



# NATIONAL GEAR UP WEEK 2022

SEPTEMBER 26 - 30, 2022



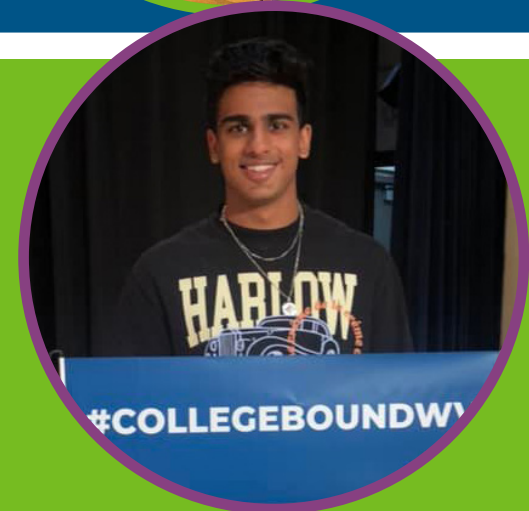
**National GEAR UP Week is a chance to highlight GEAR UP's positive impact in your community.**

It's a time to engage all your stakeholders (local, state and federal elected officials, funders, partners and media), share accomplishments, and encourage involvement with your services to students and families.



Hold a GEAR UP Week at your school to kick off the year with activities that encourage a college-going culture in your school and community. Use these materials during National GEAR UP Week or any time that works for you. This booklet has ideas designed to get the word out about GEAR UP and the importance of going to college.

Choose to do some, or all, of the activities or create your own traditions.



Remember to share your events on social media and with GEAR UP staff so we can help celebrate around the state (and country)!

Be sure to tag WV GEAR UP and use these hashtags on social media: #GEARUPworks and #IheartGEARUP

📷 WVGEARUP

🐦 WVGEARUP

📘 WVGEARUP

West Virginia  
**GEAR UP**

### Who is the audience?

- High school students (class of 2023)
- Middle school students (7th and 8th graders)
- Families
- Educational professionals
- Policymakers
- Local and national GEAR UP partners

### Ways to reach out:

- **Gubernatorial Proclamation:** In early September, a copy of the Governor's Proclamation is typically issued.

- **Media Advisory:** This template is to notify media outlets in your area to cover the event you are hosting.
- **Press Release:** This template will help you create some "buzz" about your event. You can send it out before or after the event takes place, just make sure you edit it accordingly!
- **Op-Ed:** Op-eds are a great way to raise awareness about GEAR UP at the local and regional level.
- **Thank You Cards to Congress:** Thank your United States Senators and Representatives for supporting GEAR UP and other programs with an oversized card or individual letters.
- **Social Media:** This is a great way to stay connected to students and share out information.

## BUILDING AN ONLINE PRESENCE THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

**Commit.** If you are going to establish a presence for your school on a social network like Facebook or Twitter, someone will need to post regularly. A Facebook page that has been ignored for months can look even worse than no social media presence at all. Even quick, casual photos can be enough to keep your account active.

**Address social media posts in your enrollment contract.** Many schools already include a media release in their contracts that allow for the use of pictures, likenesses, and art created by students. This release should include a social media provision if you plan to use student images on your social networks. If some families don't want pictures of their child used online, make sure that your social media account manager is aware of these restrictions.

**Encourage online involvement.** The quickest way to build your social media presence is to connect with current and former students and staff. Start by asking students, parents and teachers to "Like" your school's page on Facebook and setting up an alumni page for your graduates to reconnect.

**Engage your community.** Social networks are designed for connecting, which means that active participation will lead to better results for your school. Be sure to check out what other schools and organizations are doing for ideas and liking, commenting and sharing education-related news articles, blogs and even valuable posts from competing schools.

**Use images.** Social network posts based on photos or videos get more clicks and shares than posts with just text.

**Keep your branding/messaging consistent across online platforms.** Your social posts should include a link to relevant information on your website that engages users through official channels. This also makes sure that those who

find your website first can see your community in action on social media.

With so many social media platforms at our fingertips, it may be difficult to know which one(s) to choose. The basic premise of all social media sites is to post, view and share content while interacting with other users. Although their purposes may be similar, these popular social media sites are best suited for the following uses:

- **Instagram:** Post pictures and short clips of your classroom ideas while browsing specific content via hashtags and following others who share your interests.
- **Facebook:** Dialogue with other users by joining Facebook groups and sharing content – such as articles, videos and pictures – with your own personal network.
- **Twitter:** Stay up-to-date on the latest trends and ideas in education by browsing and posting brief snippets of inspiration or information with others.
- **YouTube:** Post and browse original videos, such as model lessons or video tutorials, which can be archived and viewed on your personal channel.
- **Pinterest:** Browse, share and save visual images that can then be categorized in user-created "boards."

Create and design content to add to your social media.

- **Canva:** Great for slide decks and infographics.
- **Adobe Spark and Powtoons:** Great for videos.
- **Snapseed, PicsArt and Light Room:** Apps to edit photos on hand-held devices.

The only limitation to virtual events is your own imagination! An event's content can be instantly accessed repeatedly, allowing students, family and friends to relive the happy moment after the event is over. All events require a great deal of planning and virtual events are no exception. So, please allow yourself 2-4 weeks to plan your virtual event.

**Sample morning announcements.** You can revise the following announcements about GEAR UP Week and getting ready for college to fit your school's GEAR UP needs. You can also use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, text messages, a blog, or a website to get the word out.

- **Monday:** It's National GEAR UP Week this week! There will be activities every day plus facts and trivia about college in the morning announcements. Here's your first fun fact: What do Owen Schmitt, Taylor Kinney, Katherine Johnson, Billy Crystal, Randy Moss, Conchata Ferrell and Channing Tatum have in common? They all attended West Virginia universities! Also, tomorrow is GEAR UP T-Shirt Tuesday! Wear your GEAR UP T-shirt or other college gear. Share what your plan is for college and career on [www.facebook.com/wvgearup](http://www.facebook.com/wvgearup).

- **Tuesday:** Happy National GEAR UP Week! Did you know that there are over 4,000 colleges and universities across the country? There are also lots of options beyond high school including apprenticeships, on-the-job training, college career and technical education, customized training, non-credit education, certificates, certifications, and associate's degrees. So whatever your dream is, there is a school that will help you make a career of it!

- **Wednesday:** West Virginia's Climb campaign aims to equip 60% of West Virginians with a certificate or degree by 2030. In 2016, 31% of West Virginians aged 25-65 held at least an associate degree. In 2017, 55% of recent high school graduates enrolled in college. 60% of working-aged West Virginians will need a certificate or degree to meet future workforce demands.

- **Thursday:** National GEAR UP Week has been awesome! Have you investigated what scholarships are available to you? Check out [cfwv.com](http://cfwv.com) and start a profile to search for scholarships you will want to apply for.

- **Friday:** Thanks to everyone who has made National GEAR UP Week a huge success! West Virginia GEAR UP is a federally funded program that helps students in eleven counties prepare to succeed in education and training beyond high school. "GEAR UP" stands for "Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs," and the program's goal is to help students pursue a college diploma or skillset certificate.

## Sample general posts

- It is National GEAR UP Week, and @wvgearupstudents are all celebrating at [school name]! #GEARUPWorks
- Students at [school name] are celebrating National GEAR UP Week this week! #GEARUPWorks
- Students at [school name] are representing @wvgearup during National GEAR UP Week! #GEARUPWorks

## Examples for tweeting to state representatives

- @handle, thank you for supporting GEAR UP! Here is how our students are celebrating National GEAR UP Week! #GEARUPWorks
- #GEARUPWorks thanks to support from folks like @handle. Happy GEAR UP Week!
- Happy GEAR UP Week, @handle! Thanks for supporting GEAR UP! Here's how [school name] has been celebrating.

**Virtual college visits.** Just because students can't physically visit campuses at this point doesn't mean they can't learn about what college might be the best fit. Take advantage of virtual campus tours and scan colleges' websites and social media feeds to learn more about what each school has to offer.

**Virtual student and family workshops.** Consider hosting online events or workshops. For example, invite a local employer to serve as a guest speaker or a host a virtual employee panel to share about their job sector, specific work skills important to the career path, and what background was needed to pursue that path. These events could be pre-recorded or hosted live on YouTube, Zoom, or Event Facebook or Instagram Live.

**Social Media Prompts.** Have students answer a prompt below on a social media site. Ask them to take a picture or selfie to use in their post. Sample prompts include:

- How has GEAR UP inspired you?
- What are your plans after you graduate high school?
- Who inspires you to be the best person you can be?
- What challenges did you overcome while in school?
- What about your future makes you excited?
- Why is getting an education important to you?
- Why is GEAR UP an important program to you and your family?
- How has GEAR UP changed your outlook on education?

### THROWBACK THURSDAY!

Two words: Throwback Thursday! Use this day to post pictures of school staff from when they were in college. Have staff members wear college gear and snap pictures for your school's social media. Post throwback tunes of a song that was popular when school staff were in college.

### HIGHLIGHT TEACHERS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Celebrate all of the wonderful people who are part of your local and school communities. Take time to highlight teachers, have students interview local businesses who have worked with you during the year, and more! Post to all your social media outlets!

### DON'T FORGET THE PARENTS AND GUARDIANS!

Remember to include the parents or guardians in your outreach! Have your students interview their parents or guardians and ask them to post their pictures and their responses on social media.

### RECAP THE WEEK'S EVENTS

On Friday, use social media to post the highlights of National GEAR UP Week and encourage your stakeholders to stay connected with you throughout the year. Make sure to mention upcoming events and ask for volunteers.

### #IHEARTGEARUP CAMPAIGN

Participate in the #IHeartGEARUP campaign and ask your students to write letters to their future-selves about what they hope to achieve in school, college and beyond and then posting it to social media.

### CLASS SHOW AND TELL

Have a "show and tell" for students. The students can reach out to a college of their choice and request materials. They can open the materials and share out what information they received on social media.

### INCLUDE YOUR ALUMNI

Encourage your school's alumni to share their experiences with GEAR UP using templates and posting on social media.



### VIDEO COMPETITIONS

Create a video competition and ask your students to make videos on why college matters. Also, have students tag WV GEAR UP in videos talking about why and how GEAR UP works.





**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

[Date]

Media Contact

[Insert contact information]

## **[Insert the name of your school] Celebrates National GEAR UP Week Starting September 26**

[Insert dateline] – [Insert the name of your school], a West Virginia GEAR UP program cohort, announced their participation in National GEAR UP Week 2022. This week commemorates the continuing success of Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), a college access program providing students and families the support and resources they need for college access and success. Since its inception in 1999, GEAR UP has improved educational outcomes for millions of students across the United States.

[Insert the name of your school] will celebrate National GEAR UP Week 2022 by [Insert a paragraph with information specific to your GEAR UP Week 2022 event(s)]

Students like [Insert highlights or success stories from your program]. [Insert a quote from a student, parent, or other community member about the value of your GEAR UP Program]. National GEAR UP Week is a time to celebrate these accomplishments in our community.

For more information about the GEAR UP program at [Insert the name of your school], contact [Insert GEAR UP contact's name]. To learn more about the statewide GEAR UP program, please contact Elizabeth Manuel, Director of the West Virginia GEAR UP program at (304) 558-0655, or by email at [elizabeth.manuel@wvhepc.edu](mailto:elizabeth.manuel@wvhepc.edu).

**About:** West Virginia GEAR UP is a federally funded program that helps students in eleven counties prepare to succeed in education and training beyond high school. “GEAR UP” stands for “Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs,” and the program’s goal is to help more students pursue their dreams of earning a college diploma or skillset certificate. West Virginia GEAR UP is managed by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, in collaboration with the West Virginia Community and Technical College System, the West Virginia Department of Education and many other community partners.

**For more information, visit [www.wvgearup.org](http://www.wvgearup.org).**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact**

[Insert contact information]

- Planning Purposes Only -

**[Insert Title of Your Event]**  
Celebrating National GEAR UP Week

**When:** [Insert date of event]  
[Insert time of event]

**Where:** [Insert location of event – name of building]  
[Insert street address]  
[Insert Town, State and Zip Code]

**Note:** Members of the media will be asked to sign in upon arrival. Crews may begin setting up at [Insert crew set-up time].

[Insert any other relevant information, i.e., “Satellite truck parking is available on site.”]



**#heartGEARUP #GEARUPWorks**

# #GEARUPworks...



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# THANK YOU for supporting GEAR UP!

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