrolled in or who had completed college (55%). The highest level of education most frequently reported among the parents/guardians was at least some postsecondary education (55%). Almost half (46%) of parents/guardians reported their family income is \$60,000 or less.

2.3 Findings

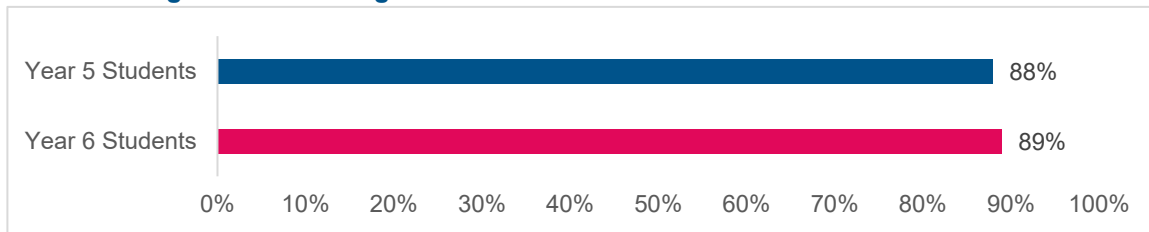
2.3.1 Educational Goals, Aspirations, and Academic Confidence

Students indicated whether or not they planned to continue their education after high school. As shown in Figure 2, similar to Year 5, 89% of Year 6 students reported they plan to continue their education after high school.

¹ Student and parents/guardian surveys in Year 6 included one question that asked respondents to report the highest level of education achieved by the students' parents/guardians. In previous years, respondents indicated the level of education of the students' mother and father in separate questions.

² In Year 5, 9% of students reported that they always or sometimes did not have enough food to eat in the past 12 months; 8% said the same about the past 30 days.

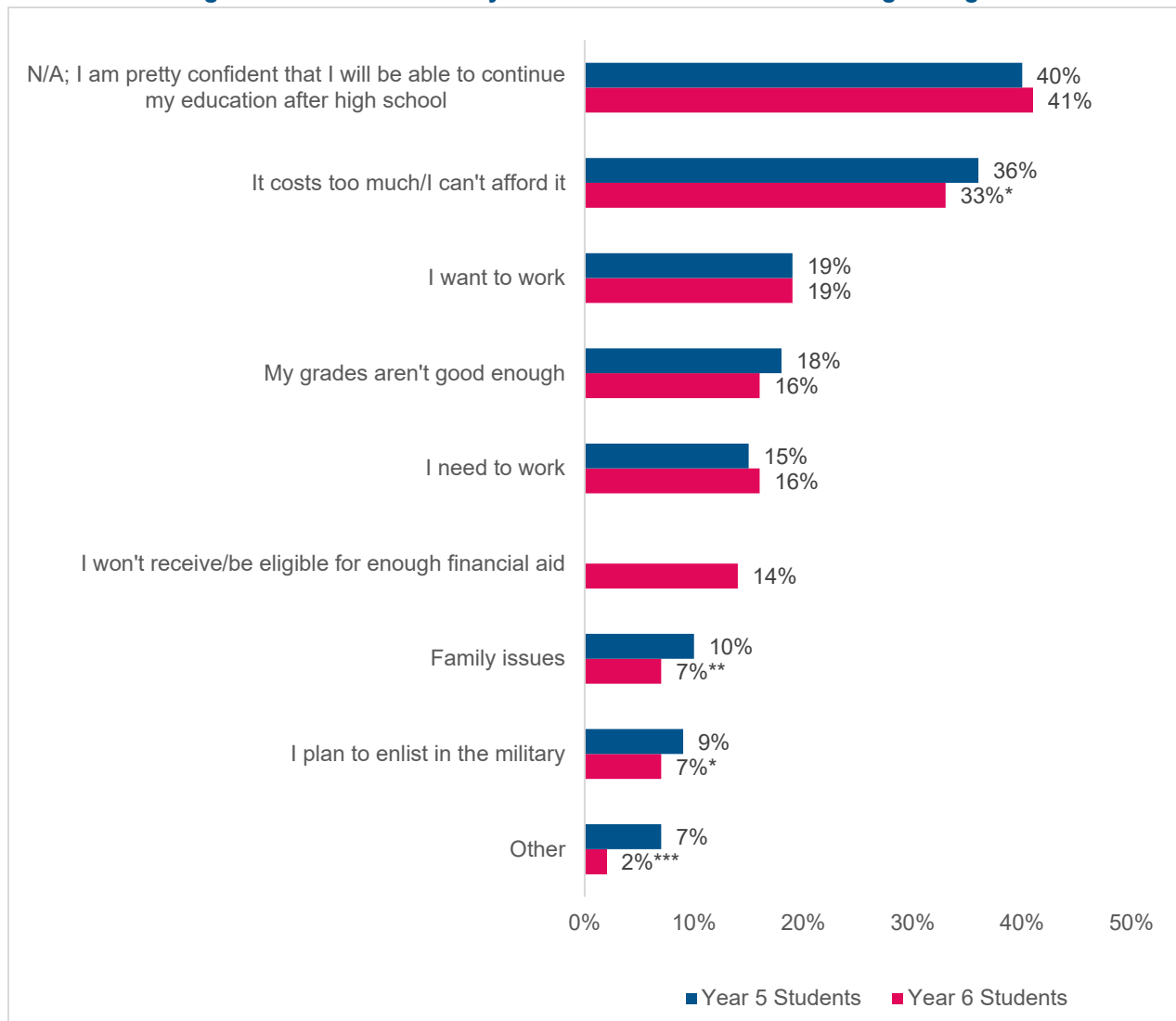
³ $\chi^2=22.54$, $p\leq.001$, ($V=.08$)

Figure 2. Percentage of Students that Plan to Continue Their Education

Source: Year 6 WV GEAR UP Student Survey and Year 5 WV GEAR UP Student Survey.

In Year 6, almost half of students continued to report that they are pretty confident they will be able to continue their education after high school (41%). The most often reported reason that may prevent students from continuing their education continued to be *it costs too much/I can't afford it* (see Figure 3). One-third of students cited this reason for potentially not attending, a decrease of three percentage points from Year 5. Other significant differences included a decrease from 10% in Year 5 to 7% in Year 6 for those who selected *family issues*, from 9% to 7% among those who indicated they planned to enlist in the military, and a decrease from 7% to 2% among those who selected *Other*.⁴ More than 15% of students also selected *I want to work* (19%), *My grades aren't good enough* (16%), and *I need to work* (16%)—similar to Year 5.

⁴ It costs too much: $X^2=4.66$, $p\leq.05$, ($\phi=.04$); Family issues: $X^2=13.57$, $p\leq.01$, ($\phi=.06$); I plan to enlist in the military: $X^2=4.99$, $p\leq.05$, ($\phi=.04$); Other: $X^2=65.47$, $p\leq.001$, ($\phi=.13$)

Figure 3. Reasons that May Prevent Students from Attending College

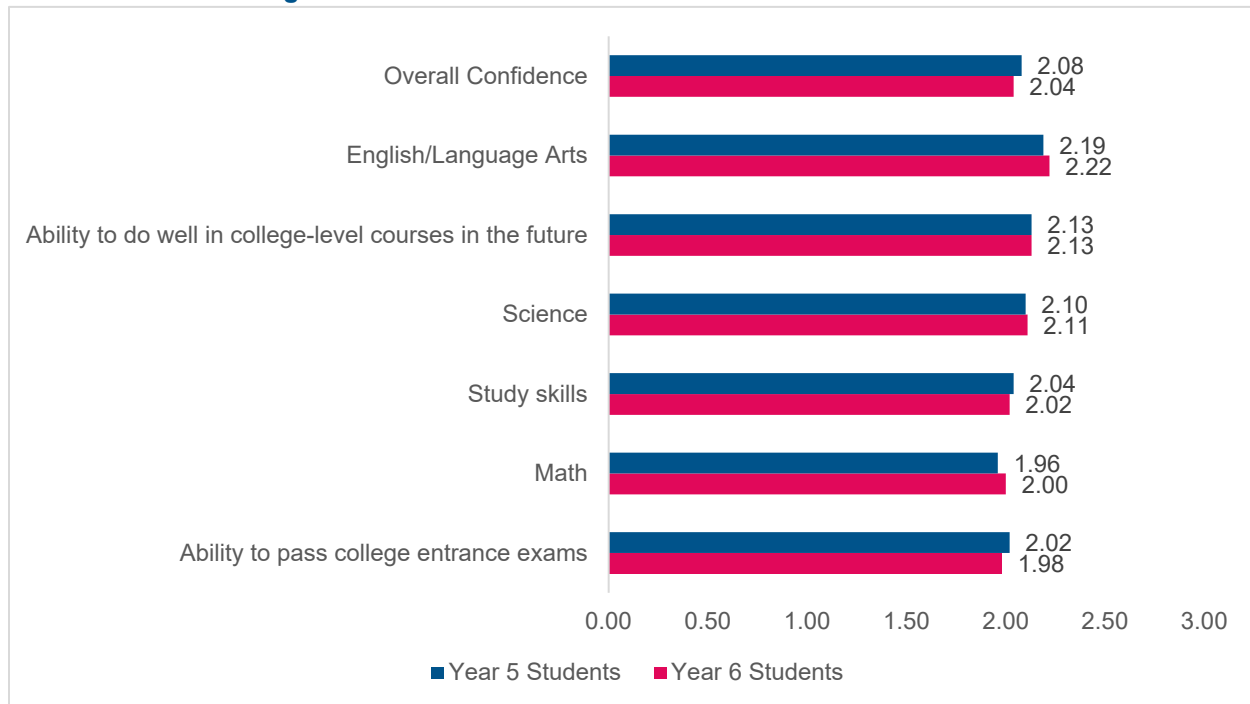
Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .05$); **Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .01$);

***Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .001$).

Students next rated their academic confidence across seven content areas (i.e., math, English/language arts, science, study skills, ability to pass end-of-year tests [test taking], ability to do well in college-level courses in the future [college courses], and ability to pass college entrance exams in the future [college entrance exams]) using a four-point scale (i.e., 1 = *Not Confident*, 2 = *Confident*, 3 = *Very Confident*, and 4 = *Don't Know*). When calculating the mean score for each of the survey items, the evaluation team excluded the option *Don't Know*.

Figure 4 shows that, overall, students exhibited statistically similar self-confidence in Year 6 as they did in Year 5.

Figure 4. Students' Academic Confidence in Content Areas

Source: Year 6 WV GEAR UP Student Survey and Year 5 WV GEAR UP Student Survey.

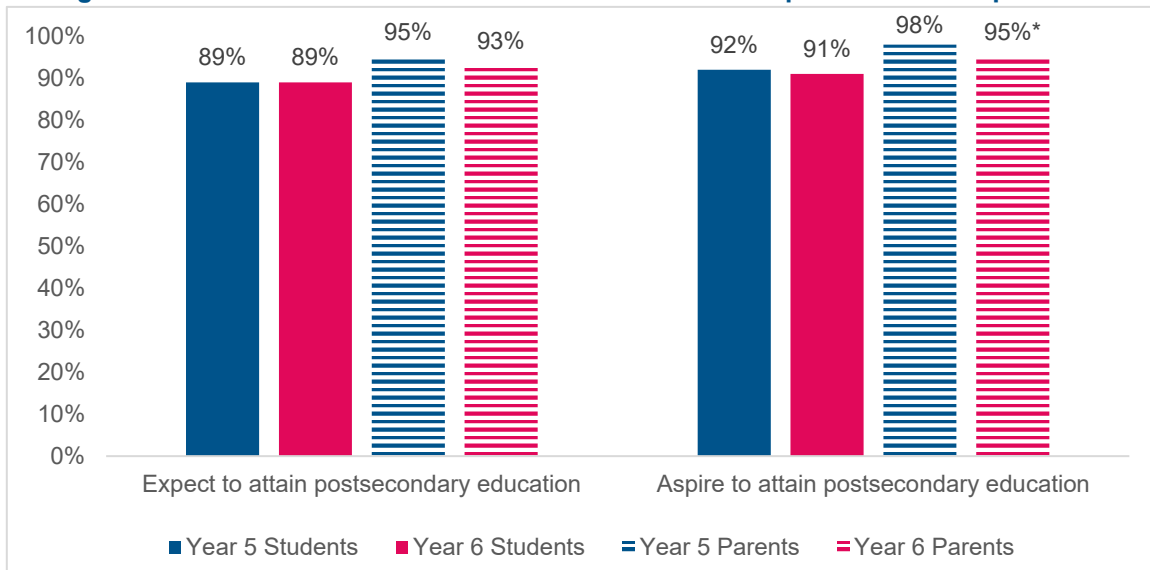
*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .001$).

Two new questions were added to the student survey in Year 6. The first new question allowed students to indicate the frequency in which they had a hard time staying focused on homework or other things in the past twelve months; 24% reported *most of the time* or *always*. The second new question asked students to report how often they were so worried they could not sleep at night; 17% reported *most of the time* or *always*.

Students and parents/guardians were next asked to indicate the levels of education to which they, or their student, 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 simplify interpretation of the findings, the evaluation team combined the last four options into a category labeled, "postsecondary education." This category includes certificates, skill sets, or degrees as well as college courses that do not lead to a credential. Figure 5 presents parents'/guardians' and students' educational aspirations and expectations.

Among students, 91% in Year 6 aspired and 89% expected to attain postsecondary education, compared to 92% and 89%, respectively, in Year 5. The percentage of parents/guardians who aspired for their student to attain postsecondary education decreased significantly from 98% in Year 5 to 95% in Year 6.⁵ Nearly all parents/guardians in Year 6 (93%) reported that they expect their student to attain postsecondary education, similar to those in Year 5.

⁵ $\chi^2=9.93$, $p \leq .01$, ($\phi=-.08$)

Figure 5. Students' and Parent/Guardians' Educational Aspirations and Expectation

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey, and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .01$).

2.3.2 College Entrance Requirements, Cost, and Financial Aid

The evaluation team asked students and parents/guardians 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. Additionally, parents/guardians were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that attending college is important to their child's career goals and future; parents/guardians were also prompted to report if they had talked with their child about attending college. Overall, students and parents/guardians showed increases in these areas in Year 6 (see Figure 6).

The percentage of students who reported that they spoke with someone at their school about college entrance requirements significantly increased from Year 5 to Year 6 (79% to 86%).⁶ Among parents/guardians, 74% in Year 6 reported that they had spoken with someone at their child's school about college entrance requirements, which was also a significant increase from the 55% who reported the same in Year 5.

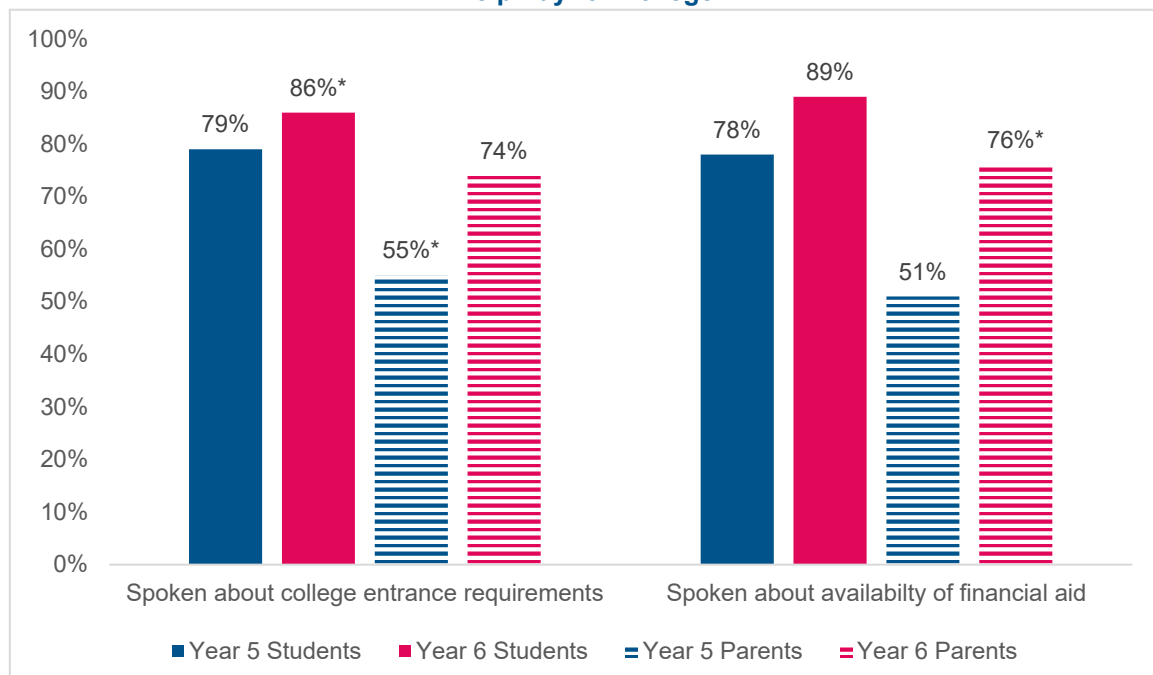
The percentage of students who reported that they spoke with someone at their school about the availability of financial aid to help pay for college also significantly increased from 78% in Year 5 to 89% in Year 6.⁷ Just over three-quarters of parents/guardians (76%) reported in Year 6 that they spoke with someone at their child's school about the availability of financial aid, which was significantly greater than the percentage of parents/guardians who reported the same in Year 5 (51%).⁸

⁶ $\chi^2=39.93$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.10$)

⁷ $\chi^2=76.54$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.14$)

⁸ $\chi^2=100.32$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.26$)

Figure 6. Percentage of Students and Parents/Guardians Who Have Spoken with Someone about College Entrance Requirements and the Availability of Financial Aid to Help Pay for College

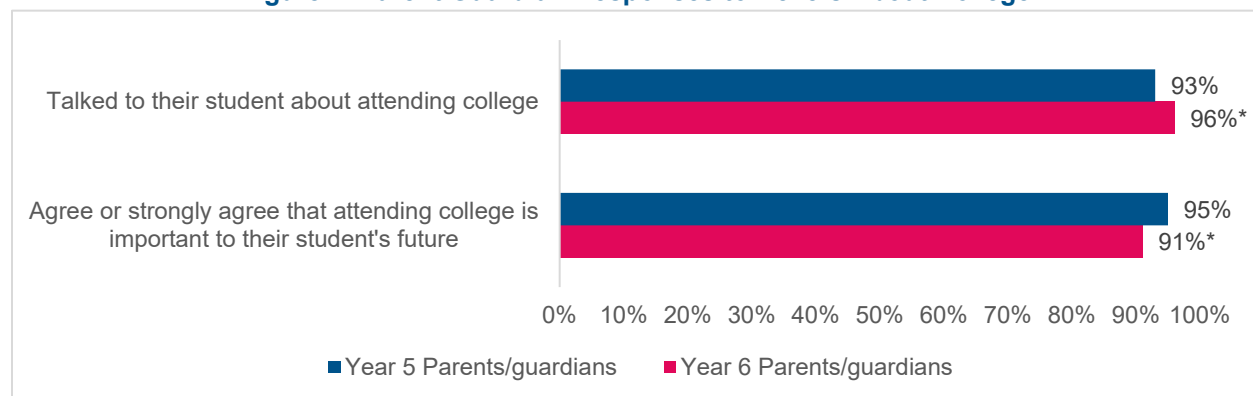


Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .001$).

Figure 7 shows that most parents/guardians continued to report in Year 6 that they had talked to their student about attending college (96%), statistically higher than the percentage reported in Year 5 (93%).⁹ Also 91% of parents/guardians in Year 6 reported that they *strongly agreed* or *agreed* that attending college is important for their child's future compared to 95% in Year 5.¹⁰

Figure 7. Parent/Guardian Responses to Beliefs About College



Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey

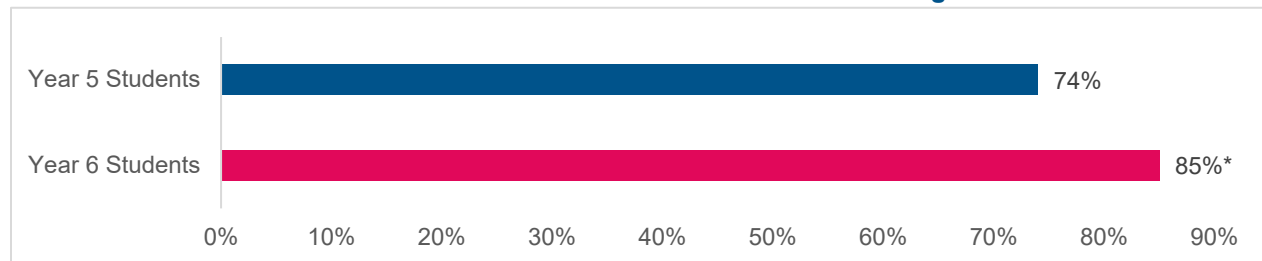
*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .05$).

⁹ $\chi^2=5.07$, $p \leq .05$, ($\phi=.06$)

¹⁰ $\chi^2=10.84$, $p \leq .05$, ($V=.09$)

Students then reported whether or not they felt knowledgeable about financial aid and the cost and benefits of going to college. The majority (85%) of students reported in Year 6 that they were knowledgeable about these topics, a significant increase from 74% in Year 5, as shown in Figure 8.¹¹

Figure 8. Percentage of Students Who Reported They Were Knowledgeable about Financial Aid and the Costs and Benefits of College



Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .05$).

The next survey questions were regarding estimates of 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. The survey offered seven response options, ranging from 1 = *up to \$3,000* to 7 = *more than \$25,000*. The correct estimates for the 2019–20 school year were as follows:

- **Four-year public college/university:** \$6,001-\$10,000
- **Public community/technical college:** \$3,001-\$6,000

Both students and parents/guardians in Year 6 made progress in answering these questions correctly (see Figure 9). The percentage of students who correctly estimated the cost of a four-year college/university in Year 6 was 43%, similar to the 42% in Year 5. The share of parents/guardians who correctly estimated the cost of a four-year college/university (54%) was also similar to the percentage in Year 5 (51%). Of those who did not correctly estimate the cost, 78% of students and 76% of parents/guardians overestimated the cost.

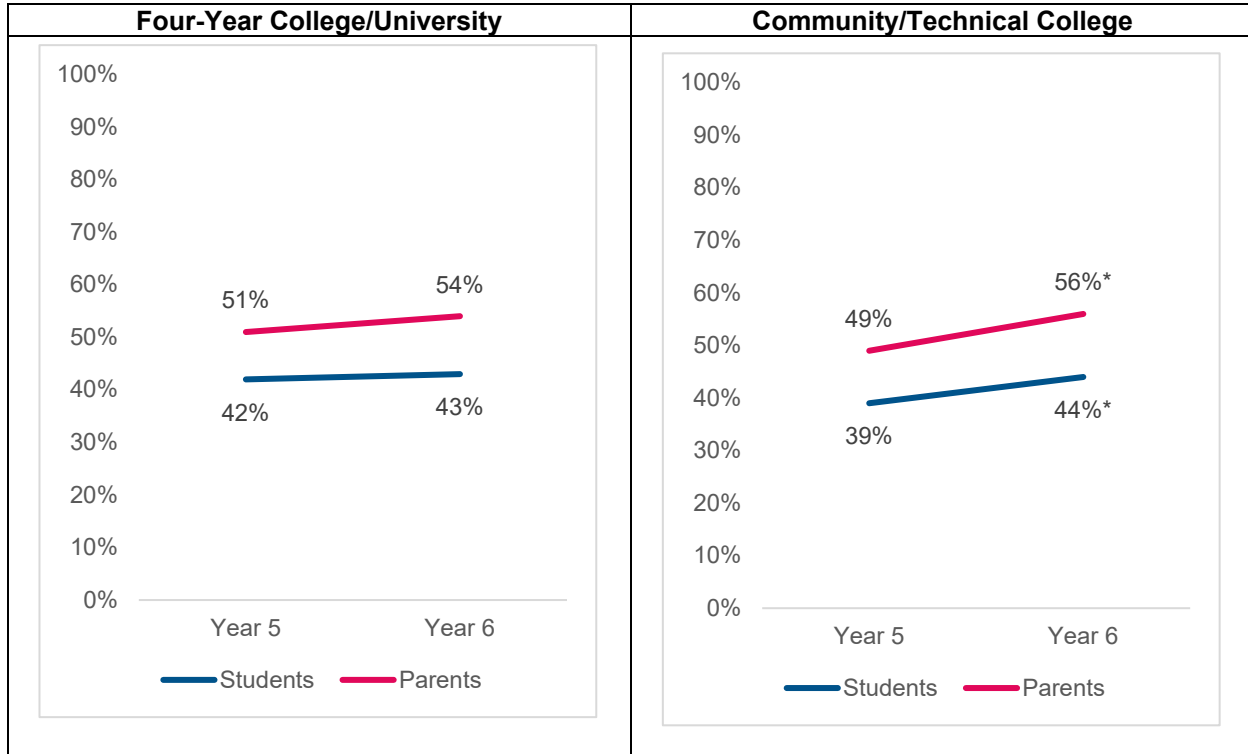
Regarding community/technical colleges, the percentage of students who correctly estimated the cost significantly increased from 39% in Year 5 to 44% in Year 6.¹² Similarly, the percentage of Year 6 parents/guardians who correctly estimated the cost of a community/technical college increased significantly from 49% in Year 5 to 56% in Year 6.¹³ Of those who did not correctly estimate the cost, 78% of students and 75% of parents/guardians overestimated the cost of a community/technical college.

¹¹ $\chi^2=73.06$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.14$)

¹² $\chi^2=10.48$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.05$)

¹³ $\chi^2=7.40$, $p \leq .01$, ($\phi=-.07$)

Figure 9. Percentage of Students and Parents/Guardians Who Correctly Estimated the Cost of a Four-Year College/University and a Community/Technical College



Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .01$).

Students and parents/guardians then estimated the maximum amount of money per academic year they thought was available for college through three programs: (1) Federal Pell grants, (2) the WV Higher Education Grant (WVHEG), and (3) the WV PROMISE Scholarship.

Respondents had eight response options ranging from 1 = *up to \$1,000* to 8 = *more than \$7,000*. The correct estimates and actual amounts were as follows:

- **Federal Pell grant:** \$6,001 to \$7,000 (\$6,195)
- **WVHEG:** \$2,001 to \$3,000 (\$2,800)
- **WV PROMISE Scholarship:** \$4,001 to \$5,000 (\$4,750)

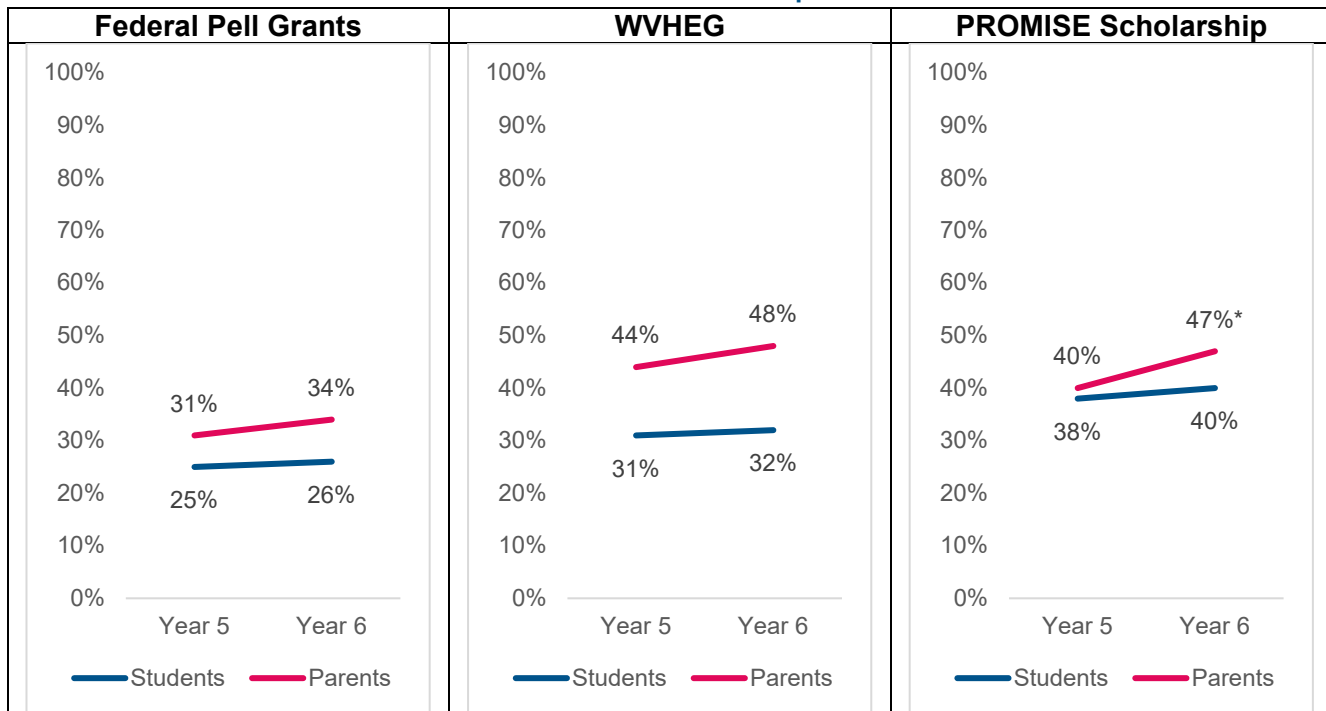
The percentage of students and parents/guardians who correctly estimated the amount of financial aid available through a Federal Pell grant was 26% and 34%, respectively, similar to the percentages that correctly estimated the amount available in Year 5. However, the majority of both groups underestimated the amount available through a Federal Pell grant, including 91% of students and 93% of parents/guardians.

Regarding the WVHEG, 32% of Year 6 students correctly estimated the amount available, while the share of parents/guardians who correctly estimated this was 48%. Estimates from both groups were similar to those in Year 5. Each group was more likely to overestimate the amount available in the WVHEG, including 88% of students and 75% of parents/guardians.

When respondents estimated the amount available through the WV PROMISE Scholarship in Year 6, 40% of students and 47% of parents/guardians did so correctly. The percentage of

parents/guardians who correctly estimated the amount increased significantly from Year 5 by seven percentage points.¹⁴ Of those who did not provide the correct estimate, most were more likely to underestimate the amount available (54% of students and 64% of parents/guardians) (see Figure 10).

Figure 10. Percentage of Students and Parents/Guardians Who Correctly Estimated the Amount of Financial Aid Available through Federal Pell Grants, WVHEG, and the PROMISE Scholarship



Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey, and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .01$).

For the first time in Year 6, students and parents/guardians were asked to estimate the cost of tuition at a two-year public community/technical college in West Virginia if they qualified for a WV Invests Grant. As described in Section I, this new grant covers the cost of basic tuition and fees, minus other grant and scholarship aid received by the student at participating West Virginia public two- or four-year institutions, so the correct response to the survey question was \$0. Approximately one-quarter (26%) of students and almost half (45%) of parents/guardians selected the correct response.

In regard to affordability, the survey again included questions prompting students and parents/guardians to indicate the extent to which they felt they could afford to attend any of three public postsecondary education options: (1) a public four-year college, (2) a public two-year community/technical college, and (3) a public career/technical college. Respondents used a five-point Likert-type response scale (i.e., 1 = *Definitely Not*, 2 = *Probably Not*, 3 = *Not Sure*, 4

¹⁴ $\chi^2=7.23$, $p \leq .01$, ($\phi=-.07$)

= *Probably*, 5 = *Definitely*). The evaluation team compared the average ratings among students on this scale for all five options across years.

Most Year 6 students reported they believed they could *probably* or *definitely* afford a career/technical center (77%), followed by a two-year community/technical college (74%) and four-year college/university (65%). The distribution of responses for a career/technical college and in Year 6 was significantly different from those in Year 5 (see Table 1).¹⁵

Parents/guardians reported higher perceptions of affordability than students in Year 6, though the data for parents/guardians overall saw little change from Year 5. Among Year 6 parents/guardians, 81% 79%, and 70% reported they *probably* or *definitely* could afford a career/technical center, community/technical college, and four-year college/university, respectively.

Table 1. Perceived Affordability of Postsecondary Education Options

	<i>Probably or Definitely Could Afford to Attend...</i>		
	Four-Year College/University	Community/Technical College	Career/Technical Center
Year 5 Students	65%	72%	73%
Year 6 Students	65%	74%	77%*
Year 5 Parents/Guardians	68%	78%	80%
Year 6 Parents/Guardians	70%	79%	81%

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey, WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey, and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .001$).

Student survey respondents indicated their awareness of 11 postsecondary education topics. Similar to previous surveys, the Year 6 instrument included questions about the importance of 17 resources in providing information about postsecondary education options. In all five years, the items in both questions used four-point Likert-type response scales (i.e., 1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *Slightly*, 3 = *Moderately*, 4 = *Extremely*). The evaluation team calculated average awareness/importance ratings for both scales by averaging responses to the individual scale items.

As shown in Table 2, the overall awareness reported by Year 6 students showed a mean score rating of 3.05, which was significantly higher than the Year 5 overall mean (2.55).¹⁶ Mean score ratings for individual topics increased significantly in all 10 topics on the survey from Year 5 (WV Invests Grant was asked about for the first time in Year 6), six of which had a medium effect size: (1) FAFSA ($d=.76$), (2) Federal Pell grants ($d=.50$), (3) Federal work-study ($d=.48$), (4) Federal student loans ($d=.44$), (5) WV HEG ($d=.41$), and (6) requirements for college acceptance ($d=.41$).¹⁷ All other effect sizes were small.

¹⁵ $\chi^2=23.30$, $p \leq .001$, ($V=.08$)

¹⁶ $t(3861.34)=-20.34$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.65$)

¹⁷ FAFSA: $t(3896.96)=-23.94$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.76$); Federal Pell grants: $t(3865.78)=-15.45$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.50$); Federal work-study: $t(3886)=-14.92$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.48$); Federal student loans: $t(3871.83)=-13.56$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.44$); Requirements for college acceptance: $t(3881.28)=-12.68$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.41$); WV Higher Education Grant: $t(3859.39)=-12.82$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.41$); ACT/SAT: $t(3891)=-10.54$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.34$); Scholarships: $t(3897)=-10.46$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.34$)

The importance/benefit of a college education: $t(3886)=-8.76$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.28$); High school graduation requirements: $t(3867.30)=-8.35$, $p \leq .001$, ($d=.27$)

Table 2. Student Awareness Ratings (Ordered by Year 6 Means, Greatest to Least)

Topic	Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Overall	2,046	2.55	0.77	1,850	3.05*	0.76
High school graduation requirements	2,044	3.12	0.90	1,827	3.36*	0.82
ACT/SAT	2,052	3.04	0.88	1,841	3.33*	0.81
The importance/benefit of a college education	2,051	3.03	0.95	1,837	3.28*	0.85
FAFSA	2,052	2.51	0.93	1,847	3.20*	0.84
Requirements for college acceptance	2,052	2.79	0.92	1,842	3.15*	0.87
Federal student loans	2,050	2.52	0.94	1,842	2.93*	0.91
Federal Pell grants	2,052	2.33	0.98	1,844	2.81*	0.96
Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or Institutional)	2,055	2.89	0.91	1,844	3.18*	0.85
WV Higher Education Grant	2,047	2.45	0.96	1,840	2.84*	0.93
WV Invests Grant	-	-	-	1,842	2.78*	0.97
Federal work-study	2,047	2.27	0.97	1,841	2.74*	0.99

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .001$).

As shown in Table 3, Year 6 parents/guardians had an overall mean score rating of 3.07, which was a statistically significant increase from Year 5 (2.74).¹⁸ When analyzing these scores for individual topics, significant increases from Year 5 to Year 6 were found for all ten items on both Year 5 and Year 6 surveys. Among these increases, two had a medium effect size: (1) Federal Pell grants ($d=.41$) and (2) Federal work-study ($d=.41$).¹⁹ All other effect sizes were small.

Table 3. Parent/Guardian Awareness Ratings (Ordered by Year 6 Means, Greatest to Least)

Topic	Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Overall	700	2.74	0.74	808	3.07*	0.75
FAFSA	699	2.72	0.92	807	3.26*	0.81
WV Invests Grant	-	-	-	804	2.76*	1.02
ACT/SAT	695	2.97	0.92	806	3.27*	0.77
WV Higher Education Grant	698	2.53	0.98	803	2.85*	0.96
Federal Pell grants	696	2.53	0.97	806	2.91*	0.95
Federal student loans	700	2.67	0.96	807	3.00*	0.90
Federal work-study	695	2.41	0.99	803	2.82*	1.01
Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or Institutional)	697	2.74	0.99	804	3.08*	0.89
Requirements for college acceptance	695	2.81	0.94	804	3.12*	0.86
The importance/benefit of a college education	698	3.17	0.92	805	3.34*	0.82
High school graduation requirements	698	3.20	0.84	801	3.35*	0.78

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .001$).

As shown in Table 4, Year 6 students rated the program's resources with an overall mean importance score of 2.82, which was significantly higher than the Year 5 rating of 2.55.²⁰ All

¹⁸ $t(1506)=-8.59, p \leq .001, (d=.44)$

¹⁹ FAFSA: $t(1403.80)=-12.01, p \leq .001, (d=.63)$; Federal work-study: $t(1496)=-7.89, p \leq .001, (d=.41)$; Federal Pell grants: $t(1460.81)=-7.74, p \leq .001, (d=.40)$; ACT/SAT: $t(1499)=-6.92, p \leq .001, (d=.36)$; Scholarships: $t(1406.30)=-6.83, p \leq .001, (d=.36)$; Federal student loans: $t(1444.60)=-6.69, p \leq .001, (d=.35)$; College acceptance requirements: $t(1414.71)=-6.56, p \leq .001, (d=.34)$; WV Higher Education Grant: $t(1461.89)=-6.45, p \leq .001, (d=.33)$; The importance/benefit of a college education: $t(1408.92)=-3.70, p \leq .001, (d=.19)$; High school graduation requirements: $t(1497)=-3.61, p \leq .001, (d=.19)$

²⁰ $t(3876.81)=-11.09, p \leq .001, (d=.36)$

items increased significantly from Year 5 to Year 6, two of which had a medium effect size: (1) email ($d=.48$) and (2) direct mail ($d=.42$).²¹

Table 4. Student Importance Ratings (Ordered by Year 6 Means, Greatest to Least)

Topic	Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Overall	2,048	2.55	0.77	1,846	2.82*	0.73
College or university websites	2,037	2.75	0.94	1,843	3.08*	0.86
School counselor	2,031	2.75	0.99	1,843	3.04*	0.91
College admissions representatives	2,032	2.69	0.98	1,842	3.01*	0.88
College fairs	2,033	2.68	0.95	1,835	3.01*	0.87
E-mail	2,029	2.52	0.99	1,835	2.98*	0.90
GEAR UP staff	2,030	2.81	0.96	1,839	2.98*	0.90
Family members	2,032	2.79	0.94	1,841	2.97*	0.91
College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com)	2,036	2.65	0.95	1,837	2.93*	0.90
Direct mail	2,026	2.46	1.00	1,840	2.87*	0.95
Brochures and pamphlets	2,029	2.57	0.95	1,840	2.80*	0.91
Other college planning websites	2,023	2.53	0.95	1,836	2.80*	0.91
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	2,035	2.57	0.99	1,834	2.78*	0.96
Text messages	2,030	2.43	1.02	1,838	2.77*	0.97
Signs, posters, or billboards	2,026	2.37	0.97	1,839	2.55*	0.99
Television	2,027	2.39	0.96	1,842	2.50*	0.99
Magazines/newspapers	2,032	2.27	0.99	1,841	2.45*	1.02
Radio	2,028	2.21	1.00	1,842	2.40*	1.03

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p\leq.001$).

As shown in Table 5, parents'/guardians' overall mean importance score was 2.72, significantly higher than Year 5 (2.50).²² Ratings of all 17 resources increased significantly from Year 5 to Year 6, four of which had a medium effect size: (1) email ($d=.43$), (2) direct mail ($d=.42$), (3) text messages ($d=.41$), and (4) other college planning websites ($d=.40$).²³ All other changes had a small effect size.

²¹ E-mail: $t(3861.98)=-14.96$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.480$); Direct mail: $t(3858.05)=-13.13$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.42$); College or university websites: $t(3877.72)=-11.28$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.36$); College fairs: $t(3865.20)=-11.28$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.36$); Text messages: $t(3855.30)=-10.80$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.35$); College admissions representatives: $t(3871.91)=-10.60$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.34$); College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com): $t(3862.16)=-9.57$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.31$); School counselor: $t(3870.77)=-9.23$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.30$); Other college planning websites: $t(3843.20)=-8.81$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.28$); Brochures or pamphlets: $t(3854.86)=-7.75$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.25$); Social media: $t(3845.99)=-6.85$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.22$); Family members: $t(3857.11)=-5.98$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.19$); Magazines/newspapers: $t(3808.26)=-5.80$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.19$); GEAR UP staff: $t(3862.46)=-5.75$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.19$); Signs, posters, or billboards: $t(3863)=-5.66$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.18$); Radio: $t(3799.21)=-5.59$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.18$); Television: $t(3857)=-3.76$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.12$)

²² $t(1500.36)=-5.69$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.29$)

²³ E-mail: $t(1485)=-8.30$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.43$); Direct mail: $t(1444.47)=-8.10$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.42$); Text messages: $t(1481)=-7.88$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.41$); Other college planning websites: $t(1478)=-7.72$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.40$); College or university websites: $t(1447.21)=-7.20$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.37$); College admissions representatives: $t(1430.11)=-6.86$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.36$); College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com): $t(1431.36)=-6.58$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.34$); School counselor: $t(1425.74)=-6.36$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.33$); College fairs: $t(1436.90)=-6.27$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.33$); Radio: $t(1476.19)=-5.07$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.26$); GEAR UP staff: $t(1432.47)=-4.89$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.26$); Magazines/newspapers: $t(1478.57)=-4.59$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.24$); Signs, posters, or billboards: $t(1471.22)=-4.40$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.23$); Social media: $t(1447.91)=-4.14$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.21$); Television: $t(1481.12)=-4.11$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.21$); Brochures or pamphlets: $t(1482)=-3.60$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.187$); Family members: $t(1485)=-3.58$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.19$)

Table 5. Parent/Guardian Importance Ratings (Ordered by Year 6 Means, Greatest to Least)

Topic	Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
Overall	700	2.50	0.73	805	2.72*	0.80
College or university websites	688	2.73	0.90	802	3.06*	0.89
College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com)	685	2.52	0.98	798	2.85*	0.95
Other college planning websites	684	2.35	0.97	796	2.75*	0.99
College fairs	689	2.60	0.96	794	2.90*	0.93
Television	687	2.17	0.96	798	2.39*	1.08
Radio	687	2.03	0.97	793	2.30*	1.08
Direct mail	689	2.36	0.99	794	2.77*	0.97
E-mail	688	2.34	0.99	799	2.77*	0.99
Brochures and pamphlets	687	2.52	0.91	797	2.70*	0.95
Magazines/newspapers	686	2.10	0.98	799	2.34*	1.08
Signs, posters, or billboards	688	2.18	0.98	795	2.41*	1.04
Text messages	685	2.16	1.04	798	2.59*	1.05
School counselor	686	2.66	0.99	796	2.98*	0.95
Family members	686	2.77	0.90	801	2.94*	0.92
GEAR UP staff	683	2.68	0.98	796	2.93*	0.96
College admissions representatives	686	2.55	1.01	799	2.90*	0.97
Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	688	2.44	1.03	796	2.66*	1.02

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Parent Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Parent Survey.

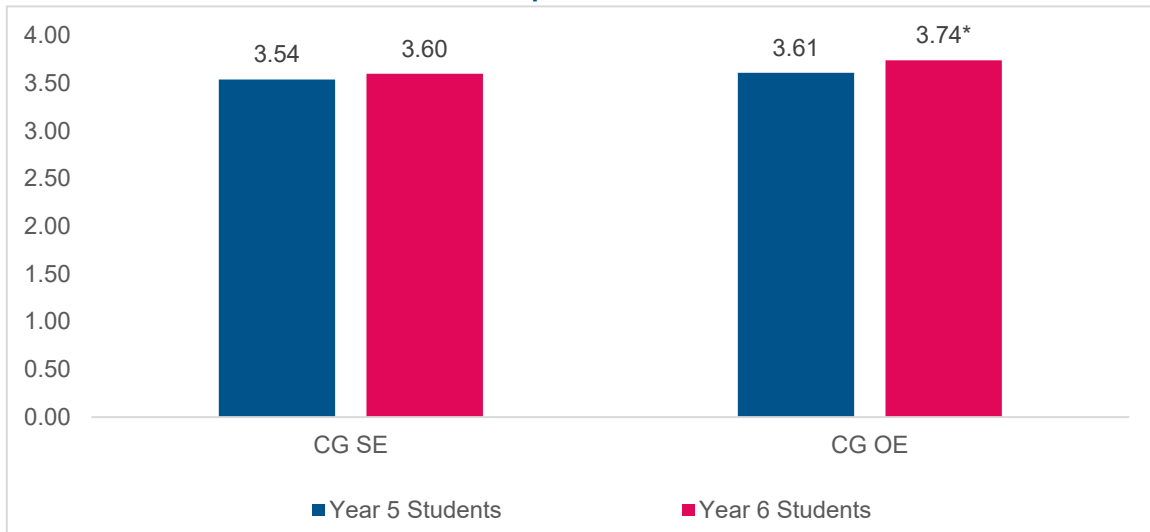
*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .001$).

2.3.3 College-Going Self-Efficacy and Outcomes-Expectations

In Years 2–5, students responded to two multi-part questions to measure their level of CGSE related to 14 items (e.g., *I can find a way to pay for college, I can choose a good college*) and 16 CGOE items (e.g., *I could get good grades in college, I could fit in*). Both scales came from Gibbons (2005) and utilized a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 = *Don't Know* to 5 = *Very Sure*. To analyze differences in these outcomes, we first calculated each respondent's average CGSE and CGOE ratings across all 14 CGSE items and all 16 CGOE items.

Figure 11 shows that students continued to have higher average ratings for their outcomes expectations than their self-efficacy. Their self-efficacy ratings remained similar from Year 5 to Year 6 (3.60). However, their outcomes expectations ratings increased significantly from 3.61 to 3.74.²⁴

²⁴ $t(3915) = -3.71$, $p \leq .001$, ($d = .12$)

Figure 11. Student Self-Reported College-Going Self-Efficacy and Outcomes-Expectations

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p \leq .01$).

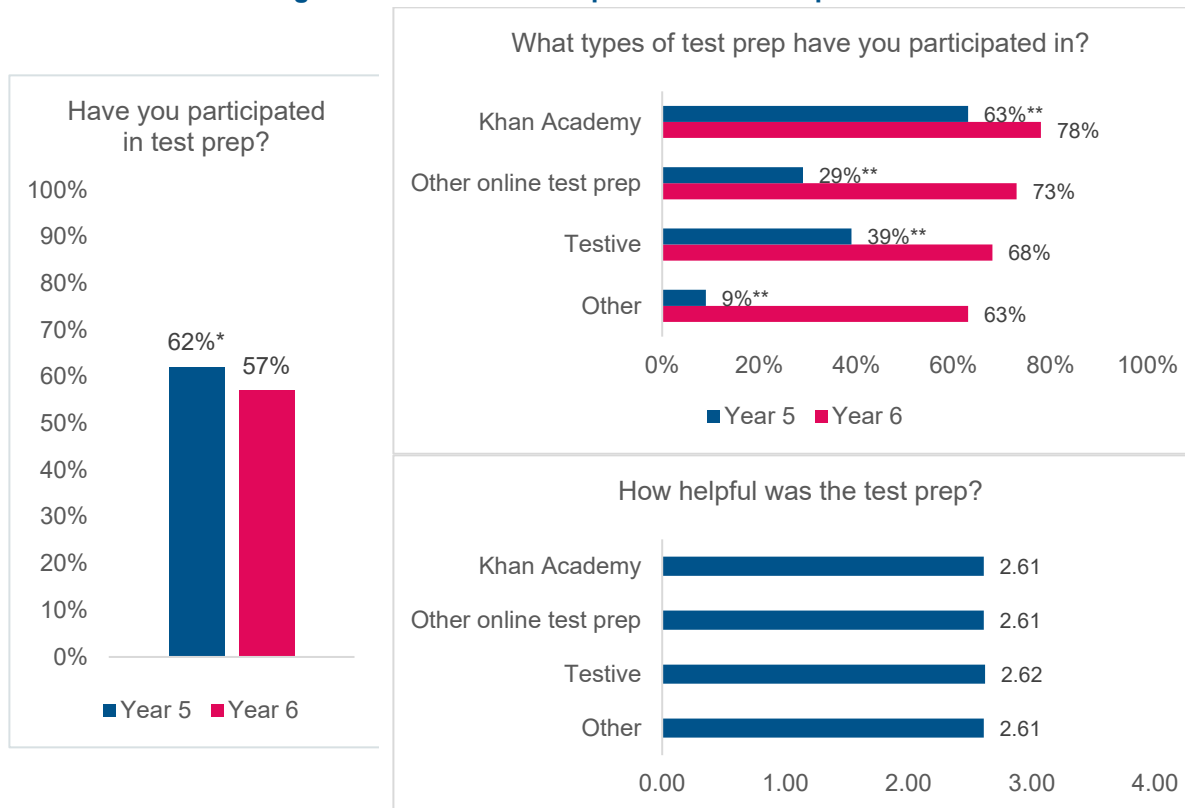
2.3.4 College Preparation Activities

This section highlights findings related to college preparation activities such as the SAT and ACT, FAFSA, and college applications.

Year 6 students reported on their participation and use of test preparation for the SAT and ACT, including Khan Academy, Testive, and other online preparation resources. As seen in Figure 12, 57% of students in Year 6 reported that they used test preparation materials, a significant decrease from Year 5 (62%).²⁵ This decrease may be because the SAT was required for all students in Grade 11 and optional for students to re-take in Grade 12. The most often reported test preparation activity was Khan Academy for both groups. All test preparation activities received similar helpfulness ratings on a four-point scale; ratings ranged from 2.61 to 2.62. Among those who participated in test preparation activities, there was a significant increase in all types of activities participated in.²⁶ The difference between those who selected *other* and *other online test prep* had a large effect size; the effect size of the difference for Testive was medium.

²⁵ $\chi^2=8.41$, $p \leq .01$, ($\phi=-.05$)

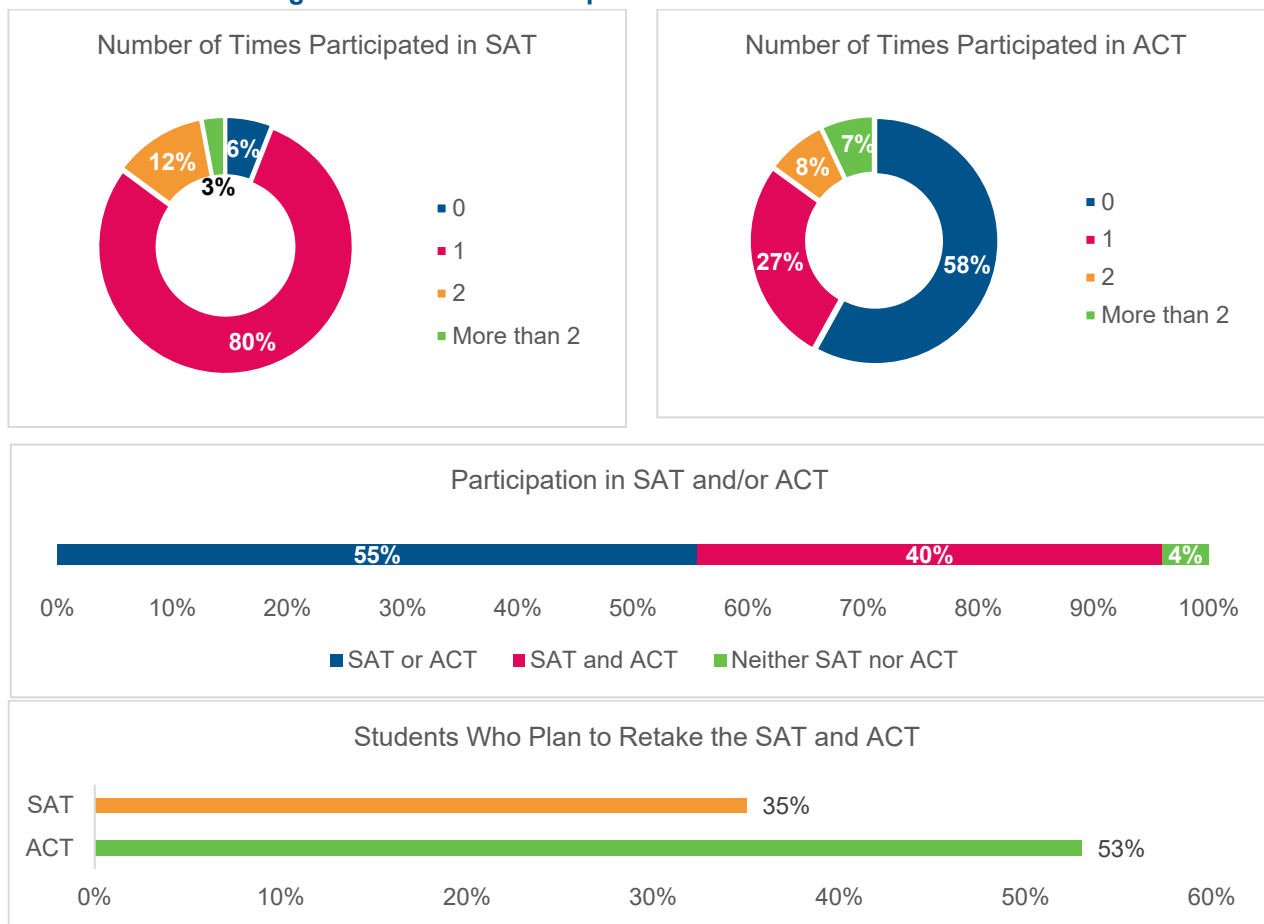
²⁶ Other: $\chi^2=759.43$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.57$); Other online test prep: $\chi^2=456.69$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.44$); Testive: $\chi^2=205.98$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.29$); Khan Academy: $\chi^2=56.52$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=-.15$)

Figure 12. Student Participation in Test Preparation

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey and WV GEAR UP Year 5 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p < .01$); **Statistically significant compared to Year 5 ($p < .001$).

Students were asked the number of times they have taken the SAT and the number of times they have taken the ACT. When findings were aggregated across responses, 95% indicated they had taken the SAT and/or the ACT at least once at the time of the survey. Further, 40% cited participation in both the SAT and ACT. Nearly all (94%) students reported participating in the SAT at least once; most (80%) reported participating one time. Almost half (42%) of students reported that they participated in the ACT at least once, 15% reported they participated two or more times. Additionally, 35% of students indicated they plan to retake the SAT during the school year and 53% indicated the same for the ACT within the next year (see Figure 13).

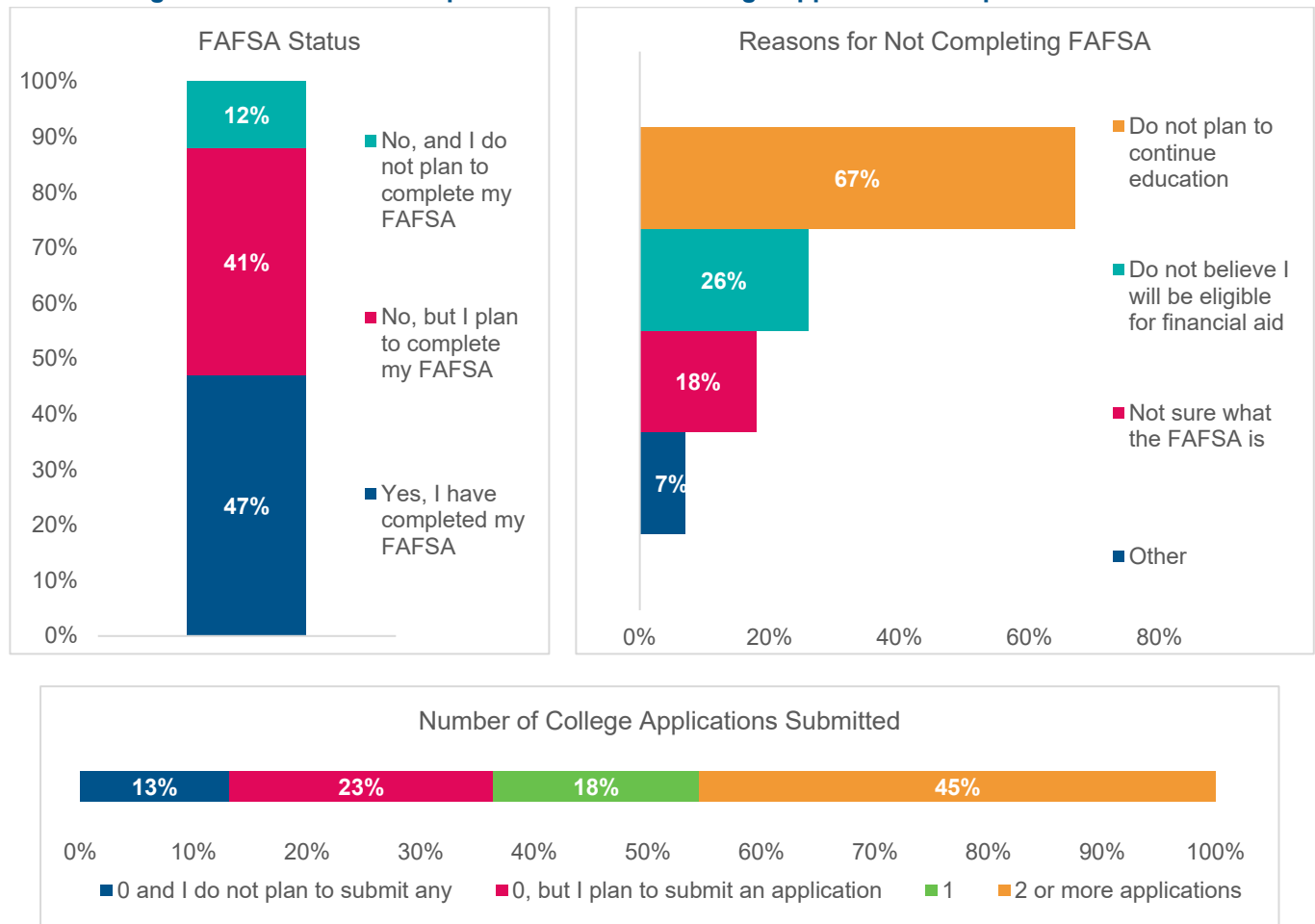
Figure 13. Student Participation in SAT and ACT

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey

Note: Some items may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Most students reported that they had already completed or planned to complete the FAFSA (47% and 41% respectively). Of the 12% of students who reported that they do not plan to submit a FAFSA, just over half of these respondents (54%) reported that they do not plan to continue their education. See Figure 14 for more details.

Finally, students reported on the number of college applications they submitted at the time of the survey. Similar to FAFSA completion outcomes, 87% of Year 6 students reported that they had submitted at least one application or planned to submit an application at a later time (see Figure 14). Almost half (63%) reported they had already submitted at least one application.

Figure 14. Student Self-Reported FAFSA and College Application Completion

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey.

Note: Some items may not total to 100% due to rounding.

2.3.5 Survey Outcomes for Key Subgroups

The evaluation team conducted analyses to understand any potential differences in education plans and perceived affordability of education after high school for key subgroups, including students who experienced food insecurity (12%), students who reported their family income as \$30,000 or less (32%), and students whose parents did not receive postsecondary education (42%). Table 6 provides an overview of these groups.

Table 6. WV GEAR UP Student Populations

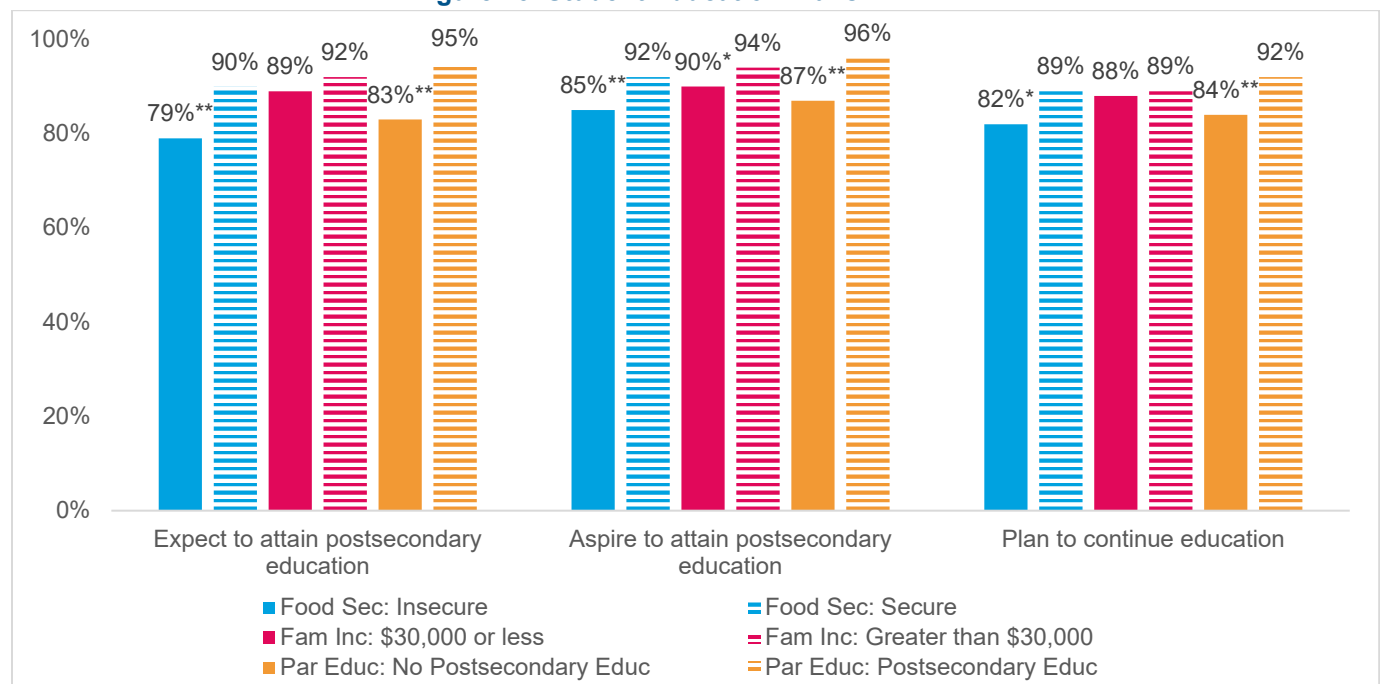
Group	Category	
Food Insecurity	Experienced food insecurity in the past 30 days and/or 12 months	12%
	Never experienced food insecurity	89%
Family Income	\$30,000 or less	32%
	Greater than \$30,000	68%
Parent Education	No postsecondary education	42%
	Postsecondary education	58%

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey.

Note: Categories in bold were identified as key subgroups and will be the focus of this section. Some items may not total to 100% due to rounding.

When examining for college, students in all three key subgroups were significantly more likely to report lower education aspirations than their counterparts.²⁷ Those who reported food insecurity and parents/guardians with no postsecondary education were also significantly more likely than their counterparts to report lower education expectations and also that they planned to continue their education.²⁸ See Figure 15 for more details.

Figure 15. Student Education Plans



Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey.

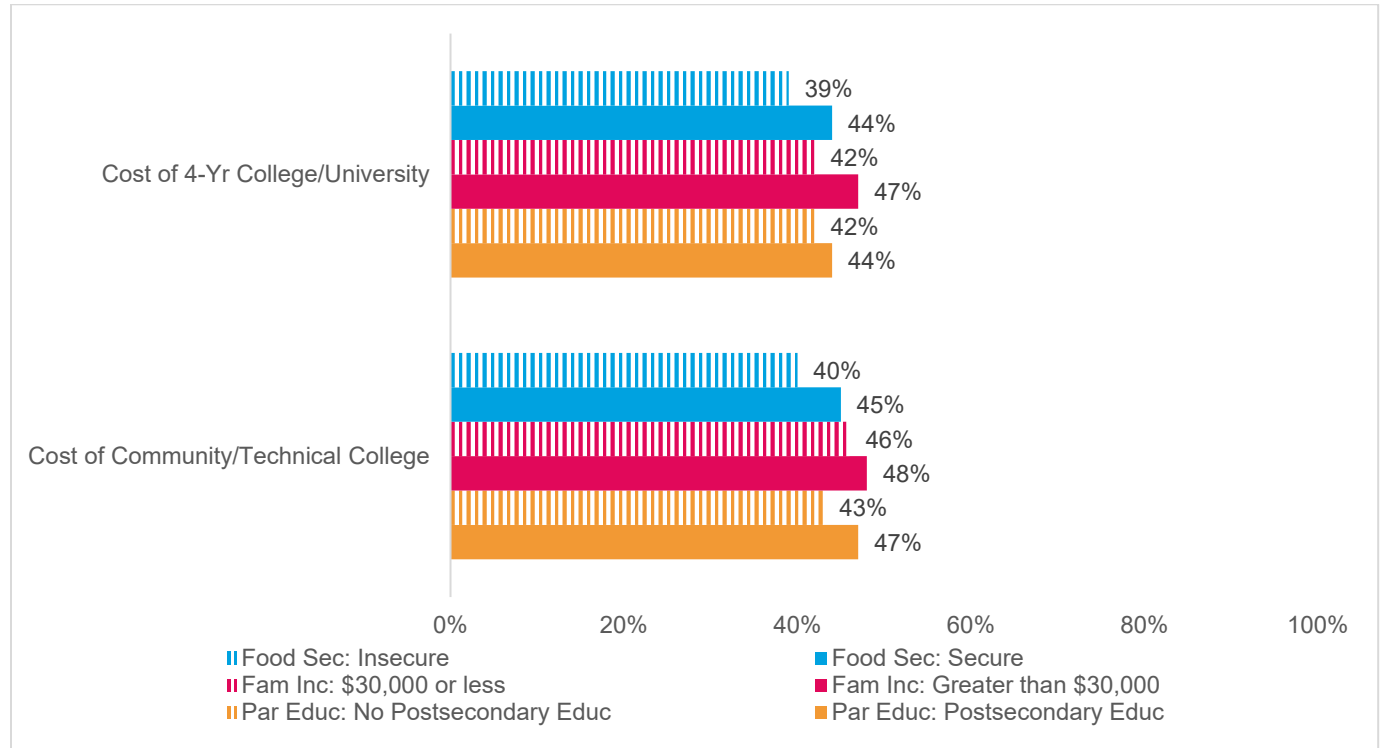
*Statistically significant compared to Counterpart ($p < .01$); **Statistically significant compared to Year Counterpart ($p < .001$).

²⁷ Food Insecure: $X^2=21.79$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.11$); Family income \$30,000 or less: $X^2=7.00$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.05$); No Postsecondary Parent Education: $X^2=45.28$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.17$)

²⁸ Expectations, Food Insecure: $X^2=21.79$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.11$); Expectations, No Parent Postsecondary Education: $X^2=64.54$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.20$); Continue Education, Food Insecure: $X^2=7.40$, $p \leq .01$, ($\phi=.11$); Continue Education, No Parent Postsecondary Education: $X^2=26.54$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.13$)

Students in all groups had similar understandings of the cost of postsecondary education. There were no statistically significant differences between the percentage of those who correctly estimated the cost of a four-year college or university and the cost of a community/technical college across both categories within all three groups. Figure 16 provides more detail on the estimates.

Figure 16. Students Who Correctly Estimated the Cost of College

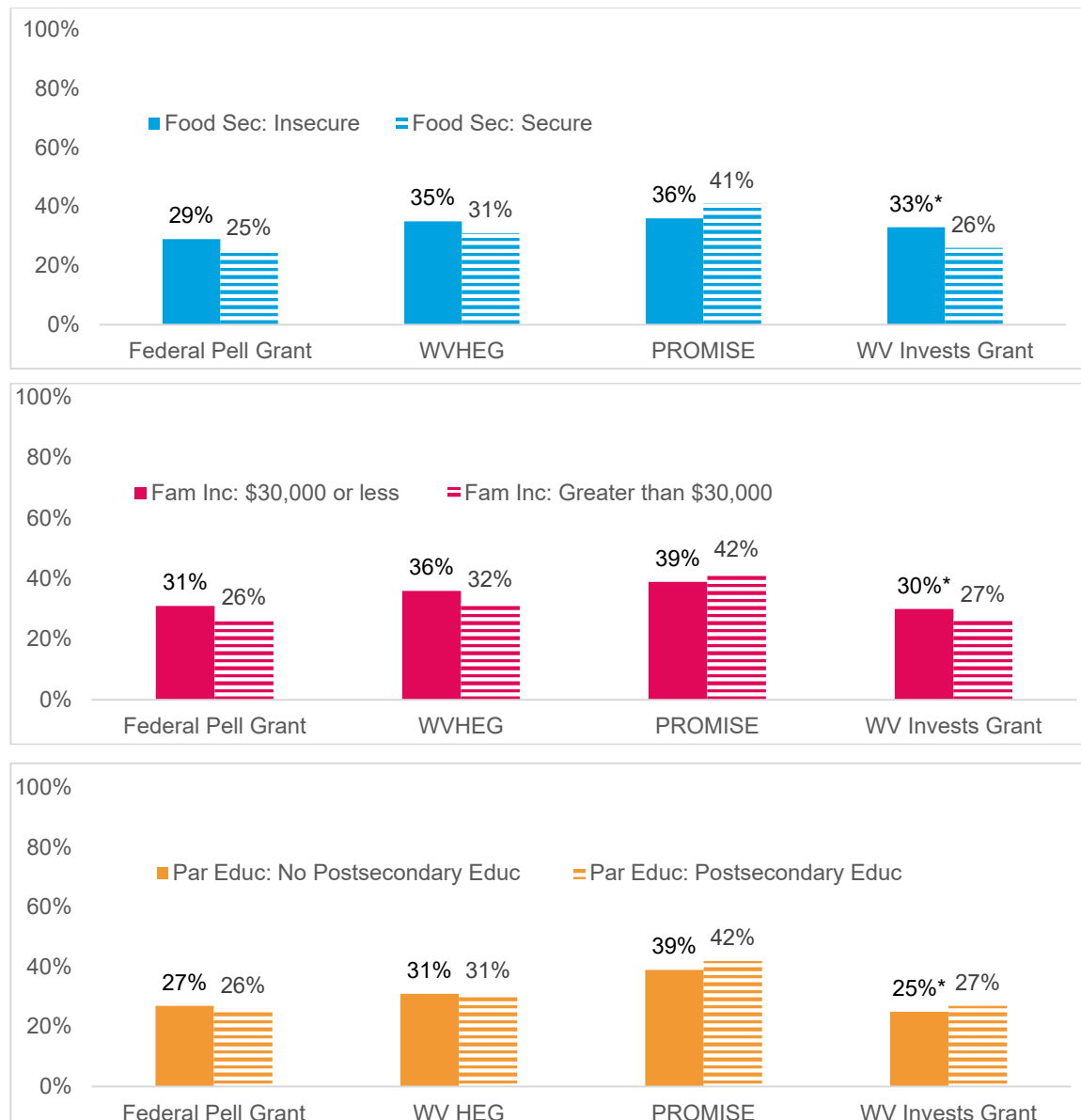


Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey.

Comparisons of the key subgroups and their counterparts' understanding of amount of financial aid available through Federal Pell grants, the WVHEG, PROMISE Scholarship, and the WV Invests grant was varied, but most differences were not statistically significant. However, two cases emerged in which those in key subgroups were more likely to correctly estimate the amount of financial aid available than their counterparts. Those who reported food insecurity were significantly more likely to correctly estimate the amount of financial aid available through the WV Invests Grant, compared to their counterparts (33% vs. 26%).²⁹ Those who reported a family income of \$30,000 or less were significantly more likely than their counterparts to correctly estimate the amount available through a Federal Pell grant (31% vs. 26%).³⁰ Figure 17 highlights these differences.

²⁹ $\chi^2=4.70$, $p\leq .05$, ($phi=.05$)

³⁰ $\chi^2=4.39$, $p\leq .05$, ($phi=.06$);

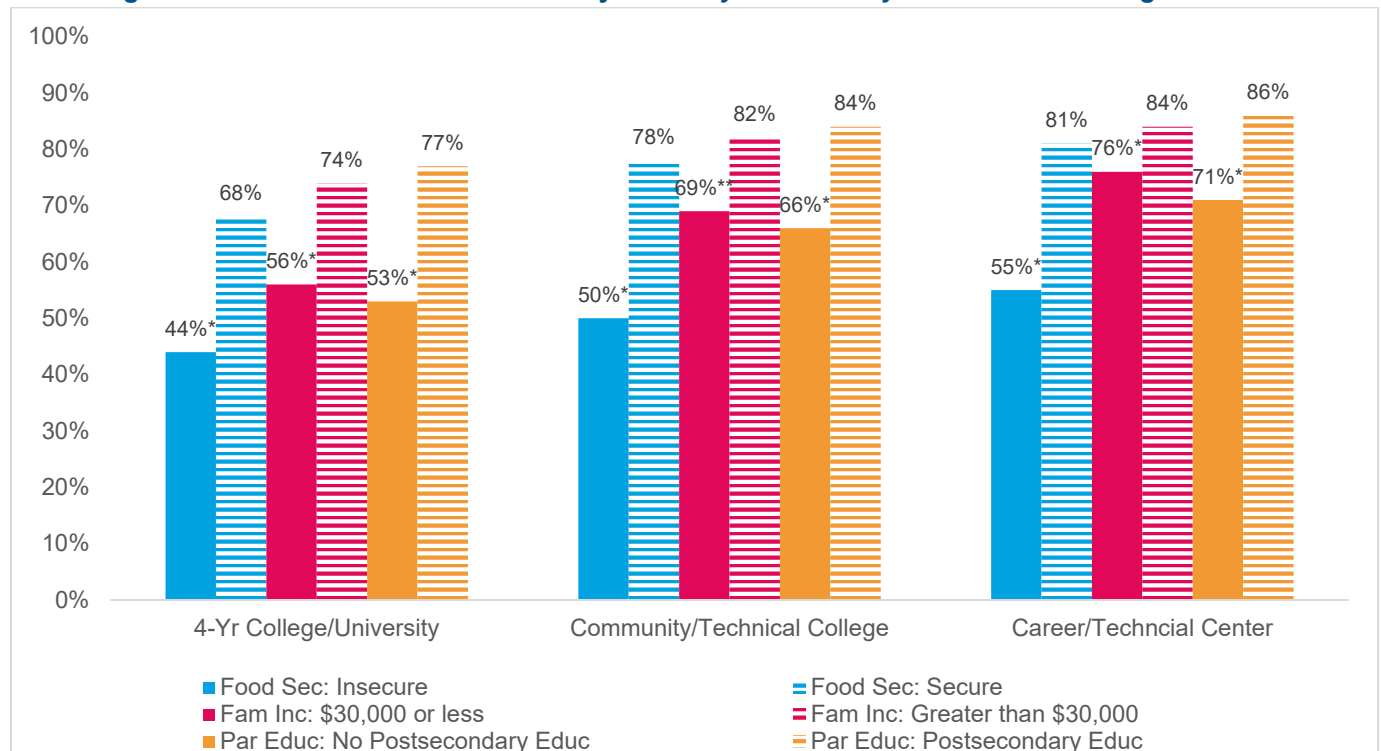
Figure 17. Students Who Correctly Estimated the Amount of Financial Aid Available

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Counterpart ($p \leq .05$).

Despite similar levels of understanding of the cost of college and the amount of financial aid available to help pay for college, there was a significant difference in those within the key subgroups and their counterparts that reported they believed they *probably* or *definitely* would be able to afford a four-year college/university, a two-year college/university, or career/technical college (see Figure 18). Those in all three key subgroups were significantly less likely than their counterparts to report they would be able to afford a four-year college/university, a community/technical college, or a career/technical center.³¹

³¹ 4-Year, Food Insecure: $X^2=46.38$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.16$); 4-Year, Family Income \$30,000 or Less: $X^2=37.13$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.17$); 4-Year, No Parent Postsecondary Education: $X^2=106.36$, $p \leq .01$, ($\phi=.05$); Community/Technical College,

Figure 18. Students' Who Indicated They *Probably* or *Definitely* Could Afford College

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 Student Survey.

*Statistically significant compared to Counterpart ($p \leq .001$).

Students have most often reported the cost of college as a reason they may not be able to attend college in Years 5 and 6 (see Figure 18 above). Trends among these three key subgroups within the Year 6 WV GEAR UP program suggest that circumstances like food insecurity, low family income, or first-generation status may have an effect on how students perceive college affordability. More targeted and tailored discussions regarding college affordability that address specific concerns students or their families have (such as how to afford food or other necessities or how to navigate enrollment with minimal family experience in college) may help students in these key sub-groups feel more confident that they will have the resources to continue their education, thus removing cost and perceived lack of affordability as a barrier.

3. School Personnel Survey Outcomes

The following section describes trends in Year 6, compared to previous year survey results for school personnel. To examine changes in survey outcomes for personnel from year-to-year for WV GEAR UP, ICF conducted longitudinal analyses of Year 1 to Year 6 and conducted further

Food Insecure: $X^2=72.77$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.20$); Community/Technical College, Family Income \$30,000 or Less: $X^2=26.49$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.14$); Community/Technical College, No Parent Postsecondary Education: $X^2=71.28$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.21$); Career/Technical Center, Food Insecure: $X^2=68.62$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.20$); Career/Technical Center, Family Income \$30,000 or Less: $X^2=11.08$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.09$); Career/Technical Center, No Parent Postsecondary Education: $X^2=51.17$, $p \leq .001$, ($\phi=.18$);

analysis on Year 5 and Year 6. This section also examined responses by position held by the respondent such as teacher, counselor, or administrator and years of experience.

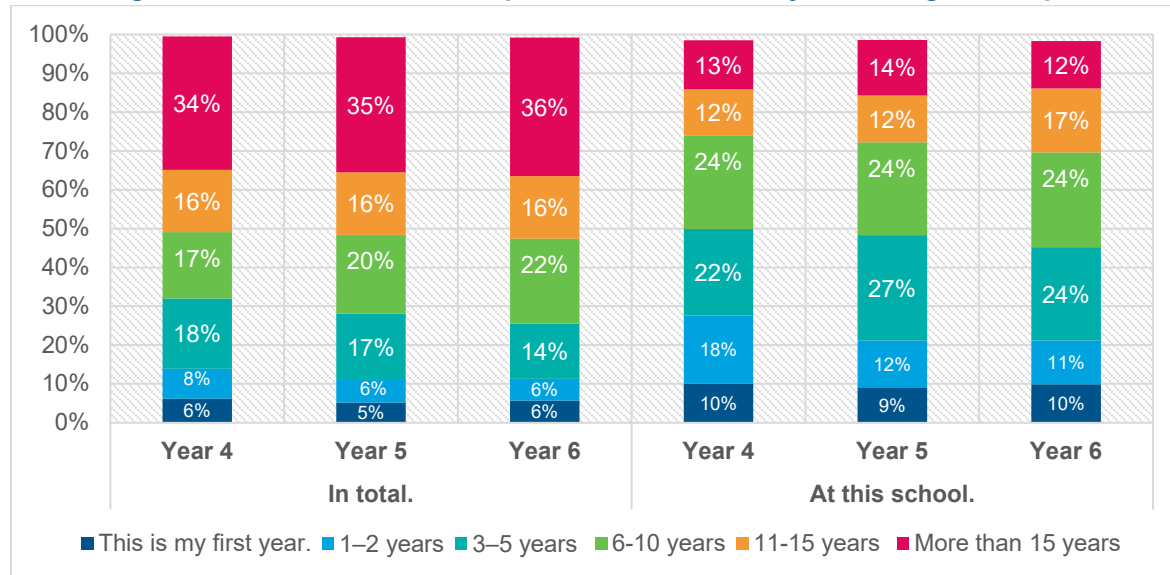
3.2 Characteristics of Respondents

Sixty-six percent of an estimated 848 possible faculty and staff members responded to the Year 6 school personnel survey, including 562 individuals representing 23 WV GEAR UP schools. The majority of those 562 individuals were teachers (88%) and the remaining 12% were equally split between administrators and counselors. Approximately 6% of those 562 teachers indicated that, in addition to their primary role, they served as a GEAR UP site coordinator. We found no significant differences across Years 1–6 in the distribution of their primary roles or in the percentage who also served as site coordinators.

The survey asked respondents to indicate which grade level(s) they serve. An equal number of the 562 respondents indicated they served 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students (78%) and lastly, a slightly smaller percent (74%) indicated that they served freshman students.

The evaluation team also asked respondents to indicate how many years of experience they had working in their current role in the school and how many years they had working in that role in total. Figure 19 displays these results, highlighting that in Year 6 48% of all personnel respondents had greater than 10 years total experience in their role, but only 29% had the same level of experience in that role at their school. In their school, personnel reported slightly higher rates of school experience than the previous year (29% vs. 26%), indicating that those teachers probably stayed on in their current school.

Figure 19. School Personnel Experience Breakdown by Percentage of Respondents



3.3 Findings

3.3.1 Participation/Satisfaction with GEAR UP and Perceptions of Program Effectiveness

Participation. Approximately 98% of 562 respondents—teachers, administrators, and counselors—responded to the question about whether they had participated in GEAR UP services or support during the 2019–20 school year. Specifically, we asked school personnel to (a) indicate whether or not they participated in 13 GEAR UP-sponsored activities, and (b) to rate the effectiveness of these activities in helping students to succeed in school and prepare for college. Six response options were provided for each activity (i.e., 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 7 shows the percentage of personnel across Year 3 to Year 6 who reported either that an activity was not offered or that they did not attend. Eighty-nine percent of respondents indicated they had the opportunity to participate in a college visit, a two-percentage point increase from the previous year. As was the case in Years 3, 4, and 5, summer activities, teacher professional development, and tutoring were reported as the least common type of GEAR UP activity attended or offered. It should be noted that there has been a five-percentage point increase in professional development participation and two-percentage point increase in tutoring and summer activities participation since Year 5.

Table 7. Percentage of School Personnel Responding “Not Offered” or “Did Not Attend” by Activity and Year

Activity	Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Difference (Y6-Y5)
	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	
a. Tutoring and homework assistance	546	33%	585	22%	484	21%	544	19%	2 points
b. Opportunities to participate in college visits	545	32%	585	16%	487	13%	545	11%	2 points
c. Summer activities	544	49%	594	30%	478	29%	543	31%	2 points
d. College Application and Exploration Week	544	29%	594	12%	484	12%	544	10%	2 points
e. Provide information about college entrance requirements	539	28%	594	12%	485	12%	544	9%	3 points
f. Career exploration activities	545	25%	593	12%	487	12%	545	10%	2 points
g. Test preparation (e.g., Testive, ACT/SAT prep)	542	29%	592	6%	487	10%	545	8%	2 points
h. Assistance with the college entrance process	540	32%	593	12%	487	13%	544	10%	3 points
i. Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA)	541	33%	593	11%	483	11%	544	10%	1 point
j. Teacher professional development about college awareness and success strategies	543	41%	593	22%	485	24%	547	19%	5 points

Activity	Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Difference (Y6-Y5)
	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	N	Not Offered or Did Not Attend	
k. Student Success Societies/mentoring opportunities	540	36%	593	16%	485	19%	543	19%	0 points
l. Faculty Senate presentations	Not Applicable				481	9%	538	14%	5 points
m. College Decision Day and/or other college acceptance ceremonies/programming					484	5%	538	10%	5 points

Source: Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .001$); effect sizes are small ranging between $\phi = .18$. and $\phi = .34$.

We also asked a separate question to personnel about their frequency of participation in GEAR UP activities. Five response options were provided (i.e., 1 = *Never*, 2 = *Seldom*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Often*, 5 = *Always*). Of the 538 respondents who answered this question in Year 6, only 7% indicated that they “never” participated in GEAR UP events (compared to 10% in Year 5, 10% in Year 4, and 13% in Year 3). However, we found no statistically significant difference in the distribution of responses across Years 1–6. Figure 20 below shows combined percentages of “never and seldom” and “often and always” for each year.

Figure 20. Frequency of School Personnel Participation in GEAR UP Activities by Year

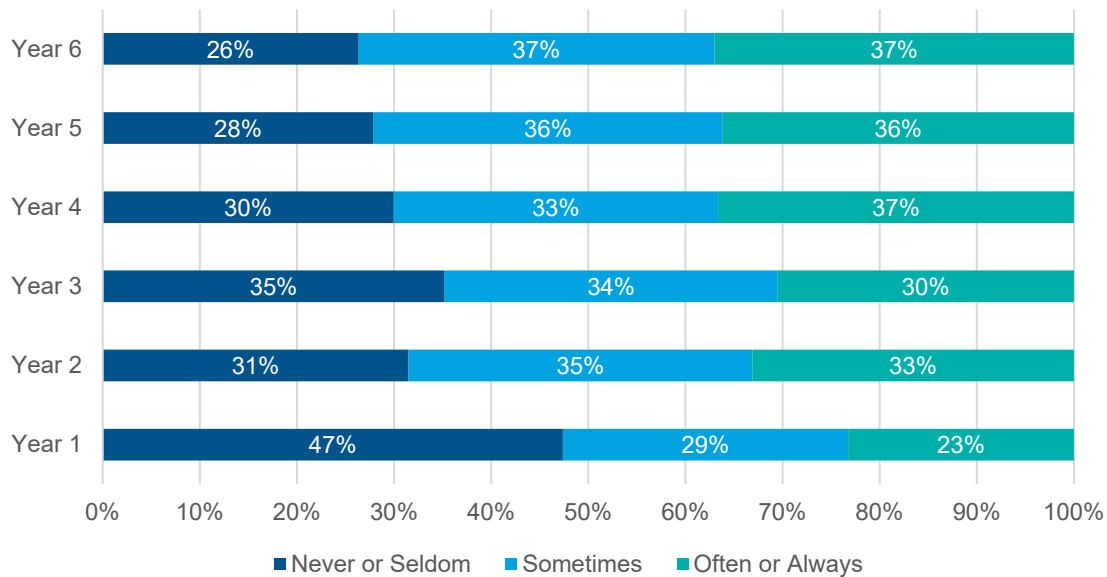


Table 8 shows the average effectiveness ratings by year for each activity. We include only those respondents who chose an answer other than *it was not offered/does not apply* or *did not attend*. The evaluation team found that Year 6 respondents reported all items as being moderately and extremely effective, which was similar to Year 5 respondents. While all but one item, *test preparation*, showed slight increases in their mean effectiveness rating, there were no statistically significant differences found between Year 5 and Year 6 for any of the items.

Table 8. School Personnel Ratings of the Effectiveness of GEAR UP Resources, Information, and Tools by Year

Resource, Information, or Tool	Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. Tutoring and homework assistance	460	5.12	.84	365	5.15	.79	495	5.23	.76	383	5.17	.79	435	5.23	.76
b. Opportunities to participate in college visits	491	5.23	.77	373	5.44	.69	523	5.55	.67	423	5.53	.67	480	5.54	.65
c. Summer activities	414	5.08	.85	276	5.05	.77	410	5.10	.83	337	5.06	.84	370	5.11	.75
d. College Application and Exploration Week	525	5.36	.78	387	5.34	.73	521	5.39	.73	424	5.37	.74	485	5.38	.70
e. Provide information about college entrance requirements	522	5.41	.73	388	5.35	.69	519	5.42	.71	426	5.39	.72	493	5.45	.65
f. Career exploration activities	523	5.35	.75	410	5.27	.73	520	5.36	.73	428	5.30	.74	489	5.37	.70
g. Test preparation (e.g., Testive, ACT/SAT prep)	559	5.22	.84	383	5.29	.74	519	5.39	.70	439	5.40	.72	498	5.37	.68
h. Assistance with the college entrance process	520	5.46	.69	370	5.35	.70	516	5.47	.67	426	5.44	.70	487	5.46	.68
i. Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA)	524	5.58	.66	362	5.43	.74	522	5.56	.66	427	5.58	.65	489	5.60	.62
j. Teacher professional development about college awareness and success strategies	464	5.11	.84	318	5.12	.74	460	5.12	.84	370	5.05	.80	442	5.09	.76
k. Student Success Societies/Mentoring opportunities	498	5.21	.80	347	5.25	.73	491	5.23	.77	394	5.17	.79	437	5.19	.77
l. Faculty senate presentation	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	404	4.96	.87	461	4.94	.81
m. College Decision Day and/or other college acceptance ceremonies/programming	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	427	5.36	.79	476	5.41	.71

Source: Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

3.3.2 College-Going Culture Scale

We have multiple question types to determine overall college-going culture in schools and classrooms. First, we asked all respondents—teachers, administrators, and counselors—to rate their schools on 19 items measuring two components of college-going culture: (1) expectations/rigor and (2) visual cues/material resources. Next, we asked only teachers to measure their classroom on the same two components. The section below summarizes those findings. Each item used a four-point Likert-type response format (i.e., 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, 4 = *Strongly Agree*).

Expectations/rigor at the school level. Table 9 shows each of the items assigned to the school-level expectations/rigor subscale, and the descriptive statistics for the entire sample of school personnel by year. ANOVA tests revealed average ratings for Year 6 were significantly higher than ratings for Year 5 for every scale item. We found small but noteworthy gains with respect to eight items.³² (1) Creativity and original thinking are highly valued ($d=.31$), (2) Students are learning effective problem-solving skills ($d=.31$), (3) Teachers are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum ($d=.33$), (4) The curriculum appropriately challenges most students ($d=.33$), (5) All students have the ability to succeed academically ($d=.23$), (6) Students are encouraged to do their best (.22), (7) Teachers regularly talk to students about the importance of college ($d=.21$), and (8) Advanced (e.g., honors, pre-AP) courses are appropriately rigorous ($d=.20$). These effect sizes were small to medium. For the remaining two items: (1) Students care about learning and getting a good education and (2) Students are encouraged to set future college and career goals, effect sizes were very small ($d<.2$).

³²(1) Creativity and original thinking are highly valued: $t(1055)=5.23$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.31$), (2) Students are learning effective problem-solving skills: $t(1052)=5.21$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.31$), (3) Teachers are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum: $t(1052)=5.25$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.33$), (4) The curriculum appropriately challenges most students $t(1059)=5.39$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.33$), (5) All students have the ability to succeed academically: $t(1056)=3.44$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.23$), (6) Students are encouraged to do their best: $t(1050)=4.05$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.22$), and (7) Teachers regularly talk to students about the importance of college: $t(1056)=3.22$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.21$). (8) Advanced (i.e., honors, pre-AP, etc.) courses are appropriately rigorous: $t(1049)=3.45$, $p\leq.001$, ($d=.21$).

Table 9. Average School-Level College-Going Culture Ratings by Item and Year: Expectations/Rigor Component

Item	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	M	N	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. Creativity and original thinking are highly valued.***	797	3.17	.61	804	3.40	.61	561	3.39	.60	598	3.36	.63	496	3.35	.61	561	3.53	.54
b. Teachers expect all students to succeed academically.***	791	3.22	.67	802	3.37	.65	562	3.38	.62	596	3.38	.62	496	3.37	.63	562	3.49	.56
c. Students are encouraged to do their best.***	798	3.42	.56	802	3.57	.58	562	3.51	.59	598	3.49	.61	493	3.51	.57	559	3.64	.51
d. Teachers regularly talk to students about the importance of college.***	795	3.22	.57	801	3.41	.59	559	3.40	.61	596	3.40	.59	496	3.38	.60	562	3.49	.55
e. Students care about learning and getting a good education.*	794	2.74	.68	805	3.00	.68	561	2.99	.70	595	3.01	.72	496	3.00	.74	562	3.10	.61
f. Students are encouraged to set future college and career goals.***	790	3.25	.54	800	3.42	.57	559	3.43	.58	597	3.40	.59	496	3.41	.57	562	3.53	.52
g. Students are learning effective problem-solving skills.***	797	3.00	.54	805	3.17	.62	561	3.17	.66	595	3.15	.69	496	3.09	.66	558	3.29	.58
h. Teachers are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum.***	795	3.12	.61	799	3.18	.64	561	3.16	.67	594	3.37	.69	493	3.10	.68	561	3.31	.62
i. The curriculum appropriately challenges most students.***	799	3.17	.58	797	3.20	.63	557	3.25	.60	591	3.20	.66	492	3.18	.64	555	3.38	.57
j. Advanced (e.g., honors, pre-AP) courses are appropriately rigorous.***	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	559	3.39	.63	596	3.35	.65	489	3.38	.65	562	3.51	.59

Source: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .05$); **Statistically significant ($p \leq .01$); ***Statistically significant ($p \leq .001$) from Year 5 to Year 6

Expectations/rigor at the classroom level. Table 10 shows each of the items assigned to the expectations/rigor subscale, and the descriptive statistics for the entire sample of teachers by year. ANOVA tests revealed average ratings for Year 6 were significantly higher than ratings for Year 5 for every scale item except two: “All students have the ability to succeed academically” and “I regularly talk to students about the importance of college.” Effect sizes for the differences in Year 5 and Year 6 ratings ranged from very small (e.g., “The curriculum appropriately challenges most students” $d=.18$) to small (e.g., “Students are learning effective problem-solving skills” $d=.27$).³³

³³ Students care about learning and getting a good education: $t(907)=2.48, p\leq.05, (d=.16)$, Students are encouraged to set future college and career goals: $t(903)=3.07, p\leq.001, (d=.21)$, Students are learning effective problem-solving skills: $t(906)=3.97, p\leq.001, (d=.27)$, I am able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum: $t(901)=2.58, p\leq.01, (d=.21)$, The curriculum appropriately challenges most students: $t(901)=2.59, p\leq.01, (d=.18)$, Advanced (i.e., honors, pre-AP, etc.) courses are appropriately rigorous: $t(1049)=3.45, p\leq.001, (d=.16)$

Table 10. Average Classroom-Level College-Going Culture Ratings by Item and Year: Expectations/Rigor Component

Resource	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. Creativity and original thinking are highly valued.**	697	3.41	.58	693	3.60	.53	492	3.59	.54	527	3.62	.52	432	3.61	.52	478	3.71	.46
b. All students have the ability to succeed academically.	700	3.19	.65	694	3.41	.65	493	3.63	.52	525	3.63	.51	432	3.66	.51	477	3.72	.46
c. Students are encouraged to do their best.**	706	3.46	.56	688	3.68	.51	490	3.69	.48	527	3.7	.48	431	3.71	.49	476	3.81	.40
d. I regularly talk to students about the importance of college.	706	3.28	.61	692	3.42	.61	491	3.49	.58	525	3.47	.59	427	3.50	.58	477	3.53	.55
e. Students care about learning and getting a good education.*	703	2.83	.67	691	3.10	.68	490	3.13	.70	525	3.14	.74	432	3.08	.76	477	3.19	.65
f. Students are encouraged to set future college and career goals.**	698	3.29	.55	688	3.45	.56	491	3.51	.55	522	3.51	.55	428	3.49	.53	477	3.60	.51
g. Students are learning effective problem-solving skills.***	706	3.21	.54	690	3.35	.57	489	3.39	.59	525	3.36	.65	431	3.37	.58	477	3.52	.54
h. I am able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum.**	703	3.26	.58	687	3.37	.60	488	3.33	.69	515	3.38	.67	430	3.30	.67	476	3.43	.59
i. The curriculum appropriately challenges most students.**	707	3.24	.56	689	3.40	.59	489	3.43	.60	523	3.39	.62	428	3.41	.61	475	3.51	.53
j. Advanced (i.e., honors, pre-AP, etc.) courses are appropriately rigorous.**	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	414	3.39	.64	465	3.49	.60

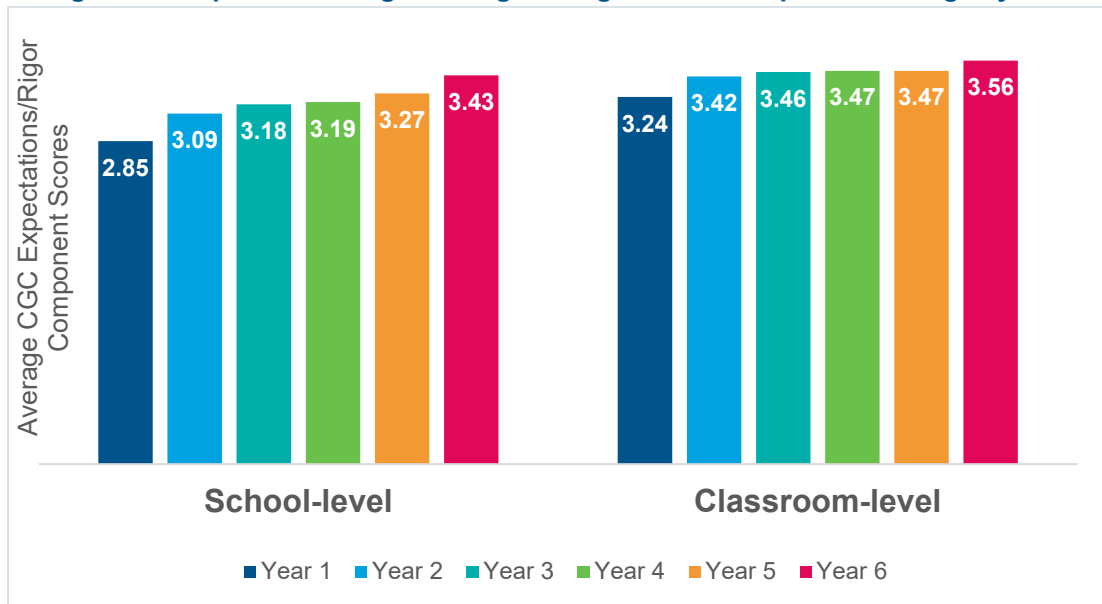
Source: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .05$); **Statistically significant ($p \leq .01$); ***Statistically significant ($p \leq .001$) from Year 5 to Year 6

Note: The wording of the items in this table do not perfectly align with the survey as there are differences in the wording of the school-level and classroom-level survey items based on respondent type.

We also compared the average overall scores on the college-going culture scales for the Expectations/Rigor component across the past six years, and average ratings have increased (see Figure 21). Specifically, we conducted post-hoc tests comparing Year 5 and Year 6 on the average overall scores for both the school- and classroom-level. We found that while the average school college-going culture expectations/rigor subscale rating showed higher gains, both school- and classroom-level Expectations/Rigor scores significantly increased from Year 5 to Year 6 (from 3.27 to 3.43 school-level scores and 3.47 to 3.56 classroom-level scores).³⁴

Figure 21. Expectations/Rigor College-Going Culture Component Ratings by Year



Visual cues/materials resources at the school level. Table 11 shows average school personnel perceptions of the Visual Cues/ Material Resources component of college-going culture in their schools. Overall, respondents agreed or strongly agreed to all items, and mean score ratings ranged between 3.24 and 3.62 (between agree to strongly agree). We used ANOVA for post-hoc analysis and found that all items showed a statistically significant increase from Year 5 to Year 6. Effect sizes for the differences in Year 5 and Year 6 ratings ranged from small (e.g., “Parents are included in the college preparation process,” $d = .23$) to small-moderate (e.g., “Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college-attendance decisions,” $d = .38$).³⁵

³⁴ School-level Expectations/Rigor scores: $t(1017)=5.21, p \leq .001, (d=.33)$ and Classroom-level Expectations/Rigor scores: $t(861)=3.37, p \leq .001, (d=.23)$

³⁵ College pennants, banners, and posters are visible: $t(1056)=-4.59, p \leq .001 (d=.28)$, Parents are included in the college preparation process: $t(1052)=-3.66, p \leq .001 (d=.23)$, Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college-attendance decisions: $t(1054)=-6.11, p \leq .001 (d=.38)$, Teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience: $t(1054)=-4.46, p \leq .001 (d=.27)$, Teachers are provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates: $t(1055)=-4.67, p \leq .001 (d=.29)$, College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances: $t(1047)=-3.87, p \leq .001 (d=.24)$, Teachers engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness: $t(1050)=-5.56, (d=.34)$, Teachers are equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college: $t(1052)=-4.71, p \leq .001 (d=.29)$

Table 11. Average School-Level College-Going Culture Ratings by Item and Year: Visual Cues/Material Resources Component

Item	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. College pennants, banners, and posters are visible.***	797	2.84	.83	804	3.31	.72	561	3.39	.61	596	3.35	.65	497	3.40	.65	561	3.57	.56
b. Parents are included in the college preparation process.***	789	2.97	.67	800	3.27	.64	560	3.36	.58	594	3.37	.63	496	3.40	.59	558	3.53	.55
c. Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college-attendance decisions.***	790	3.06	.61	797	3.27	.65	558	3.39	.55	594	3.37	.61	495	3.41	.58	561	3.62	.52
d. Teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience.***	791	2.82	.70	803	3.17	.69	561	3.19	.63	596	3.23	.65	496	3.29	.56	560	3.45	.59
e. Teachers are provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates.***	787	2.68	.80	797	3.01	.80	560	3.17	.69	597	3.22	.72	496	3.31	.69	561	3.50	.62
f. College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances.***	790	2.66	.70	798	2.89	.76	555	2.99	.72	593	3.04	.73	493	3.07	.74	556	3.24	.69
g. Teachers engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness.*^	789	2.87	.71	795	2.89	.78	558	2.91	.76	593	2.96	.77	494	3.03	.72	558	3.27	.67
h. 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	556	3.13	.65	587	3.19	.65	495	3.22	.62	559	3.40	.60

^Item was modified in Year 6 to read, "Faculty and staff engage in professional development about ways to promote college readiness."

Source: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .05$); **Statistically significant ($p \leq .01$); ***Statistically significant ($p \leq .001$) from Year 5 to Year 6.

Visual cues/material resources at the classroom level. Table 12 shows each of the items assigned to the visual cues/material resources subscale, and the descriptive statistics for the entire sample of school personnel by year. ANOVA tests revealed average ratings for Year 6 were significantly higher than ratings for Year 5 for every scale item. Effect sizes for the differences in Year 5 and Year 6 ratings ranged from small (e.g., “equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college.” $d = .21$) to medium (e.g., “include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience (e.g., posters, pennants).” $d = .39$).³⁶

³⁶ College pennants, banners, and posters are visible: $t(907) = -4.24, p \leq .001 (d = .28)$, Parents are included in the college preparation process: $t(900) = -3.97, p \leq .001 (d = .26)$, Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college-attendance decisions: $t(903) = -5.48, p \leq .001 (d = .36)$, I include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience (e.g., posters, pennants): $t(905) = -5.76, p \leq .001 (d = .39)$, I am provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates: $t(900) = -4.20, p \leq .001 (d = .28)$, College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances: $t(902) = -4.35, p \leq .001 (d = .29)$, I engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness: $t(902) = -4.93, p \leq .001 (d = .33)$, I am equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college: $t(902) = -5.55, p \leq .01 (d = .21)$

Table 12. Average Classroom-Level College-Going Culture Ratings by Item and Year: Visual Cues/Material Resources Component

Item	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. College pennants, banners, and posters are visible.***	705	2.70	.81	689	3.09	.78	490	3.13	.77	526	3.19	.75	432	3.21	.75	477	3.41	.65
b. Parents are included in the college preparation process.***	691	2.81	.67	683	3.05	.71	490	3.13	.69	523	3.12	.72	428	3.18	.69	474	3.35	.65
c. Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college-attendance decisions.***	699	3.01	.62	618	3.08	.67	488	3.32	.60	464	3.20	.62	428	3.32	.61	477	3.53	.56
d. I include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience.***	705	2.80	.75	687	3.07	.75	489	3.17	.69	525	3.22	.70	430	3.26	.67	477	3.50	.55
e. I am provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates.***	705	2.64	.80	685	2.94	.82	489	3.08	.75	523	3.14	.76	429	3.26	.72	473	3.46	.70
f. College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances.***	699	2.67	.72	683	2.88	.80	489	3.00	.75	521	3.03	.74	429	3.09	.72	475	3.29	.70
g. I engage in ongoing professional development about ways to promote college readiness.***^	701	2.87	.71	685	2.90	.80	491	2.98	.77	523	3.04	.76	427	3.12	.76	477	3.36	.67
h. I am equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high school to college.***	702	3.11	.70	681	3.12	.74	489	3.24	.63	527	3.26	.67	430	3.34	.60	474	3.46	.58

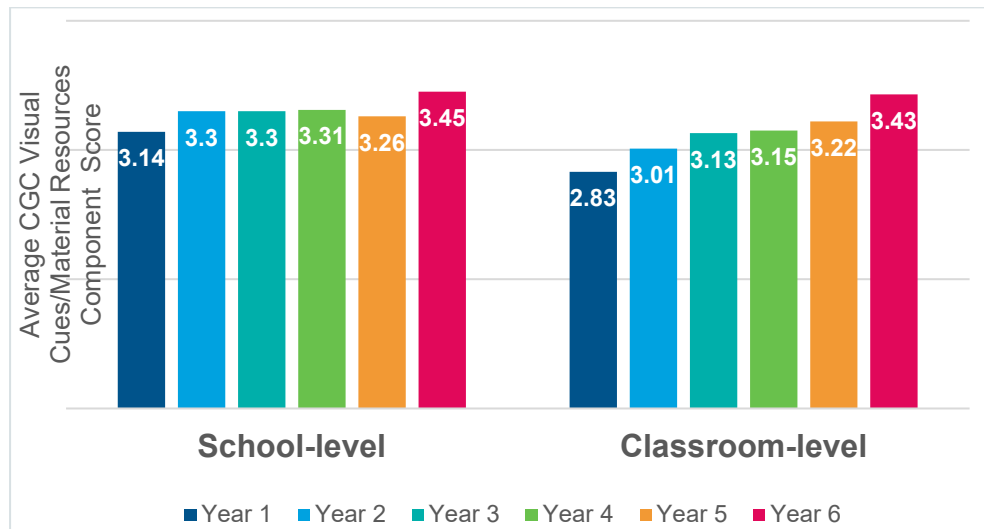
^Item was modified in Year 6 to read, "Faculty and staff engage in professional development about ways to promote college readiness."

Source: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .05$); **Statistically significant ($p \leq .01$); ***Statistically significant ($p \leq .001$) from Year 5 to Year 6.

Figure 22 shows that overall ratings for Visual Cues/Material Resources significantly increased in Year 6 (from 3.26 in Year 5 to 3.45 in Year 6 for school-level and from 3.22 in Year 5 to 3.43 in Year 6 for classroom-level)³⁷. For both school and classroom, personnel were more likely to report a higher rating in the visible signs and resources available to support and create a college-going culture. The effect sizes were small-moderate for school-level ($d=.37$) and classroom-level ($d=.37$).

Figure 22. Visual Cues/Material Resources College-Going Culture Component Ratings by Year

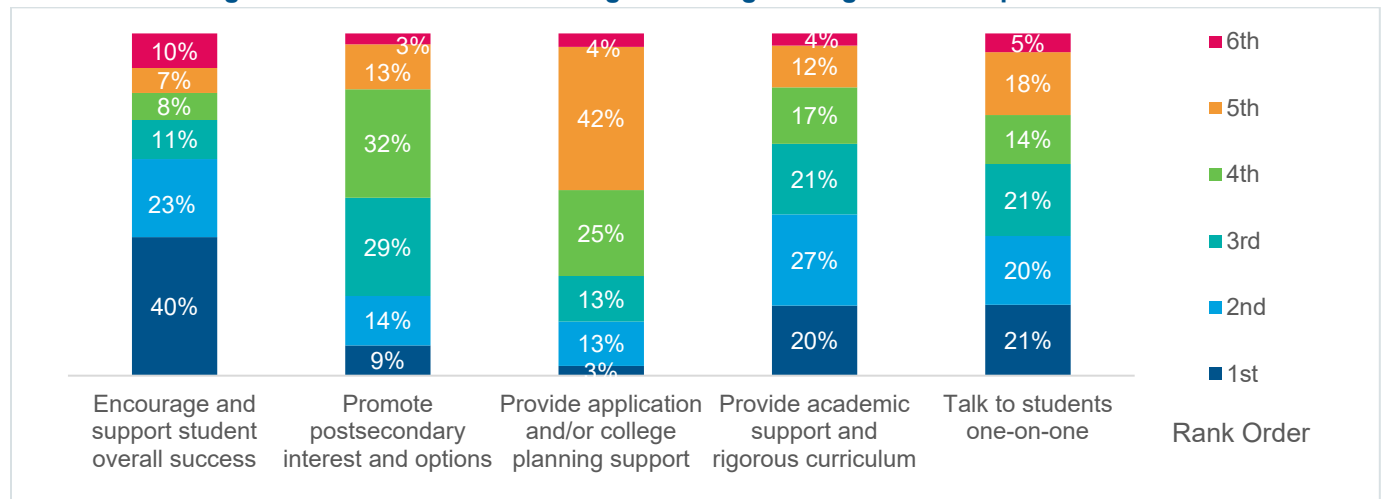


3.3.3 College-Going Culture Perspectives

To understand the leadership perspective of college-going culture, one question asked only administrators to rank order the most important aspects (1) to the least important aspects (6) to building a college-going culture at your school. This was followed up by two open-ended questions: (1) explanation of their ranking of most important aspects and (2) their role in building a college-going culture.

Figure 23 shows percentages of each item ranked as number 1 to number 6. Forty percent of the 534 respondents to this question believed *encourage and support student overall success* was the most important aspect of college-going culture. This was followed by *talk to students one-one* (21%) and *provide academic support and rigorous curriculum* (20%).

³⁷ Average school-level Visual Cues/Material Resources score: $t(1031)=5.96$, $p\leq.001$ ($d=.37$) and Average classroom-level Visual Cues/Material Resources score: $t(886)=5.55$, $p\leq.001$ ($d=.37$)

Figure 23. Administrator Rankings of College-Going Culture Aspects

Comments about rankings most important aspects to building a college-going culture.

Approximately 68% of respondents (362 respondents total) commented on their rankings. Comments reflected personnel beliefs that the highest ranked aspect, **encourage and support student overall success**, encompassed students' whole being and not just their postsecondary success. One respondent noted, "Overall success, like staying off drugs, is more important than simply going to college." Another mentioned, "Successful students are more likely to have the courage to leave their comfort zone and explore the opportunities available to them." In other cases, respondents believed the concept of student success is a process. One respondent shared, "Through a rigorous curriculum and academic support we encourage students to find overall success. Face-to-face discussions with students promote interests and options. Through these interests and options students are provided college planning/ technical education support..." Other respondents shared similar sentiments around promoting student overall success: "Being a supportive role model is great to encourage student success. If they don't get that encouragement elsewhere, maintaining that one-on-one effort can do wonders. Students may feel they are not able to find support elsewhere, so giving them a start can do well to let the other options come into play."

While many respondents indicated their overall success was most important, **talk to students one-on-one** was the second most highly ranked aspect of building a college-going culture. When describing the importance of talking to students, one respondent shared how "one-on-one conversations tend to be the best way to get students to open up about what it is they wish to pursue..." A few other comments included:

Talking to students is the most important so you can help them based on their individual needs and interests.

Talk about succeeding and provide the mindset; convince them that they individually can do it THEN provide the tools. The tools are nothing if they do not believe in themself.

Talking to students one-to-one makes them feel important and it builds the relationships to get the other things completed.

While others noted overall success and talking to students was the most important aspect, several believed starting with a foundation of **provide academic support and rigorous curriculum** was most important. One respondent shared, “They are all important, difficult to rank. But if we don’t provide the curriculum and challenges, students will not be prepared for what is expected in college and will not stay in college once they get there.” Several agreed and one stated, “Rigorous curriculum is very important because without it we set them up to fail in college.”

Next, respondents believed that **promote postsecondary interest and options** was extremely valuable. Several respondents talked about motivation and interest as the most important aspects of supporting students. One respondent stated, “Students need to be aware of their choices after high school and know that college isn’t the only option.” Finally, the importance of **provide application and college planning** was ranked as the fifth most important aspect but noted often in the comments. One respondent shared, “It all starts with the FAFSA; it is [a] foundational [component] because it gives hope to the hopeless.” Another respondent shared, “Students and families need assistance in navigating the college process. Many do not know the system, and the work of the GEAR UP team makes the process less daunting.”

Comments about their role in building a college-going culture. Sixty-two percent of the 562 respondents commented about their role in building a college-going culture at their school (compared to 64% in Year 5). While a few respondents indicated their role had not changed, several respondents indicated their role had evolved, and they attributed this shift to the organization and resources provided through GEAR UP. In fact, approximately 20% of respondents shared sentiments about their role as supported and/or expanded through the presence of GEAR UP in their school.

GEAR UP has helped me as well as the students to recognize college opportunities.

As a teacher, it is important to help students with college prep. Also, to encourage them. Gear up makes a huge difference at our school. I see more and more students looking into college since Gear up.

As a teacher, to promote the importance of an education beyond our school building, as well...not just within our building. Gear up has helped in understanding the promotion of higher ed.

Table 13 shows how responses were categorized in Year 6 based on theme and sample comments. Overall, sentiments were similar to previous years but in certain cases, personnel were more equipped and thus made more comments about certain topics. Approximately one in four respondents believed their primary role was **encouragement** and shared how important it is to “encourage students” to pursue their goals. Specifically, one respondent reported, “Before GEAR UP, I would talk about college when asked about it in the classroom. Now I encourage students to tell me their plans and how they plan to achieve them. GEAR Up has brought up a lot of college-going conversations in my classroom.” Many respondents also reported their role in **talking or communicating with students** about their future ($n=30$). Notably, several respondents talked specifically about their role in providing resources, either **academic or college planning**. One respondent shared, “I feel my role is to prepare students academically, so I try to teach relevant topics and set high expectations. Since exposure to GearUp I try to

discuss career goals and requirements” ($n=38$). Some respondents also elaborated on their role in **support of GEAR UP activities**.

Table 13. School Personnel Perceptions about their Role and the Most Important Aspect in Building a College-Going Culture, Themes and Sample Comments

Theme	Year 6 Sample Comments
a. Talk or communicate	<p><i>My role has changed because I spend a lot of time talking to students about their future choices. I have ALL seniors at our school in my classes so many times, gear up activities are used in my class because it reaches every senior at our small school.</i></p> <p><i>I see our "staffulty" openly engaging students one on one, promoting their alma maters, and discussing their personal successes due to their higher learning.</i></p>
b. Provide resources: academic rigor and college and career planning	<p><i>Provides opportunities to students to explore many different college and career choices.</i></p> <p><i>Our purpose as educators is to help students ready themselves for life, now and after high school. Some students are ready for college, some are not. It is a day to day vocation to guide, nurture and help students. My role is always the same, GEAR up gives us more tools to fulfill this role.</i></p>
c. Encouragement: Making college seem attainable	<p><i>To be a role model. Show students that their dreams can come true.</i></p> <p><i>Using my own college experience and its benefits is an ongoing process for me with my students. Emphasizing that all children have an opportunity for postsecondary education with its advantages for a life-long positive experiences is primary in these discussions. GEAR UP has helped to reinforce these discussions through their good work and enthusiasm for helping children succeed.</i></p>
d. Support GEAR UP and similar efforts	<p><i>Sometimes I feel as if my role is a little fuzzy. I have never worked in a school with Gear Up before so I am very used to handling all the college visits, fafsa workshops, etc. We also have HATS which blurs the lines even more. Sometimes I think there is a little overlap.</i></p> <p><i>I support the Gear -Up program and provide time in our schedules, for meetings, college visitors, as well as visitations, encourage student participation in these activities. Take time for after school events such as FASFA nights, to visit with students and parents to encourage them to complete the applications. I am a support person who tries to help motivate.</i></p>

Source: Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Survey.

In Year 6, 28 of the 41 administrators commented about their role in building a college-going culture. In most cases, respondents indicated that they saw their role as mentors or advisors to their staff and students. One noted, “I see my role in the college-going culture as an academic leader. I feel that I should work together with my counselors and teachers to prepare students to make informed decisions about what they will study post high school and where they will study.” Several respondents shared how the work of fostering a college-going culture at their school also includes the promotion and use of resources and tools available to students. One

administrator noted, “My role as an administrator is to ensure that students are utilizing all the tools and opportunities that are available.”

Several administrators also mentioned the role of GEAR UP in supporting them to promote a college-going culture at the school. According to these respondents, counselors and administrators need resources to find the right information and offer students better postsecondary options. Some of these responses are reflected below:

GEAR UP has played a huge role in helping me prepare these kids for their next level. I couldn't imagine not having GEAR UP to rely on when working with high school seniors and their futures because the resources they provide not only for students, but for educators too are irreplaceable. GEAR UP is life changing to all involved!

GEAR UP is a valuable tool that provides tons of ideas, valuable resources, and opportunities to assist me in that mission. Both of my kids were GEAR UP students- GEAR UP works!”

Gear Up has increased my ability to fulfill my role in building and maintaining a college-going culture at my school.”

3.3.4 Involvement

The evaluation team next examined the extent to which respondents reported that they were involved in each of the six college-related activities offered by their schools. In Year 6, five response options were included for involvement items (1 = *never*, 2 = *seldom*, 3 = *sometimes*, 4 = *often*, 5 = *always*). A sixth option (*not applicable*) was included on each scale, but this option was not used to calculate average ratings.

Overall, responses across items decreased and the mean score ranged from 2.56 to 4.03—or from *sometimes* to *often* involved (see Table 14 below). Similar to Year 5, the largest Year 6 involvement scores were for “I talk with students about their plans for college or work after high school” and “I have individual discussions with students about what they want to do with their futures.” ANOVAs revealed that there were no significant differences across years except one, “I participate in the college preparation activities of my school.” Effect size for this item was small ($d=.20$).³⁸

³⁸ $t(1044)=3.194, p\leq.01$ ($d=0.20$)

Table 14. School Personnel Involvement in Six College-Related Activities by Year

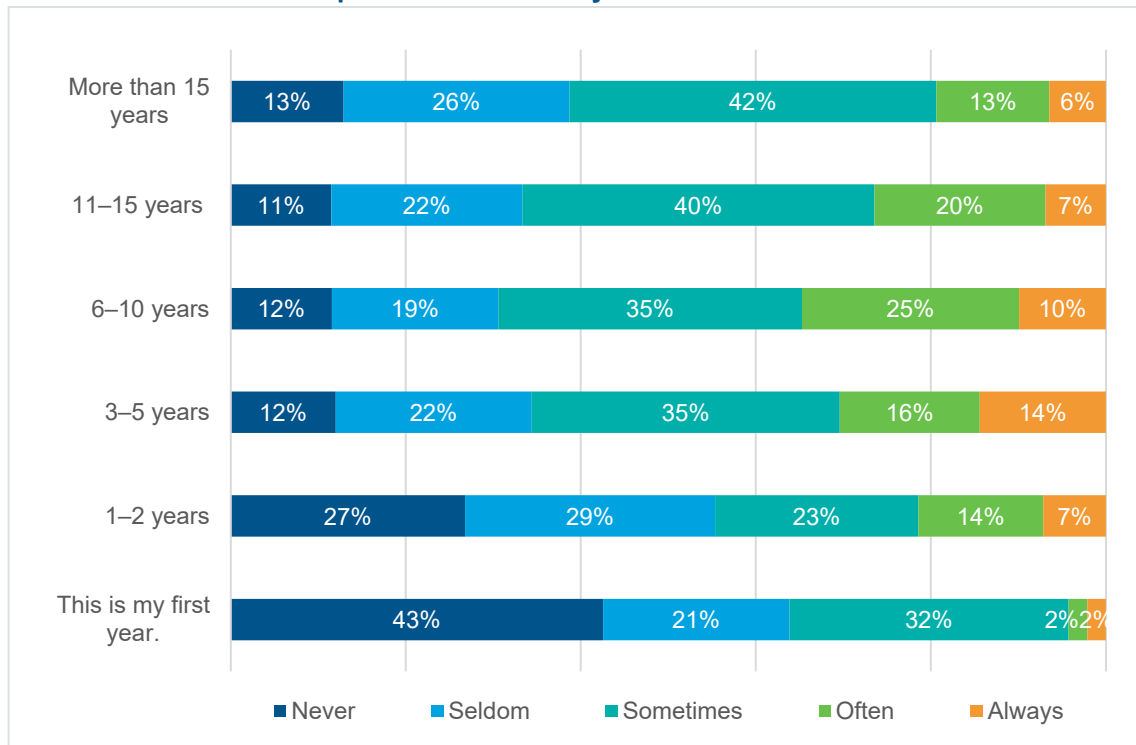
Item	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. I participate in the college preparation activities of my school, e.g., chaperoning college visits.*	665	2.77	1.20	713	2.90	1.25	558	2.71	1.42	597	2.76	1.37	494	2.83	1.35	552	2.56	1.37
b. I have individual discussions with students about what they want to do with their futures.	781	3.88	.86	789	3.93	.81	560	4.01	.80	596	4.05	.82	495	4.01	.84	556	3.95	.89
c. I talk with students about their plans for college or work after high school.	785	3.89	.85	789	3.97	.77	555	4.06	.79	594	4.11	.78	494	4.09	.79	553	4.03	.82
d. I offer students supplemental instructional support to prepare them for postsecondary options.	737	3.31	1.08	759	3.40	1.03	554	3.51	1.15	593	3.58	1.12	495	3.55	1.15	554	3.47	1.08
e. I talk with parents about their ability to help prepare their student(s) for postsecondary education.	734	2.84	1.13	750	3.00	1.10	551	2.96	1.30	593	3.08	1.23	488	3.00	1.26	550	2.93	1.18
f. I offer or incorporate class time to support college preparation efforts at my school.	Not Applicable						553	3.25	1.31	590	3.27	1.36	492	3.35	1.25	552	3.27	1.26

Source: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .05$); **Statistically significant ($p \leq .01$); ***Statistically significant ($p \leq .001$) from Year 5 to Year 6.

Post-hoc analysis of the item, “I participate in the college preparation activities of my school, e.g., chaperoning college visits,” revealed some involvement patterns based on years of experience. Specifically, first-year teachers had the least involvement in college preparation activities. Teachers with between “6 and 10 years,” and “11 and 15 years” of experience at the school reported the highest involvement. The difference was statistically significant.³⁹ Figure 24 shows the average rating of respondents, by years at the school.

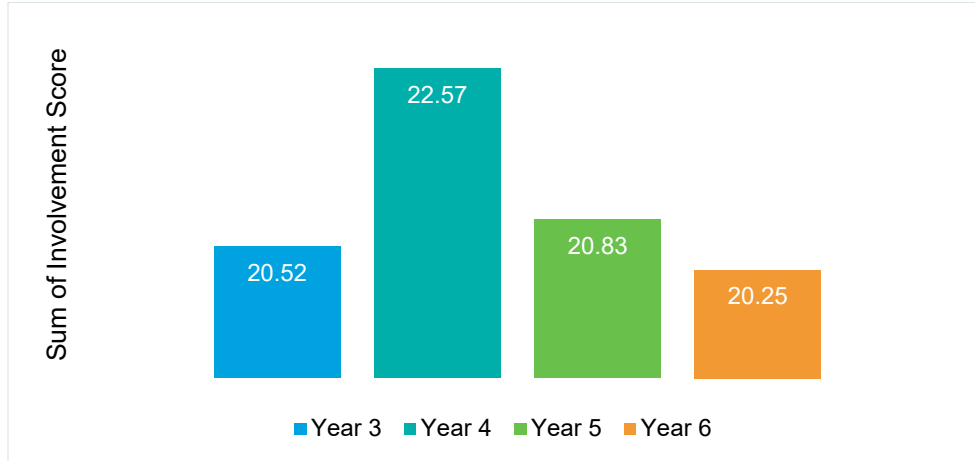
Figure 24. School Personnel Respondents’ Frequency of Involvement in College Preparation Activities by Years at the School



Note: Some items may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Overall involvement. As we did in previous years, we calculated an overall involvement score for each participant. This score was operationalized as the sum of participant self-ratings for the six items on the scale. For Years 3 through 6, the range for this variable was 0–24 points, and a score of 18 points indicated being involved “sometimes.” We found Year 6 school personnel respondents’ involvement was *sometimes* to *often* (20.25); this was slightly lower overall involvement than respondents in Year 4 (22.57) and Year 5 (20.83), but we found no statistical differences by year (see Figure 25 below).

³⁹ $\chi^2=51.3$, $p\leq.001$, ($\phi=-.33$)

Figure 25. School Personnel Respondents' Sum Score Involvement by Year

3.3.5 Knowledge of Financial Aid and PSE Topics

Two questions on the school personnel survey asked respondents about their financial aid and postsecondary education knowledge. The first five items assessed whether personnel knew correct responses for cost of tuition and financial aid available. The second question asked personnel to rate their level of comfort with their knowledge to assist students with seven financial aid-related topics and five college-related topics.

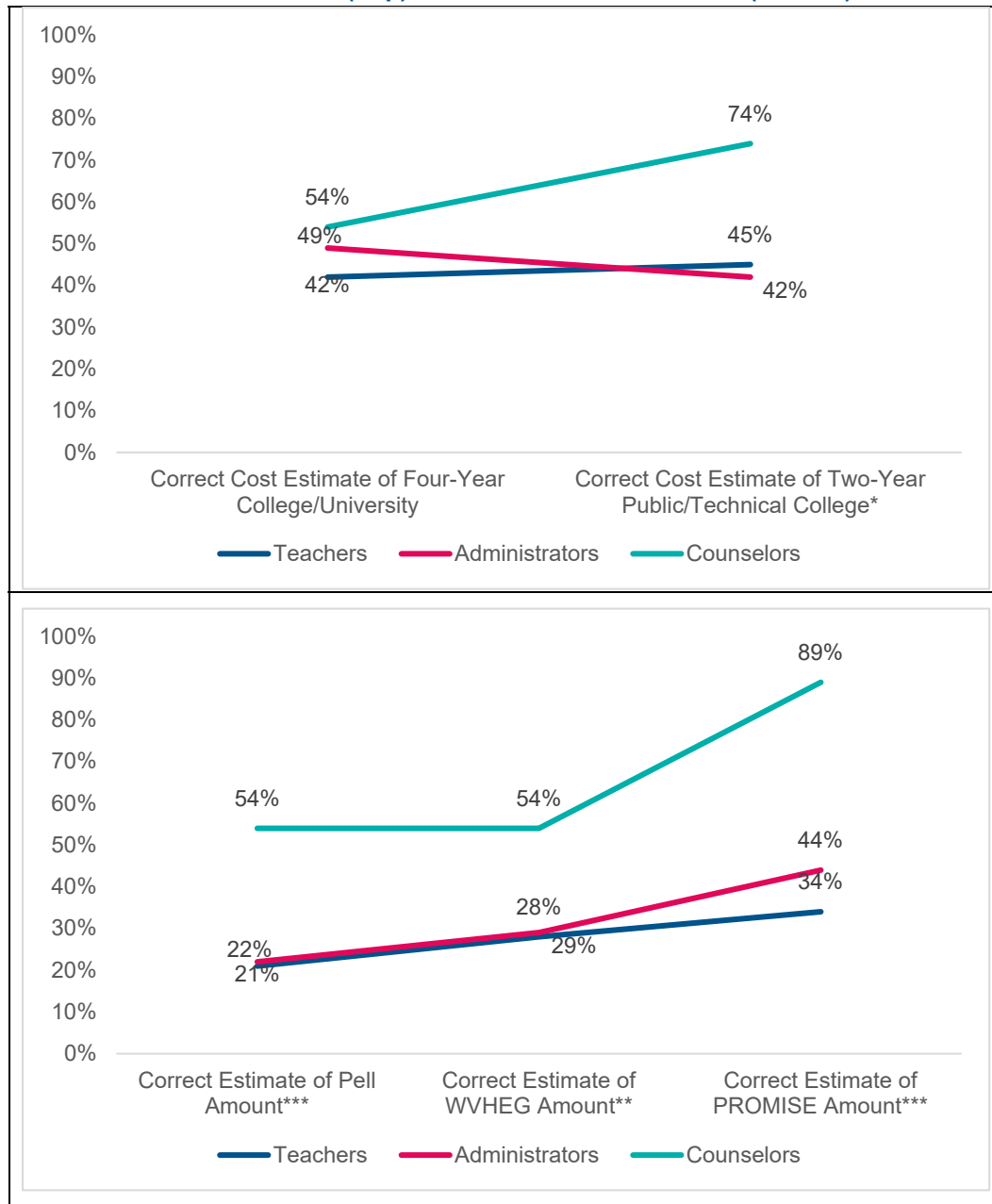
Tuition cost estimates. Similar to parents and students, in Year 6 school personnel were asked about estimates of the average cost of tuition, excluding the cost of food, housing, and books, for two public college options in West Virginia: (a) a four-year public college/university, and (b) a public community/technical college (see section IV.1.2.2 for details). The percentage of personnel who correctly estimated the cost of a four-year college/ university and two-year public/ technical college in Year 6 was 43% and 46%, respectively. The share of teachers who correctly estimated the cost of a four-year college/university (42%) was also similar to the percentage of those who correctly estimated the cost of a two-year college (45%). There were no statistical differences by position for the four-year cost estimates. For two-year college cost estimates, we found that counselors were statistically more likely than teachers and administrators to correctly estimate the cost (74% of counselors compared to 45% of teachers and 42% of administrators).⁴⁰

Financial aid estimates. School personnel were also asked about estimates of the average amount of financial aid support available, for three public options in West Virginia: (a) Pell, (b) WVHEG, (c) PROMISE (see section IV.1.2.2 for details). See Figure 26 below. The percentage of Year 6 personnel who correctly estimated the amount of Pell, WVHEG, and PROMISE amounts available was also significantly lower for teachers and administrators than counselors.⁴¹

⁴⁰ $\chi^2=11.67$, $p\leq.01$, ($\phi=-.14$)

⁴¹ $\chi^2=7.40$, $p\leq.01$, ($\phi=-.07$)

Figure 26. Percentage of Personnel Who Correctly Estimated the Cost of Tuition (Top) and Financial Aid Available (Bottom)



Source: WV GEAR UP Year 6 School Personnel Survey

***Statistically significant by position (administrator, counselor, or teacher) ($p \leq .001$).

**Statistically significant by position (administrator, counselor, or teacher) ($p \leq .01$).

*Statistically significant by position (administrator, counselor, or teacher) ($p \leq .05$).

Comfort/knowledge with financial aid and other postsecondary education topics. This item on the school personnel survey asked respondents to rate their level of comfort with their knowledge to assist students with seven financial aid topics and five college-related topics. Respondents had four response options for comfort/knowledge items (i.e., 1 = *not at all comfortable*, 2 = *slightly comfortable*, 3 = *moderately comfortable*, 4 = *extremely comfortable*). A fifth option (*rather not say*) was included on each scale, but this option was not used to calculate average ratings.

Overall, staff had the least comfort with knowledge about the WV Invests Grant (2.28), followed by the College Savings Plan/529 (2.38). A series of ANOVAs showed that the average comfort/knowledge level reported by survey respondents differed positively across Years 1–6 for two financial aid topics: (1) *WVHEG* and (2) *Federal grants*.⁴² However, effect sizes for each of these items were very small ($d=.18$ and $d=.10$). For all remaining items, mean ratings were similar in Year 5 and Year 6 and any positive or negative differences were not significant. (See Table 15 below for all mean values across years.)

⁴² WHEG: $t(1040)=2.9$, $p\leq.01$, ($d=.18$), Federal grants: $t(1038)=-1.63$, $p=.10$, ($d=.10$)

Table 15. School Personnel Respondents' Comfort with their Knowledge to Assist Students with 10 PSE Topics by Year

Financial Aid Topic	Year 1			Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
FAFSA	790	2.65	.99	796	2.85	.95	556	3.00	.91	593	2.98	.93	491	3.05	.90	555	3.03	.90
College savings plan/SMART 529	785	1.97	.94	787	2.24	.98	553	2.39	1.01	586	2.35	1.04	489	2.42	1.03	548	2.38	1.00
Scholarships from organizations, institutions, and other entities ¹	787	2.58	.97	785	2.79	.95	548	2.99	.92	584	3.02	.92	488	3.05	.93	545	2.98	.88
WV Higher Education Grant*	782	2.21	1.01	785	2.45	1.02	555	2.62	1.03	589	2.68	1.03	491	2.71	1.06	551	2.90	.93
Federal grants, loans, and work-study	781	2.48	.98	789	2.70	.97	554	2.87	.95	587	2.90	.97	490	2.94	.97	550	3.03	.92
PROMISE Scholarship	Not Applicable in Years 1 - 5															558	3.01	.95
WV Invests Grant	Not Applicable in Years 1 - 5															559	2.28	1.05
Postsecondary Education Topic	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
College selection (match and fit)	786	2.50	1.06	787	2.71	1.01	551	2.97	.98	593	3.03	.95	489	3.22	.87	557	3.16	.79
ACT/SAT Prep	778	2.87	.92	787	3.02	.88	551	3.24	.85	586	3.27	.83	485	3.35	.83	556	3.30	.74
Requirements for college acceptance	782	2.86	.93	783	3.02	.90	549	3.21	.83	584	3.25	.84	482	3.28	.84	553	3.26	.74
Importance/benefit of college education	767	3.55	.72	780	3.60	.66	520	3.71	.58	570	3.69	.58	474	3.67	.65	551	3.67	.57
High school graduation requirements	777	3.15	.87	784	3.27	.82	529	3.48	0.69	574	3.50	.70	475	3.45	.76	553	3.49	.67

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 School Personnel Surveys.

¹Item wording slightly changed in Year 6

*Statistically significant by position (administrator, counselor, or teacher) ($p \leq .05$).

Subsequent post-hoc analyses of financial aid topics by position revealed a few notable findings. While WVHEG knowledge increased, approximately 30% of teacher respondents reported they were not-at-all or only slightly comfortable with their knowledge of the WVHEG program (compared to 5% of counselors and 25% of administrators). Additionally, 55% of teachers and administrators (compared to 11% of counselors) were not-at-all or slightly comfortable with their knowledge of scholarships. Next, 24% of Year 6 teacher respondents were significantly less comfortable with their knowledge to assist students with Federal grants, loans, and work-study than counselors (3%) and administrators (15%). The trend was similar with FAFSA; 24% of teachers were significantly less comfortable with their knowledge to assist students on this topic as well compared to counselors (3%) and administrators (17%). Finally, all respondents rated their comfort with knowledge of College Savings/529 (52% of teachers, 39% of administrators, 34% of counselors) as limited.⁴³ Finally, when examining this knowledge of financial aid topics by years of experience at the school, we found only one item with statistically significant difference: knowledge of scholarships. Only half of school personnel with less than one year of experience were moderately or extremely comfortable (approximately 51%), compared to more than 75% of those respondents with between one year and 15 years' experience at the school, and 65% of those respondents with over 15 years' experience at the school.

Other postsecondary education topics. When examining postsecondary education comfort with knowledge comparisons by position, we found the largest differences with respect to measures of “extremely comfortable” with knowledge of the following three topics: (1) *the importance/benefits of a college education* (73% of teachers, 68% of administrators, and 97% of counselors), (2) *requirements for college acceptance* (44% of teachers, 38% of administrators, and 74% of counselors), and (3) *college selection* (36% of teachers, 34% of administrators, and 74% of counselors).⁴⁴ While these differences by position were significant, a majority of all respondents reported being at least moderately comfortable with knowledge in all three areas (as shown in table above with a mean rating of at least 3.0). Finally, when examining this knowledge of postsecondary topics by years of experience at the school, we found one item with statistically significant difference: requirements for college acceptance. Approximately, 63% of school personnel with less than one year of experience and more than 15 years of experience at the school were moderately or extremely comfortable with the topic, compared to more than 85% of those respondents with between 1 year and 15 years of experience at the school.⁴⁵

Overall knowledge. We also compared the overall sum comfort/knowledge score between Year 5 and Year 6; 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. We calculated a

⁴³ WVHEG program: $X^2=32.543$, $p\leq.001$, ($\phi=-.24$), Scholarships: $X^2=62.151$, $p\leq.001$, ($\phi=-.34$), Federal grants, loans, and work-study: $X^2=45.143$, $p\leq.001$, ($\phi=-.28$), FAFSA: $X^2=26.875$, $p\leq.001$, ($\phi=-.21$), and College Saving/529: $X^2=10.737$, $p=.09$, ($\phi=-.14$)

⁴⁴ Importance and Benefits of Education: $X^2=13.49$, $p\leq.05$, ($\phi=-.15$), College selection: $X^2=23.19$, $p\leq.001$, ($\phi=-.20$), Requirements for college graduation: $X^2=19.86$, $p\leq.01$, ($\phi=-.19$)

⁴⁵ $X^2=26.02$, $p\leq.05$, ($\phi=-.227$)

one-way ANOVA on respondents' knowledge score, using year as the predictor. The overall results showed that comfort/knowledge levels did not change significantly between Year 5 and Year. See Figure 27 below.

Figure 27. School Personnel Respondents' Sum Score Comfort with Their Knowledge to Assist with Financial Aid and PSE Topics by Year



Most valuable tools and resources. For the first time, respondents were asked to provide a description of the most valuable tool or resource in helping to answer students' questions accurately about financial aid for college. Approximately 64% of 562 respondents commented. Table 16 shows the categorization of their responses by theme, sample comment, and count. School counselors were reported as the most valuable resource ($n=85$) followed by using CFWV online resources ($n=67$). College website or other websites ($n=45$) was the next most frequently identified theme, followed by GEAR UP resources ($n=40$).

Table 16. Thematic Analysis of School Personnel Perceptions about the Most Valuable Resources to Answer Questions about Financial Aid

Theme	Sample Comment	Count of Responses
a. Guidance/school counseling office	<i>Being the first year in my position, I rely on the guidance counselor for information.</i>	85
a. CFWV website	<i>The most valuable tools include CFWV, FastWeb, and individual colleges and their information.</i>	67
b. College website or other websites	<i>College websites; Websites like WVGearUp or using the collegeboard website with the students scores as well as comparison of different schools on that website.</i>	45
c. GEAR UP coordinator or other sponsored resource/activity	<i>The tools that are given to us by Gear Up. Being able to contact HEPC at any time to get assistance; WV GearUp activities are vital for me to help my students. Our guidance counselors regularly schedule them and assist me with anything I need to discuss with my students that I don't already know.</i>	40
d. Personal experience	<i>I don't use sources of information. My daughter was recently in college, so I know the forms.</i>	29
f. Financial aid night/workshop	<i>We frequently hold FASFA workshops for parents and students at our school.</i>	14

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

In Years 2–6, we asked school personnel to respond to 10 items designed to measure their perceptions of student efficacy related to college-going efficacy (e.g., “the majority of students will be eligible to apply to a postsecondary institution”). Items were adapted from Gibbons (2005) and utilized a four-point Likert-type response scale (i.e., 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.

We used independent samples t-tests to test for statistically significant differences between Year 5 and Year 6 average ratings on each item. There were positive differences found between those years on eight items: (1) will be eligible to apply to a postsecondary institution, (2) can make an educational plan that will prepare them for college, (3) can get good grades in their high school science classes, (4) can get good grades in their high school math classes, (5) can choose the classes needed to get into college, (6) know enough about computers/technology, (7) can go to college after high school, and (8) could finish college and receive a college degree. Nevertheless, the effect size for these differences ranged from very small to small.⁴⁶ See Table 17 below for a complete breakdown of means by year.

⁴⁶ will be eligible to apply to a postsecondary institution: $t(1007)=3.611, p\leq.001, d=.23$ (2) can make an educational plan that will prepare them for college: $t(1003)=2.176, p\leq.05, d=.14$ (3) can get good grades in their high school science classes: $t(1005)=2.705, p\leq.01, d=.17$ (4) can get good grades in their high school math classes: $t(1005)=2.607, p\leq.01, d=.17$ (5) can choose the classes needed to get into college: $t(1007)=3.510, p\leq.001, d=.17$ (6) know enough about computers/technology: $t(1004)=2.183, p\leq.05, d=.23$ (7) can go to college after high school: $t(1003)=4.352, p\leq.001, d=.28$ and (8) could finish college and receive a college degree: $t(990)=2.190, p\leq.05, d=.12$.

Table 17. School Personnel Perceptions of their Students' College-Going Efficacy

The majority of students...	Year 2			Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. will not attend (college) but will seek a job or enter the military.	766	2.00	.81	538	2.06	.87	576	2.10	.90	472	2.16	0.93	527	2.05	.85
b. will be eligible to apply to a postsecondary institution.***	772	2.55	.81	548	2.67	.83	587	2.70	.83	478	2.63	0.82	531	2.82	.79
c. can make an educational plan that will prepare them for college.*	769	2.49	.82	540	2.50	.82	583	2.58	.83	474	2.53	0.82	531	2.64	.79
d. can get good grades in their high school science classes.**	779	2.51	.76	547	2.48	.75	586	2.55	.82	478	2.46	0.81	529	2.59	.76
e. can get good grades in their high school math classes.**	781	2.43	.79	545	2.33	.79	587	2.45	.85 4	479	2.35	0.83	528	2.48	.78
f. can choose the high school classes needed to get into college.***	781	2.64	.83	544	2.66	.84	586	2.69	.89	479	2.61	0.86	530	2.80	.84
g. know enough about computers/technology to get into college.*	783	2.88	.84	546	2.86	.86	587	2.82	.85	478	2.80	0.85	528	2.92	.85
h. can go to college after high school.***	784	2.58	.84	548	2.65	.84	587	2.67	.86	477	2.54	0.84	528	2.77	.82
i. could get A's and B's in college.	780	2.29	.82	542	2.29	.81	586	2.31	.87	477	2.21	0.89	528	2.32	.82
j. could finish college and receive a college degree.*	774	2.43	.82	540	2.46	.83	587	2.48	.87	468	2.41	0.87	524	2.53	.83

Source: WV GEAR UP Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 School Personnel Surveys.

***Statistically significant by position (administrator, counselor, or teacher) ($p \leq .001$).

**Statistically significant by position (administrator, counselor, or teacher) ($p \leq .01$).

*Statistically significant by position (administrator, counselor, or teacher) ($\leq .05$). p

3.3.6 Most Significant Factor that Prevents Students from Setting Postsecondary Goals

Personnel were asked to report specifically on the most significant factor that prevents students from setting postsecondary goals. In Year 6, 58% (327 of 562) respondents provided open-ended comments. The most commonly reported themes included (1) finances, (2) lack of family support and home culture and (3) feelings of confidence. Each of these themes, as well as some other themes are described in greater detail in this section.

Finances. Given that the project serves a largely economically disparate area, it is not surprising most personnel believed many students come from “economically disadvantaged” backgrounds and that finances and a “culture and belief that college is too expensive” can act as barriers to setting future college and career goals ($n=69$). One respondent agreed with this barrier and noted, “Cyclical poverty and geographic isolation. They don't believe they can do more than what their parents did.” In a similar sentiment, respondents reported the concern of financial resources was “students have difficulty believing they can afford college.” Another respondent shared how parents’ understanding of affordability heavily influences students’ perceptions: “Financial difficulty sometimes causes parents to discourage college and completing FAFSA and scholarship opportunities.”

Lack of family support and home culture. Concerning home culture, a vast majority of responses ($n=110$) were about the lack of “family or parental support” that prevents students from preparing for postsecondary education and training goals. One respondent commented that even though some students who are first-generation students receive GEAR UP services, “lack of family involvement to encourage students to go to college, join the military, or learn a trade” limits students’ postsecondary interest and goal-setting. Another respondent recognized that “many don't have parental or home support. Many students go into the workforce while in school and would rather make that paycheck than attend a post-secondary program.” Other staff commented about the role of parental education and community influence: “Parents and the overall attitude of the rural community setting we live in. Most of these students' parents did not attend college. They are blue collar workers in the coal mines. They refuse to see that there is no future in coal.” Other similar comments around family education and experience were also shared.

A large majority of our students don't have college-educated parents or family members, so they don't see the merit or have the push to be better.

Students in my area are often first-time college goers, and some of them have been told their entire lives that they cannot go to college, or that they do not need to go to college.

Feelings of confidence. Several respondents ($n=66$) reported how students’ lack of “confidence” and “self-esteem” is a major obstacle to their success and setting postsecondary goals. One respondent shared, “students compare themselves to the “smart kids” and do not feel good enough. Students are coming from homes where they are the first one to graduate high school, much less go to college. In a similar sentiment when talking about student fears, another respondent said, “students are intimidated by college.”

Other remaining responses around students setting post-secondary goals could be organized into two themes: (1) future planning and (2) knowledge. Goal-setting, ability to organize, and thinking beyond right now were some topics that were used to describe future planning. One respondent shared, “Goal setting is a skill in and of itself, which requires teaching the process. I’m not sure how much academic time we spend teaching students how to set realistic goals and the steps needed to fulfill those goals.” Another respondent said, “They have a hard time seeing beyond the ‘right now.’ Goal setting (Begin with an End in Mind).” When talking about knowledge, several respondents discussed how students are “unsure” or “don’t know” about potential career choices, financial options, and how to pursue them. One respondent said, “Students don’t know what kind of jobs are available. A lot of students are also only concerned with the present moment.”

3.3.7 Most Significant Factor that Prevents Students from Achieving Postsecondary Goals

Personnel were next asked to talk specifically about the most significant factor that prevents students from achieving postsecondary goals. More respondents ($n=339$) commented to this question but similarly, of these, the majority of responses ($n=7$) were about the “lack of family support” and “limited finances” ($n=61$) to support postsecondary goals. These themes and other common themes are discussed briefly in this section.

Family Influence. Respondents agreed that “support from home” and “lack of guidance” make the biggest difference in students achieving their future goals ($n=74$). Other comments around family were about “not wanting to leave home.” Nearly one-fourth of respondents talked about how family values do not reflect postsecondary goals, either because parents had no experience with college, making it unlikely they could provide information or encouragement, or because family lacked an overall understanding of the benefits, sometimes due to limited employment opportunities in the area. Examples of these comments which reflect this sentiment:

In this area, the climate needs to change. Education does not seem to be extremely valued to many families in this area.

The general opinion from parents in our area is that they didn’t go to college and they did okay. So, why should my kid go?

In sum, it appears that staff recognize the role of family to “positively or negatively influence” students’ overall success. But in these cases, comments reflected their role as a barrier in the process. One respondent shared, “Too many kids are raised by grandparents; there isn’t information available because the parent won’t cooperate...” And in other cases, respondents also noted negative influences of “drugs” and “poverty.”

Limited finances. Many respondents also mentioned “financial difficulties” and “economic hardships of the area” as the biggest obstacles to students achieving their goals ($n=61$). One respondent reported, “For some it’s a lack of self-confidence; for others it’s the overwhelming finances.” In this respect, respondents discussed that for students “cost is a huge factor in non-completion of post-secondary schooling.” Specifically, this respondent shared the challenge to explain affordability when “students know someone who is struggling with paying their student loans after not completing their education. Many who have completed their education are underemployed and really struggling to repay loans.” This is explained by several respondents

that “the financial part of school could be a hinderance. Not necessarily the tuition part but living expenses while in school can be difficult.” Overall, staff members commented on the struggles of not just enrolling but persistence in college; for example, according to one respondent, “students see the dollar signs associated with higher education and immediately decide they can’t pursue it. Even if they receive financial aid and scholarships for their freshman year at a university, without the support and resources from the school, they won’t receive it for the remainder of the years and won’t complete their degree.”

Low self-esteem and motivation. When analyzing responses about barriers to achievement, respondents mentioned “confidence” or “self-esteem” ($n=31$) as key characteristics. One member shared students’ environment as a major influencer on their confidence levels. She stated, “students lack confidence in what they can achieve. Usually because they come from a rural upbringing and then are thrust into an urban environment of which they are not used to or understand.” A few staff members comments also included students’ “personal motivation” as the most significant factor that prevent postsecondary success. One respondent described how “they do not believe in themselves.” This notion of confidence and insecurity was mentioned several times. One staff described, “Insecurity. Students often do not have the self-esteem or courage to break out of their cycle of poverty.”

Preparation. Additionally, several respondents talked about students lack of study skills, work-ethic, and time-management skills ($n=29$). One individual reported that “a lack of planning and lack of dedication once they start” were the most prominent barriers to achieving goals. A few respondents described the “work-ethic” of students as just inadequate. One individual explained, “It’s all about their own work ethic and dedication.” Members also shared several examples that pointed to students’ need for college preparation ($n=12$). One respondent commented on students “lack of knowledge and not being encouraged to do so from 9th grade until their Senior year. I believe it has to be talked about, encouraged, and knowledge must be provided, both to the student and the parents, in order for the topic to be fresh on their minds and something they place in importance.”

Overall, personnel had varying views about whether students were equipped with the proper knowledge and skills needed to persist in college. Some staff believe students lack the knowledge. For example, one respondent stated, “I believe they sometimes don’t know the steps to achieving their goal and can get overwhelmed.” Other staff disagree and believe “they have been given the tools to succeed” but lack the personal drive. Another respondent discussed how these skills must be fostered and some students are not ready to develop them. The respondent states, “Learning to work hard and to persevere in difficult situations are skills that are needed for most achievements. I think that some students have not matured enough to use those skills to finish their training.”

3.3.8 Sustainability of GEAR UP Activities

In Year 2 to Year 6, the evaluation team asked all school personnel to indicate the extent to which they believed their schools were likely to continue promoting 10 specific activities after the GEAR UP grant ends. Respondents used a four-point Likert-type scale (i.e., 1 = *Not at all*, 2 = *Slightly*, 3 = *Moderately*, 4 = *Extremely*). A fifth option, *not applicable*, was also offered, but not included in calculating mean ratings.

Table 18 below shows the average ratings for all four years. Respondents in Year 6 reported their schools were more likely to sustain five activities, when compared to Year 5: (1) Family involvement (3.08 in Year 5 and 3.19 in Year 6), (2) Academic support (3.29 in Year 5 and 3.41 in Year 6), (3) Financial aid literacy (3.18 in Year 5 and 3.28 in Year 6), (4) Access to college professionals (2.64 in Year 5 and 3.00 in Year 6), and (5) College Application and Exploration Week (3.12 in Year 5 and 3.26 in Year 6).⁴⁷ While sustainability ratings from Year 5 to Year 6 are higher overall, we found one difference in the negative direction with respect to the extent to which respondents thought *college visits* would be sustained. However, there was no significant difference found.

⁴⁷ Family involvement: $t(1005)=2.05$, $p\leq.01$, $d=.14$, Academic support: $t(1003)=2.69$, $p\leq.01$, $d=.16$, Financial Aid Literacy: $t(1005)=2.08$, $p\leq.01$, $d=.13$, Access to professionals: $t(1001)=7.63$, $p\leq.001$, $d=.49$, College Application Week: $t(994)=2.59$, $p\leq.01$, $d=.17$.

Table 18. Average Sustainability Ratings Reported by School Personnel by Year

Resource	Year 3			Year 4			Year 5			Year 6		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
a. Family involvement*	543	3.14	.76	575	3.09	.78	472	3.08	.80	534	3.19	.75
b. Mentoring	544	3.13	.81	576	3.09	.80	472	3.05	.80	534	3.09	.78
c. Academic support**	543	3.36	.73	575	3.29	.73	469	3.29	.77	535	3.41	.72
d. Financial aid literacy*	544	3.26	.75	571	3.22	.79	472	3.18	.80	534	3.28	.76
e. Partnership with institutions of higher education	542	3.19	.78	571	3.17	.79	469	3.15	.79	535	3.21	.76
f. Community support	543	3.04	.82	568	3.06	.82	468	3.01	.85	533	3.03	.85
g. College visits	545	3.11	.91	574	2.98	.94	472	2.94	.93	531	2.92	.92
h. Access to college professionals***	544	3.02	.88	575	2.97	.87	468	2.64	.60	534	3.00	.84
i. Life Skills Development	543	3.11	.80	572	3.10	.80	469	3.04	.84	530	3.14	.76
j. College Application and Exploration Week**	534	3.22	.82	569	3.20	.79	466	3.12	.85	529	3.26	.78
k. College Decision Day and/ or other college acceptance ceremonies/programming	Not Applicable									531	3.26	.79

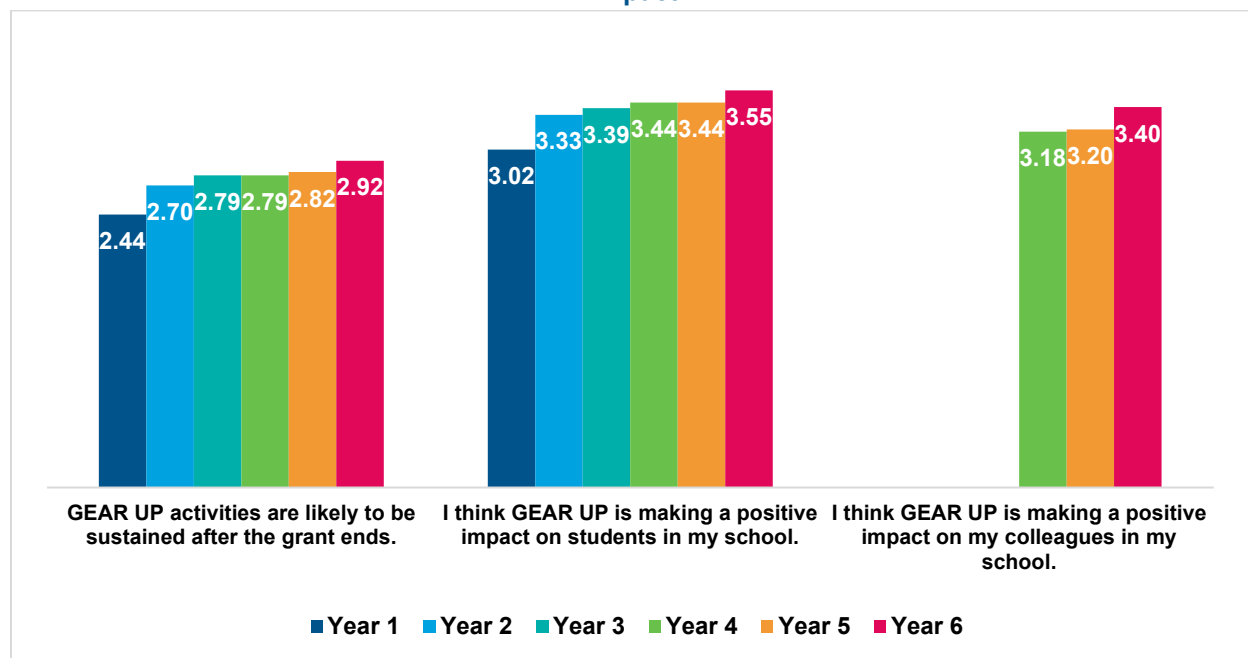
Source: Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 WV GEAR UP School Personnel Surveys.

*Statistically significant ($p \leq .05$); **Statistically significant ($p \leq .01$); ***Statistically significant ($p \leq .001$).

We next asked 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 (i.e., 0 = *Not Applicable*, 1 = *Strongly Disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Agree*, 4 = *Strongly Agree*).

We found that respondents from Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, and Year 6 were positive about GEAR UP services (a score of 3.00 represents agreement). Figure 28 below shows that on average, respondents were significantly more likely to agree that GEAR UP was making a positive impact on colleagues in Year 6 compared to Year 5 (3.40 vs. 3.20)⁴⁸ and even more reported GEAR UP was making a positive impact on students in Year 6 compared to Year 5 (3.55 vs. 3.44). Finally, the overall agreement about the sustainability of activities has increased from Year 5 (2.82) to Year 6 (2.92).

Figure 28. School Personnel Respondents’ Mean Agreement Scores: Sustainability and Impact



In terms of leadership, administrators reported their frequency of actions to continue promoting a college-going culture at their school. This question included a scale of 1 (Not at All) to 4 (Extremely) for respondents to rate seven items; an additional option to indicate “does not apply” was excluded from the mean score. Table 19 presents the response rate frequencies and descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) for all seven items, arranged by mean score (highest to lowest). The highest mean rating was 3.49, that administrators collaborate with other personnel in their school. The lowest mean rating was 2.97, that administrators collaborate with HEPC and other agencies.

⁴⁸ I think GEAR UP is making a positive impact on colleagues: $t(1035)=2.36$, $p\leq.05$, $d=.17$

Table 19. Percent Frequency Reported of College-Going Culture Actions by Administrators

Administrator Actions	Response Frequency Percentages					Descriptive Statistics		
	(1) Not at all	(2) Slightly	(3) Moderately	(4) Extremely	Does not apply	N	M	SD
Collaboration with other personnel in your school	0%	5%	41%	54%	0%	37	3.49	.61
Collaboration with postsecondary partners	0%	3%	47%	50%	0%	34	3.47	.56
Use of high-quality college preparation/readiness curricula	0%	9%	41%	50%	0%	34	3.41	.66
Targeted engagement of parents	0%	11%	41%	49%	0%	37	3.38	.68
Targeted community engagement	0%	14%	40%	46%	0%	35	3.31	.72
Collaboration with personnel in other schools	0%	14%	47%	39%	0%	36	3.25	.69
Collaboration with HEPC and/or other agencies	6%	18%	50%	27%	1%	34	2.97	.83
Other	0%	5%	30%	25%	40%	12	3.33	.65

Note: Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

The question also included an open-ended prompt for gathering other comments from administrators. Twelve respondents provided comments and while many reported a desire to try, most were concerned the limited financial resources would inhibit their ability to continue services after GEAR UP. A few sample comments are provided below.

We have amazing counselors, so I have no doubt we will continue to do all of these things. Money will be the only reason we might have to scale back on some of the activities.

Without the funding, a lot of our college exploration activities will be hard to continue.

Sustainability comments. As a follow-up question to the administrators, we asked two questions: (1) After the GEAR UP grant leaves your school, what college-readiness activities will be the easiest to sustain? And (2) After the GEAR UP grant leaves your school, what college-readiness activities will be the most challenging to sustain?

Approximately 46% of the 41 total administrator respondents added a useable comment regarding their opinions about what is easiest ($n=18$) and most challenging activities for their school to sustain ($n=19$). In general, while administrators recognized financial challenges associated with maintaining some GEAR UP activities, a majority reported they would still try to do so. Regarding those activities that would be easiest to sustain, respondents suggested activities that “we can control at the school,” were more likely. The most notable activities respondents mentioned include “FAFSA and Financial Aid Workshops,” “College Exploration and Application Week” and “College and Career Decision Day.” However, one respondent was just unsure, saying “Get A Life will continue, and I am not sure about College and Career Decision Day. MUCH work goes into that. If volunteering is involved, just not sure.” Another respondent noted, “We hope we can do at least one college trip a year if it has to be funded by the county.” As in the previous year, comments indicated a limited ability to raise and/or support activities “that cost money because either the school, community, or both were just under resourced.” One respondent explained how “the trips to colleges more than fifty miles away are expensive and will be difficult to continue as large group activities.” Other activities that were mentioned as challenges for a similar reason of cost included “tutoring” and “after- school activities.”

4. Site and County Coordinator Focus Group Findings

ICF conducted two focus groups with 24 WV GEAR UP site coordinators and one focus group with five county coordinators in April 2020 to gain their perceptions of the program and its operation during the 2019–20 school year. This section provides a high-level overview of findings with a focus on implementation/buy-in, communication, parent involvement, college-related activities, college-going culture, success in the coordinator role, transition services, and impact and sustainability. It also provides early input from coordinators on the operation of GEAR UP during the COVID-19 school closures in spring 2020.

Overall, site and county coordinators expressed largely similar views about the operation of the program; as a result, ICF uses the term “coordinators” to encompass the views of both groups.

In cases where there may be different opinions between the two groups, the report specifically identifies whether the views are held by a site coordinator or county coordinator.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Implementation/Buy-In

Most said they saw stronger buy-in among students, parents, and teachers during the 2019–20 school year prior to the COVID-19 closings. Most schools continued to offer the Higher Education Readiness Officers (HEROs) program, college visits, guest speakers, and the Student Success Societies (SSS) mentoring initiative. Some coordinators cited up to three SSS groups active at individual schools. At one high school, SSS seniors created a tutoring program to help 6th and 7th graders in math. GEAR UP also added a range of senior-focused activities including financial aid/FAFSA workshops, career days, and College Application Week. Reflecting on these activities, many coordinators said students seemed more interested this year, as indicated by these comments:

Buy-in was better this year because students knew everything we focused on was relevant to them this year. I had more participation from students and parents overall.

Our students have been great about participating and they seemed even more invested this year as seniors.

Some coordinators said more teachers in the building also participated in GEAR UP. One coordinator noted that College Application Week at the school included bingo games about college topics and events where students asked teachers about career and college. Said one:

I have been able to strengthen my staff participation, especially in regards to College Application Week and FAFSA completion. My staff has stepped up and assisted me in these events.

Another activity considered effective, even with just a small number of students, was SAT and ACT prep. One coordinator had several students who newly qualified for the PROMISE Scholarship after participating in after-school tutoring for the SAT.

A minority of site coordinators thought student interest had declined compared to past years, perhaps due to “senioritis,” jobs, and too many other competing activities. Given these challenges, one noted that GEAR UP has “had to get much more creative in getting students to participate.” Two noted that they had one group of interested students and another with little or no interest. “It continues to go well with those who choose to be engaged,” this site coordinator said.

4.2.2 Communication with Site and County Staff

Like past findings, site and county coordinators expressed high levels of satisfaction with WV HEPC. Site coordinators noted that they receive at least weekly emails from WV HEPC and that staff are quick to respond to questions.

Site coordinators had mixed views of their GEAR UP county coordinators but were generally more positive about this relationship than in past years. Most seemed to communicate with the

county coordinator about once a month, often by phone or email. One noted that she contacts the county coordinator “only when I need to,” while another said her coordinator “is always available to answer my questions by email and phone.” At least one county coordinator led the district’s secondary schools and so “had a strong interest in our program,” a site coordinator said. For their part, county coordinators had generally high praise for the work of site coordinators, who they believed were the critical linchpin of the program.

Both site and county coordinators had strong praise for many of their postsecondary partners, some of whom attended school events such as FAFSA nights, College Decision Days, dual credit programs, and college fairs. They cited participants such as Concord University, Bluefield State College, Marshall University, and Southern West Virginia CTC. Glenville State College provided a member of their financial aid department to help students and their families complete the FAFSA. Said one coordinator of college partners:

Many of them make specialized visits to my school and speak with the students, answer questions and offer free applications to complete.

4.2.3 Parent Involvement

Several coordinators believed that parent involvement increased as students neared high school graduation. They said this may be due to questions about college and financial aid and events such as College Application Week. One school offered a Life of a Senior event in fall 2019 that drew many parents. Said one: “Parents are more engaged this year than they have been in the past.”

Most schools cited an active group of parents who attend financial aid workshops and college events although it may be only a small group. Such views were reflected in these comments:

We have a core group of about 20 GEAR UP parents who have supported us and attended events.

We have 50% full support and participation. The other 50% are simply not able to be present or engaged due to other commitments.

Hard-to-reach parents often engage only at mandatory events they must attend, such as a required meeting about a summer camp. As one noted:

Some parents are very involved where others don't seem to care and let the students figure stuff out on their own.

It is always a challenge to get parent participation, especially when students reach the high school level.

One of the greatest concerns among coordinators is that families have little interest in their child attending college. Even if they have an interest, parents lack understanding of the process, making it more challenging in planning for college.

4.2.4 College-Related Activities

Coordinators cited a variety of strategies to help students learn about colleges. Coordinators described HEROs and SSS as important ways to bring together students to talk about these issues. One-to-one counseling also has grown as important for seniors. College visits also are important; at one school, seniors had the opportunity to visit 10 different colleges.

The college visits are amazing opportunities for students that many would not get a chance to do otherwise.

One coordinator also said that, over time, the GEAR UP parent and student surveys have helped increase awareness about college entrance requirements and costs. Several identified the CFVW website as an important tool.

Many also cited College Decision Day as a popular and essential GEAR UP activity where schools honor students for their college and/or career choices, often with family members in attendance. This in-person activity was one of the major casualties of the COVID-19 situation. However, many schools organized virtual decision days via Facebook or other platforms or by uploading videos to a school district website where students talk about their decisions.

At one school, GEAR UP sponsored yard signs for students showing the college they plan to attend. The site coordinator and teachers are going to each student's house to take a picture and post it on social media. A few schools have created an Adopt a Senior event, where faculty at every school in the county—plus some community members—are assigned one senior to remain in contact with as they make their post-high school decisions. A county coordinator called it “a tremendous success.”

Some site coordinators also have made home visits to drop off material such as a transcript or a scholarship application. They also email and call students. However, site coordinators have found that some students do not have current phone numbers. As a result, it is clear that some postsecondary momentum has ground to a halt, although outreach continues. As two noted:

The best way I have found to get seniors and parents' attention is to post stuff on their senior class page. It gets the students' and the parents' attention.

We send cards, encouragement, gifts, so that they know we are still behind them as they move forward even though we aren't seeing them face to face.

4.2.5 College-Going Culture

Most coordinators believed that GEAR UP had improved the college-going climate of their schools over the life of the grant. One noted how the college-going rate has increased since the school joined GEAR UP. Another cited the value of college visits as well as simple activities such as GEAR UP and college posters displayed prominently throughout the building. Activities such as “Why I Chose” a specific college also have proved effective to build a school climate conducive to future postsecondary study. These comments were indicative of the view of coordinators:

There is a college-going culture in both of our high schools. Students know that post-secondary education is a must whether they are going to a four-year, two-year, or certificate program.

The culture definitely has improved with GEAR UP, but we still have room to grow. I think many students who wouldn't have even considered it as an option now see it as possible.

A few mentioned that they worry what will happen after GEAR UP ends. Prior to GEAR UP, only students with clear interest in postsecondary study received assistance, one site coordinator

noted. Yet a county coordinator believed that teacher support has continued to increase every year, a trend that bodes well for the future.

4.2.6 Success in the Site Coordinator Role

Site coordinators described success in two major ways, a combination of meeting tangible goals and the ability to achieve specific, individual success stories. Such progress can be reflected in a stronger college-going culture at a school and in the enthusiasm of teachers, GEAR UP students, and younger students who are not in the GEAR UP cohort. As one noted:

I see students going to college who would not have gone before. We have 11th graders wanting to visit colleges and complete the FAFSA. To me this defines success.

County coordinators said success largely depends on the hard work of site coordinators. For their part, site coordinators said they have learned over time how best to design GEAR UP activities. One site coordinator explained her process to build more effective programs over time:

I feel like I've made improvements each year that I have been involved with this group of seniors since 7th grade. I've learned what events work best and what times to do those events. I have learned how to better reach out and talk with the students and make an impact on their decisions to continue their education after high school.

4.2.7 Transition Services

Prior to the COVID-19 closings, some site coordinators had established contact with GEAR UP transition staff working at six of the state's public colleges and universities. One noted that the transition staff member from Concord University visited a high school in spring 2020 and others have connected via email. Looking ahead to students' needs in fall 2020, site coordinators agreed that GEAR UP cohort students could benefit the most from these activities during their first year of college:

- Tutoring
- Time-management workshops
- Financial literacy
- Activities to promote wellness and mental health
- A calendar with key due dates, including for renewing financial aid and scholarships
- One-to-one check-ins with GEAR UP

One coordinator said students need "someone they know by name who they can talk to" about the adjustment to college. Another site coordinator plans a more pro-active approach, visiting recent high school graduates at their college or university.

I plan on going to visit college campuses in September to see how students are doing and make sure they know who their GEAR UP transition coordinator is.

4.2.8 Impact and Sustainability

Coordinators generally agreed that GEAR UP will have a great impact on cohort students with some residual benefits for schools going forward. Most believed one impact of GEAR UP is an

improvement in the school's college-going culture, something that may carry forward into the future. This improvement is evident, they said, through more college conversations in the halls, posters around the school, and the more frequent announcements and events about college activities. Said one county coordinator:

I think GEAR UP has been fabulous. They always seem to be looking at new and creative ways to support us.

Most believed they can sustain some activities, particularly low-cost events such as College Decision Day, financial aid/FAFSA workshops, and College Application Week. Teachers and counselors now have training to conduct most of these activities, they said. Most did not believe or were unsure whether they could continue tutoring or mentoring initiatives while some thought college visits, despite their value, may be too costly to afford:

Our biggest challenge would be the college visits and securing funds to make that possible.

We can sustain almost everything except actual college visits. We will not have money to continue those and with the shortage of bus drivers were limited anyway.

However, at least two site coordinators thought they would pursue outside funding sources to continue college field trips. One planned to approach community agencies while another wants to pursue grant funding.

While site coordinators were cautiously optimistic about the sustainability of some GEAR UP activities, county coordinators generally expressed more certainty that activities would continue. Since county coordinators are typically central office administrators, their optimism may bode well for continuation after the current grant ends although it also may reflect their distance from actual implementation of the program. Typical were these comments from county coordinators:

Without funding through the grant, there will be some changes. However, some activities will be sustained either because of the tradition of it or because of its direct value.

We will continue college visits, financial aid workshops, college signing day, etc. We are committed to sustaining the activities.

V. Discussion

The Year 6 report highlighted many significant and positive findings for WV GEAR UP consistent with a mature, effective program. Based on student surveys and focus groups, many GEAR UP practices appeared to benefit students and their families. For example, the percentage of students who reported that they spoke with someone at their school about college entrance requirements increased significantly from 79% in Year 5 to 86% in Year 6. The upward trend also was evident among parents/guardians, as 74% in Year 6 reported that they had spoken with someone at their child's school about college entrance requirements—up from the 55% who reported this activity in Year 5. In addition, most students in Year 6 (85%) said they

were knowledgeable about college topics, an increase from 74% in the previous year. Overall, data indicate that WV GEAR UP is effectively conveying its information to all students.

Similarly, survey data showed increases in college-going culture. Students in Year 6 cited increased awareness of all higher education topics, leading to a statistically significant gain in the all-important mean awareness score. Parents exhibited similar gains for Year 6, as both groups showed increased awareness of important resources such as college fairs, websites, email, texting, and GEAR UP staff members. In focus groups, many GEAR UP coordinators and county coordinators cited increases that suggest college-going behaviors have become embedded in WV GEAR UP schools.

School personnel reported higher expectations and rigor, as more indicated that students can succeed academically and that teachers talk to students regularly about the importance of college. Personnel in Year 6 also were more likely to say that parents are included in the college preparation process and that students have access to information and resources they need to support their college-attendance decisions. In addition, school personnel in Year 6 were more likely than in past years to believe that their school could sustain GEAR UP activities after the end of the grant. Academic support, access to professionals, and College Application and Exploration Week are among those services most likely to be sustained. All these increases suggest the possibility of long-term positive trends as non-GEAR UP students may benefit from the higher knowledge base and engagement within schools.

While these improvements are noteworthy, they also came just as GEAR UP schools halted in-person instruction due to COVID-19. While the COVID-19 closings interrupted this work, the findings suggest that schools may be able to recover quickly from these closings and continue to emphasize college-going culture for future cohorts of students. Similarly, the gains evident among parents may improve family knowledge for the long term as these adults are better positioned to help their younger children when they reach high school.

Elsewhere, the percentage of parents/guardians who correctly estimated the amount of the WV PROMISE Scholarship increased significantly from Year 5 to Year 6. This increase may be due to students obtaining their SAT results and parents recognizing that their children may qualify for a scholarship.

This year focus group participants continued to praise efforts such as College Decision Days, HEROs, and SSS at several schools. As schools closed due to COVID-19, some of these activities—particularly College Decision Days—continued virtually. While it is not possible to link these activities directly to student outcomes, it is noteworthy that surveys show increased student awareness of postsecondary options as these GEAR UP activities have thrived at many sites.

Some challenges remain, however. For example, the percentage of parents/guardians who aspired for their student to attain postsecondary education decreased significantly from 98% in Year 5 to 95% in Year 6. This finding may suggest that, as students approach high school graduation, parents/guardians grow more pessimistic about the ability of their children to afford college. Survey data in Year 6 also show that certain subgroups of students—students who experienced food insecurity, students who reported their family income as \$30,000 or less, and students whose parents did not receive postsecondary education—have lower aspirations. This

information may suggest the need for enhanced one-on-one advising to provide customized support to students with varied background experiences.

In addition, while more students and parents correctly estimated the cost of community/technical colleges, both groups have realized only minor improvement in the number who believed a community or technical college education was affordable. This could be an area for greater focus in the future, as the new WV Invests initiative makes community college an attractive alternative for GEAR UP and other low-income students.

VI. Recommendations

In response to these trends, the evaluation team offers the following recommendations to the Commission as it approaches the start of Year 7 of the program:

Redouble efforts to educate students, parents, and personnel about the value of Pell Grants.

While students and parents/guardians have cited increased knowledge of Federal Pell grants over time, they still lacked some important details about the value of this aid program. For example, 91% of students and 93% of parents/guardians in Year 6 underestimated the amount available through a Pell grant. Further, personnel also lacked information about the value of the Pell. While more counselors provided the correct estimate of the Pell compared to other personnel, still just approximately half of the counselors (54%) provided the correct estimate. WV GEAR UP may consider more programming targeted toward Pell knowledge to help students better grasp this important postsecondary financing option.

Provide students and parents/guardians with more information on the new WV Invests program that offers free tuition for students pursuing in-demand careers.

Year 6 surveys for both students and parents/guardians showed only small increases in the number who believed that they could afford to attend a West Virginia community or technical college. This could be an area for additional attention going forward, as the new WV Invests initiative may make community college an attractive alternative for GEAR UP and other low-income students.

Consider new or enhanced advising models to serve students.

Given uncertainties due to COVID-19 as well as education on new initiatives such as WV Invests, WV GEAR UP may consider enhanced advising models that provide students with more customized attention. While it is important for WV GEAR UP to continue to disseminate the same information to all students, new advising approaches could help show students how to link their future goals with available aid—and their own circumstances. More customized advising also would allow WV GEAR UP to better use information gathered in recent years about issues facing subgroups, such as students who face food insecurity.

Promote communication between school site coordinators and GEAR UP transition staff to offer multiple supports to students.

In focus groups, some site coordinators expressed a willingness to stay in contact with their GEAR UP cohort students during the first year of college. This may provide an opportunity for

cooperation between high school site coordinators and GEAR UP college transition staff who are formally assigned to work with these students in 2020–21. Given the many challenges facing cohort students due to the COVID-19 pandemic, more support likely would be welcome to help students deal with issues that may range from online courses to poverty/unemployment and family concerns. By encouraging and supporting this cooperation, WV GEAR UP also could assess its value for possible inclusion in its next GEAR UP grant application.

Consider peer-to-peer communication and between WV GEAR UP cohort students and future GEAR UP participants.

As illustrated by the survey results, many GEAR UP students have attained high levels of awareness about postsecondary options and requirements. WV GEAR UP could tap into this high knowledge base in the future by recruiting 2020 cohort students to serve as peer mentors for future cohorts of students from their high schools.

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Appendix A: Year 6 Grade 12 Student Survey

West Virginia GEAR UP Student Survey – 2019–20 School Year Grade 12

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

Like this: ● Not like this: ✓ ✗ /

Section I: About You

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.

Your lunch/WVEIS number: _____

This is an Example: lunch/WVEIS number: 09132567

0	0	9	1	3	2	5	6	7
●	●	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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

Are you a Grade 12 student?

☐ Y ☐ N

What is your gender?

☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

What is your race?

☐ White ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Black or African American ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ Asian ☐ Two or more races
☐ Other

What is your ethnicity?

☐ Hispanic or Latino ☐ Not Hispanic or Latino ☐ Other

What is the main language you speak at home?

☐ English ☐ Spanish ☐ Other

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.

I. \$30,000 or Less ☐ II. \$30,001-\$60,000 ☐ III. \$60,001-\$100,000 ☐ IV. \$100,001 or More ☐ V. Don't know or I'd rather not say ☐



Think about the last 30 days and the last 12 months. Is the following statement true for you?

"I didn't eat enough food because my family couldn't afford it."

Was that often, sometimes, or never true **in the last 12 months?**

Often
true
☐

Sometimes
true
☐

Never
True
☐

Was that often, sometimes, or never true **in the last 30 days**

Often
true
☐

Sometimes
true
☐

Never
True
☐

During the past 12 months, how often have you had a hard time staying focused on your homework or other things you had to do?

☐ VI. Never ☐ VII. Rarely ☐ VIII. Sometimes ☐ IX. Most of the Time ☐ X. Always

During the past 12 months, how often have you been so worried about something that you could not sleep at night?

☐ XI. Never ☐ XII. Rarely ☐ XIII. Sometimes ☐ XIV. Most of the Time ☐ XV. Always

What is the **highest** level of education achieved by your parent(s)/guardian(s)? (*Please answer this question for the parent/guardian who achieved the highest level of education. For example, if your mother has a 4-year college degree and your father has a high school diploma, select 4-year college degree.*)

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

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

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Section II: Your Educational Goals

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
English/Language Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to do well in college level courses in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ability to do well on college entrance exams (e.g., SAT, ACT)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you plan to continue your education after high school?

☐ Y ☐ N

What, if anything, may prevent you from continuing your education after high school (**bubble all that apply**)?



- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>My grades aren't good enough</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Family issues</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>It costs too much/I can't afford it</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I plan to enlist in the military</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I <u>need</u> to work</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I won't receive/be eligible for enough financial aid</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>I <u>want</u> to work</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Other (please write in reason):</i> |

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

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

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

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

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>I can find a way to pay for college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can get accepted to a college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can have family support for going to college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can choose a good college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can get a scholarship or grant for college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can make an educational plan that will prepare me for college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can make my family proud with my choices after high school.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can choose college courses that best fit my interests.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can pay for college even if my family cannot help me.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can get good grades in my high school math classes.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can get good grades in my high school science classes.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can choose the high school classes needed to get into a good college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I know enough about computers/technology to get into college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I can go to college after high school.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you do go to college after high school, 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>I could pay for each year of college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I could get A's and B's in college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>I could get my family to support my wish of finishing college.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I could take care of myself in college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could fit in at college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could get good enough grades to get or keep a scholarship.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could finish college and receive a college degree.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could care for my family responsibilities while in college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could set my own schedule while in college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could make friends at college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could get the education I need for my choice of career.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could get a job after I graduate from college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like being in college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could be smart enough to finish college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could pick the right things to study at college.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I could do the classwork and homework assignments in college classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

College Entrance Requirements, Cost, and Financial Aid

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

College entrance requirements? ☐ ☐

The availability of financial aid to help you pay for college? ☐ ☐

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

☐ Y ☐ N

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?

	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
A public 4-year college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A public 2-year community/technical college	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A public career/technical center	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 \$3,000	\$3,001-\$6,000	\$6,001-\$10,000	\$10,001-\$15,000	\$15,001-\$20,000	\$20,001-\$25,000	More than \$25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On average, how much do you think it costs for one year of in-state tuition at a **2-year 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 \$3,000	\$3,001-\$6,000	\$6,001-\$10,000	\$10,001-\$15,000	\$15,001-\$20,000	\$20,001-\$25,000	More than \$25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How aware are you about the following topics?

	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
ACT/SAT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<i>WV Higher Education Grant</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>WV Invests Grant</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Federal Pell Grants</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Federal student loans</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Federal work-study</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or Institutional)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Requirements for college acceptance</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>The importance/benefit of a college education</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>High school graduation requirements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What do you think is the maximum amount of money per academic year that is available to help pay for college if a student qualifies for a **Federal Pell Grant** (bubble only one answer)?

<i>Up to \$1,000</i>	<i>\$1,001-\$2,000</i>	<i>\$2,001-\$3,000</i>	<i>\$3,001-\$4,000</i>	<i>\$4,001-\$5,000</i>	<i>\$5,001-\$6,000</i>	<i>\$6,001-\$7,000</i>	<i>More than \$7,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What do you think is the maximum amount of money per academic year that is available to help pay for college if a student qualifies for the **West Virginia Higher Education Grant** (bubble only one answer)?

<i>Up to \$1,000</i>	<i>\$1,001-\$2,000</i>	<i>\$2,001-\$3,000</i>	<i>\$3,001-\$4,000</i>	<i>\$4,001-\$5,000</i>	<i>\$5,001-\$6,000</i>	<i>\$6,001-\$7,000</i>	<i>More than \$7,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What do you think is the maximum amount of money per academic year that is available to help pay for college if a student qualifies for the **West Virginia PROMISE Scholarship** (bubble only one answer)?

<i>Up to \$1,000</i>	<i>\$1,001-\$2,000</i>	<i>\$2,001-\$3,000</i>	<i>\$3,001-\$4,000</i>	<i>\$4,001-\$5,000</i>	<i>\$5,001-\$6,000</i>	<i>\$6,001-\$7,000</i>	<i>More than \$7,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How much would tuition cost at a 2-year public community/technical college in West Virginia if you qualify for a **WV Invests Grant**?

- ☐ \$0
- ☐ \$1 – \$2,000
- ☐ \$2,001 – \$4,000
- ☐ More than \$4,000

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>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other college planning websites</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>College fairs</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Television</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Radio</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Direct mail</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>E-mail</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Brochures and pamphlets</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Magazines/newspapers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Signs, posters, or billboards</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Text messages</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>School counselor</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Family members</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>GEAR UP staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>College admissions representatives</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

College Preparation Activities



The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can be completed as early as October 1, 2019.

Have you completed your FAFSA yet?

- ☐ *No, and I do not plan to complete the FAFSA this academic year.*
☐ *No, but I plan to complete the FAFSA this academic year.*
☐ *Yes*

If you answered "No, and I do not plan to complete the FAFSA this academic year," what are the main reasons you do not plan to do so?. Select all that apply.

- ☐ *I do not plan to continue my education after high school*
☐ *I'm not sure what the FAFSA is*
☐ *I do not believe I will be eligible for financial aid*
☐ *Other*

Have you participated in SAT or ACT test prep this school year (2019–20)?

- ☐ *Yes (answer question 34)*
☐ *No (skip ahead to question 35)*

If you answered yes to question 33, please select any of the following types of test prep that you used and then rate the helpfulness of each type of test prep.

	Did you participate in this type of test prep?	How helpful do you think these test prep resources have been for your SAT or ACT prep?			
		<i>Extremely helpful</i>	<i>Moderately helpful</i>	<i>Slightly helpful</i>	<i>Not at all helpful</i>
<i>Khan Academy</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Testive</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other online resources/websites</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other (please write in type)_____</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How many times have you taken the SAT and ACT tests?

- SAT ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ *More than 2*
 ACT ☐ 0 ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ *More than 2*

Do you plan to take/retake the **SAT** this year (2019–20)?

- ☐ *Yes*
☐ *No*

Do you plan to take/retake the **ACT** this year (2019–20)?

- ☐ *Yes*
☐ *No*

How many college applications have you completed?

- ☐ *0, and I do not plan to complete any this academic year.*
☐ *0, but I plan to complete one or more this academic year.*
☐ *1*
☐ *2 or more*

Thank you for your time!



Appendix B: Year 6 Grade 12 Parent/Guardian Survey

West Virginia GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Survey – 2019–20 School Year

Grade 12

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

Like this: ● Not like this: ✓ ✗ /

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

ICF Use Only

Please write your student'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 student's number, please include them.

This is an Example: lunch/WVEIS number:

09132567

0	0	9	1	3	2	5	6	7
●	●	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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:

Is the student that brought this survey home a Grade 12 student?

☐ Y

☐ N

What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other

What is your relationship to the student who brought this survey home (bubble all that apply)?

☐ Parent

☐ Legal Guardian

☐ Grandparent

☐ Step or foster parent

☐ Other

What is your race?

☐ White

☐ American Indian or Alaska Native

☐ Black or African American

☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

☐ Asian

☐ Two or more races

☐ Other

What is your ethnicity?

☐ Hispanic or

☐ Not Hispanic or Latino

☐ Other



Latino

What is the main language you speak at home?

☐ English

☐ Spanish

☐ Other

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

☐

What is the highest level of education achieved by your student's parent(s)/guardian(s)? (Please answer this question for the parent/guardian who achieved the highest level of education. For example, if your student's mother has a 4-year college degree and your student's father has a high school diploma, select the option for 4-year college degree.) (*Bubble only one answer.*)

☐ Some high school

☐ High school diploma/GED

☐ Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)

☐ 2-year college degree (Associate's)

☐ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)

☐ Master's degree

☐ Ph.D. or higher

☐ Don't know

If you have other students, how many have attended or are currently attending college?

0

☐

1

☐

2

☐

3

☐

4

☐

5 or more

☐

I don't have other students

☐

Have you talked with your student about attending college?

☐ Y

☐ N

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Attending college is important to my student's career goal and future.

Strongly
Disagree

☐

Disagree

☐

Agree

☐

Strongly
Agree

☐

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

☐ High school or less

☐ Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)

☐ 2-year college degree (Associate's)

☐ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)

☐ More than a 4-year college degree

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

☐ High school or less

☐ Some college (less than a 2- or 4-year degree, e.g., certificate or career/tech. cert.)

☐ 2-year college degree (Associate's)

☐ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's)

☐ More than a 4-year college degree

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

College entrance requirements?

☐
☐

The availability of financial aid to help your student pay for college?

☐
☐


Do you think that your student 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>
<i>A public 4-year college</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>A public 2-year community/technical college</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>A public career/technical center</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

On average, how much do you think it costs for one year of in-state tuition to attend the following college options in West Virginia: (*bubble only one answer per row; your estimate should **not** include the cost of food, housing, or books*)?

	<i>Up to \$3,000</i>	<i>\$3,001-\$6,000</i>	<i>\$6,001-\$10,000</i>	<i>\$10,001-\$15,000</i>	<i>\$15,001-\$20,000</i>	<i>\$20,001-\$25,000</i>	<i>More than \$25,000</i>
<i>A 4-year public college in West Virginia</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>A 2-year public community/technical college in West Virginia</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How much would tuition cost at a 2-year public community/technical college in West Virginia if your student qualifies for a **WV Invests Grant**?

- ☐ \$0
- ☐ \$1 – \$2,000
- ☐ \$2,001 – \$4,000
- ☐ More than \$4,000

How aware are you about the following topics?

	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>ACT/SAT</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>WV Higher Education Grant</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>WV Invests Grant</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Federal Pell Grants</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Federal student loans</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Federal work-study</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Scholarships (e.g., PROMISE or institutional)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Requirements for college acceptance</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>The importance/benefit of a college education</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>High school graduation requirements</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What do you think is the maximum amount of money **per academic year** that is available to help pay for college through each of the following programs (*bubble only one answer for each row*)?

	<i>Up to \$1,000</i>	<i>\$1,001-\$2,000</i>	<i>\$2,001-\$3,000</i>	<i>\$3,001-\$4,000</i>	<i>\$4,001-\$5,000</i>	<i>\$5,001-\$6,000</i>	<i>\$6,001-\$7,000</i>	<i>More than \$7,000</i>
<i>Federal Pell Grant</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>West Virginia Higher Education Grant</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>West Virginia PROMISE Scholarship</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

	<i>Not at All</i>	<i>Slightly</i>	<i>Moderately</i>	<i>Extremely</i>
<i>College or university websites</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>College Foundation of WV website (CFWV.com)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other college planning websites</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>College fairs</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Television</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Radio</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Direct mail</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>E-mail</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Brochures and pamphlets</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Magazines/newspapers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Signs, posters, or billboards</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Text messages</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>School counselor</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Family members</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>GEAR UP staff</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>College admissions representatives</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can be completed as early as October 1, 2019.

Have you or your student completed the FAFSA yet?

- ☐ *No, I do not and my student does not plan to complete the FAFSA this academic year.*
- ☐ *No, but I am planning or my student is planning to complete the FAFSA during this academic year.*
- ☐ *I'm not sure.*
- ☐ *Yes, I have or my student has completed the FAFSA this year.*

If you answered "No, I do not plan and my student does not plan to complete the FAFSA this year" what are the main reasons you do not plan to do so?

- ☐ *My student does not plan to continue her/his education after high school*
- ☐ *I'm not sure what the FAFSA is*
- ☐ *I do not believe my student will be eligible for financial aid*
- ☐ *Other*

Thank you for your time!

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

Appendix C: Year 6 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” option and prepares them to make informed decisions about postsecondary educational opportunities—at your school. Postsecondary educational opportunities may include certificate programs, two-year degree programs, four-year degree programs, or military training after high school graduation.

1. What is your current primary position at your school? ☐ Administrator ☐ Counselor ☐ Teacher
2. How many years have you worked in this position or role **in total**?
☐ This is my first year ☐ 1–2 years ☐ 3–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ 11–15 years
☐ More than 15 years
3. How many years have you worked in this position or role **at this school**?
☐ This is my first year ☐ 1–2 years ☐ 3–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ 11–15 years ☐ 16–20 years
☐ More than 20 years
4. What current grade level(s) do you serve (check all that apply)? ☐ 9 ☐ 10 ☐ 11 ☐ 12
5. In which school(s) are you currently working?
6. Are you a GEAR UP site coordinator?
7. 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.

	In My School					In My Classroom			
<i>The following set of items ask about topics related to Rigor and Expectations.</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. Creativity and original thinking are highly valued.	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
b. Teachers expect all students 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	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1

encouraged to set future college and career goals.									
g. Students are learning effective problem-solving skills.	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
h. Teachers are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
i. The curriculum appropriately challenges most students..	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
j. Advanced (i.e., honors, pre-AP, etc.) courses are appropriately rigorous	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
<i>The next set of items ask about topics related to Visual Cues and Material Resources.</i>	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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. Students have access to the information and resources they need to support their college-attendance decisions.	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
n. Teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their own college experience	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
o. Teachers are provided information about the school's college-going rate and FAFSA completion rates.	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
p. College messaging is integrated into events, including sports events or arts performances.	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
q. Faculty and staff engage in professional development about ways to promote college readiness.	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1
r. Teachers are equipped with the knowledge to assist students in the transition from high	4	3	2	1		4	3	2	1

school to college.									
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8. How comfortable do you feel about your level of knowledge *to assist students with the following college financial aid 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/SMART 529	1	2	3	4	99
WV Higher Education Grant	1	2	3	4	99
Federal grants, loans, and work-study	1	2	3	4	99
PROMISE Scholarship	1	2	3	4	99
Scholarships from organizations, institutions, and other entities	1	2	3	4	99
WV Invests Grant	1	2	3	4	99

9. What tools or sources of information have you found most valuable in helping to answer students' questions accurately about financial aid for college?

10. How comfortable do you feel about your level of knowledge to assist students with the following college related topics?

	Not at all Comfortable	Slightly Comfortable	Moderately Comfortable	Extremely Comfortable	Rather not say
College selection (match and fit)	1	2	3	4	99
Requirements for college acceptance	1	2	3	4	99
The importance/benefit of a college education	1	2	3	4	99
High school graduation requirements	1	2	3	4	99
ACT/SAT Prep	1	2	3	4	99

11. 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 \$3,000	\$3,001- \$6,000	\$6,001- \$10,000	\$10,001- \$15,000	\$15,001- \$20,000	\$20,001- \$25,000	More than \$25,000
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

12. 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*)?

<i>Up to</i>	<i>\$3,001-</i>	<i>\$6,001-</i>	<i>\$10,001-</i>	<i>\$15,001-</i>	<i>\$20,001-</i>	<i>More than</i>
<i>\$3,000</i>	<i>\$6,000</i>	<i>\$10,000</i>	<i>\$15,000</i>	<i>\$20,000</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>	<i>\$25,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. What do you think is the maximum amount of money **per academic year** that is available to help pay for college if a student qualifies for a **Federal Pell Grant** (*bubble only one answer*)?

<i>Up to</i>	<i>\$1,001-</i>	<i>\$2,001-</i>	<i>\$3,001-</i>	<i>\$4,001-</i>	<i>\$5,001-</i>	<i>\$6,001-</i>	<i>More than</i>
<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$6,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

14. What do you think is the maximum amount of money **per academic year** that is available to help pay for college if a student qualifies for the **West Virginia Higher Education Grant** (*bubble only one answer*)?

<i>Up to</i>	<i>\$1,001-</i>	<i>\$2,001-</i>	<i>\$3,001-</i>	<i>\$4,001-</i>	<i>\$5,001-</i>	<i>\$6,001-</i>	<i>More than</i>
<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$6,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. What do you think is the maximum amount of money **per academic year** that is available to help pay for college if a student qualifies for the **West Virginia PROMISE Scholarship** (*bubble only one answer*)?

<i>Up to</i>	<i>\$1,001-</i>	<i>\$2,001-</i>	<i>\$3,001-</i>	<i>\$4,001-</i>	<i>\$5,001-</i>	<i>\$6,001-</i>	<i>More than</i>
<i>\$1,000</i>	<i>\$2,000</i>	<i>\$3,000</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>\$6,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>	<i>\$7,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

16. On average, how much do you think it costs for one year of **tuition at a 2-year public community/technical college in West Virginia** if a student qualifies for a **WV Invests Grant** (*bubble only one answer; your estimate should not include the cost of food, housing, or books*)?

<i>\$0</i>	<i>\$1-\$2,000</i>	<i>\$2,001-</i>	<i>More than</i>
		<i>\$4,000</i>	<i>\$4,000</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

	Not Applicable	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
a. I participate in the college preparation activities of my school (e.g., chaperoning college visits).	99	1	2	3	4	5

	Not Applicable	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
b. I have individual discussions with students about what they want to do with their futures.	99	1	2	3	4	5
c. I talk with students about their plans for college or work after high school.	99	1	2	3	4	5
d. I offer students supplemental instructional support to prepare them for postsecondary options.	99	1	2	3	4	5
e. I talk with parents about their ability to help prepare their student(s) for postsecondary education.	99	1	2	3	4	5
f. I offer or incorporate class time to support college preparation efforts at my school.	99	1	2	3	4	5

18. Please rank order the most important aspects (1) to the least important aspects (6) to building a college-going culture at your school?

- a. Encourage and support student overall success
- b. Promote post-secondary interest and options
- c. Application and/or college planning support
- d. Academic support and rigorous curriculum
- e. Talk to students one-on-one
- f. Other _____

19. Please explain why you ranked the items in that particular order.

20. Please explain what you see as your role in building a college-going culture at your school? How has your role changed, if at all, since the presence of GEAR UP at your school?

The next few questions ask specifically about your GEAR UP experiences.

21. 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:

	It was not offered/ does not apply	I did not attend	Not at all effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Extremely effective
a. Tutoring and homework assistance	99	999	1	2	3	4
b. Opportunities to participate in college visits	99	999	1	2	3	4
c. Summer activities	99	999	1	2	3	4
d. College Application and Exploration Week	99	999	1	2	3	4
e. Provide information about college entrance requirements	99	999	1	2	3	4
f. Career exploration activities	99	999	1	2	3	4
g. Test preparation (e.g., Testive ACT/SAT prep)	99	999	1	2	3	4
h. Assistance with the college entrance process	99	999	1	2	3	4
i. Assistance with completing financial aid forms (e.g., FAFSA)	99	999	1	2	3	4
j. Teacher professional development about college awareness and success strategies	99	999	1	2	3	4
k. Student Success Societies/mentoring opportunities	99	999	1	2	3	4
l. Faculty Senate presentations	99	999	1	2	3	4
m. College Decision Day and/or other college acceptance ceremonies/programming	99	999	1	2	3	4

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

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4	5

Please elaborate:

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

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

24. Thinking about the future when GEAR UP services and activities will no longer be at your school, to what extent do you believe your school will promote the following elements related to a college-going culture?

	Does Not Apply	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
Family involvement	99	1	2	3	4
Mentoring	99	1	2	3	4
Academic support	99	1	2	3	4
Financial aid literacy	99	1	2	3	4
Partnership with institutions of higher education	99	1	2	3	4
Community support	99	1	2	3	4
College visits	99	1	2	3	4
Access to college professionals	99	1	2	3	4
Life skills development	99	1	2	3	4
College Application and Exploration Week	99	1	2	3	4
College Decision Day and/or other college acceptance ceremonies/programming	99	1	2	3	4

Please elaborate:

25. FOR ADMINISTRATORS ONLY: Please rate the frequency in which you take the following actions to promote a college-going culture at your school, if at all.

	Does Not Apply	Not at All	Slightly	Moderately	Extremely
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Collaboration with other personnel in your school	99	1	2	3	4
Collaboration with personnel in other schools	99	1	2	3	4
Collaboration with postsecondary partners	99	1	2	3	4
Collaboration with HEPC and/or other agencies	99	1	2	3	4
Use of high-quality college preparation/readiness curricula	99	1	2	3	4
Targeted engagement of parents	99	1	2	3	4
Targeted engagement of community organizations	99	1	2	3	4
Other: _____	99	1	2	3	4

26. FOR ADMINISTRATORS ONLY: After the GEAR UP grant leaves your school, what college readiness activities will be the **easiest** to sustain?

27. FOR ADMINISTRATORS ONLY: After the GEAR UP grant leaves your school, what college readiness activities will be the **most challenging** to sustain?

28. This question asks about your belief in 12th grade students' ability to prepare for and succeed in college. How sure are you that the majority of students...

	Not Applicable	Not at All Sure	Somewhat Sure	Sure	Very Sure
a. will not attend college but will seek a job or enter the military.	99	1	2	3	4
b. will be eligible to apply to a postsecondary institution.	99	1	2	3	4
c. can make an educational plan that will prepare them for college	99	1	2	3	4
d. can get good grades in their high school science classes	99	1	2	3	4
e. can get good grades in their high school math classes	99	1	2	3	4
f. can choose the high school classes needed to get into college	99	1	2	3	4
g. know enough about computers/technology to get into college	99	1	2	3	4
h. can go to college after high school	99	1	2	3	4
i. could get A's and B's in college	99	1	2	3	4
j. could finish college and receive a college degree	99	1	2	3	4

29. What do you feel is the most significant factor that prevents students from **setting** postsecondary education or training goals?

30. What do you feel is the most significant factor that prevents students from **achieving** their postsecondary education or training goals?

31. Please use this space for additional comments, questions, or concerns.

Appendix D: Year 6 Site and County Coordinator Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and colleagues as representatives of ICF and describe your role (i.e., facilitator).
- Briefly discuss the focus group's purpose: Explain that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (the Commission) has contracted with ICF 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 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!**

Time	Questions	Facilitator's Activity
2 min	INTRODUCTION Please introduce yourself, your school, how long you've been with GEAR UP, and your other roles at the school (teacher, counselor, etc.).	Probe: Are you the only GEAR UP site coordinator at your school or part of a team of site coordinators? If part of a team, what is your specific responsibility in the school?
7-10 min	IMPLEMENTATION AND BUY-IN How is GEAR UP going in your school this year? What activities were provided to students, parents, and teachers? How have you built awareness and buy-in at your school for GEAR UP? For those involved for more than one year, how has buy-in changed since your first year working on the grant?	Probe for college application week, financial aid/awareness workshops, student leadership academy, college decision days, HEROs, tutoring, Student Success Societies, SAT/ACT prep. Probe for trends across sites and any new challenges. Probe for perceptions of buy-in among teachers, students, and parents.
5 min	INTERACTION In what ways and how often do you interact with HEPC personnel about the work you are doing	Identify common threads across the schools. Probe for the extent of support received from GEAR UP staff.

	<p>through GEAR UP (e.g., regional program directors, project director)?</p> <p>In what ways and how often do you interact with your county coordinator about GEAR UP? For those of you who have been involved for more than this past year, how has this changed over time?</p> <p>How satisfied are you with the information and resources you receive related to GEAR UP? How could they be improved?</p>	Probe for differences in participant views and possible reasons for this.
3 min	<p>PARTNERS</p> <p>How have local college and community partners been involved in GEAR UP at your school over the past year, and what resources have they provided?</p>	Probe for satisfaction with level and extent of involvement. Probe for changes with college partners during students' senior year. Probe for comments on college partners in their geographic area and WVGU's college-specific partners (SWVCTC, Concord, and WVSU).
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 your school became involved in GEAR UP?</p>	Probe for strategies perceived as effective or ineffective and new strategies designed for parents of high school students. Probe for any barriers regarding parent participation.
5 min	<p>COLLEGE PREPARATION</p> <p>What role has GEAR UP played in helping students learn about colleges, college entrance requirements, admissions, and financial aid? What strategies have worked/not worked?</p>	Probe for GEAR UP role in scheduling college visits, learning about college entrance requirements, and FAFSA/financial aid issues. Probe for lessons learned and best practices. Probe for other services that may be important to improve college preparation.
5 min.	<p>COLLEGE-GOING CLIMATE</p> <p>How would you assess the overall college-going climate at your school? Has this climate changed with the presence of GEAR UP? If so, how?</p>	Probe for tangible changes in college-going climate (such as student/teacher discussions, student engagement about college, etc.). Probe for what may happen once GEAR UP is no longer in the school.
5 min	<p>YOUR ROLE AS COORDINATOR</p> <p>As you look back on your work with this program, how do you define being a successful coordinator at your school?</p>	Probe for how coordinators balance short-term goals such as FAFSA completion or achieving the GEAR UP work plan with long-term improvement such as changing school culture.
3 min	<p>TRANSITION SERVICES</p> <p>Services will continue for the GEAR UP cohort during their first year of college. Based on your work with GEAR UP, what services do you think would most benefit these students at the postsecondary level?</p>	Probe for coordinator knowledge of GEAR UP transition and first-year college services.

5 min	IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY As this grant nears an end, how would you describe GEAR UP's impact at your school? What, if any, services have been or will be sustained? What challenges do you face in sustaining these activities?	Probe for discussions on sustainability during the current school year. Probe for views on culture, homework completion, test preparation/scores, course completion, grades, high school graduation, financial aid knowledge, etc.
	CLOSING Is there anything else we should know to understand the GEAR UP program at your school?	

Thank you very much for your time.