



GEAR UP Program Staff Meeting

Tuesday, March 10, 2026





Welcome and Program Updates

Jason Luyster, Senior Director of Student Affairs

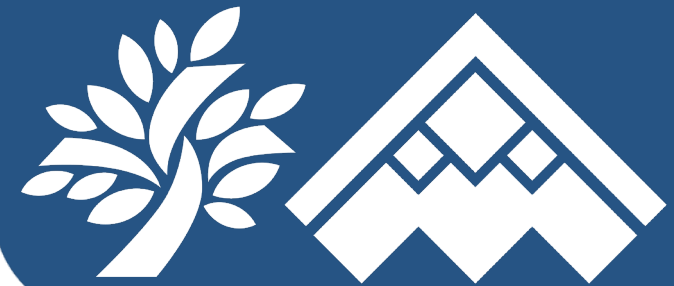


Statewide Initiatives Update

Enroll. Enlist. Employ.

March 2026 WVGEARUP Meeting

Heather McChesney, Director of Statewide Access Initiatives





COLLEGE APPLICATION & EXPLORATION WEEK

PRESENTED BY CFVW



JANUARY 2026



REFLECTING ON 2025



215 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

- 65 ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS
- 47 MIDDLE SCHOOLS
- 103 HIGH SCHOOLS



SENIOR APPLICATION NUMBERS

FALL 2025



4,570

6,528

5,133

STUDENTS SUBMITTED ONE APPLICATION DURING CAEW

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED DURING CAEW

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS TO SUBMIT ONE APPLICATION FIRST SEMESTER

KEY NUMBERS

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

1,259



TOTAL NUMBER OF PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION

49,333



TOTAL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION

11,197

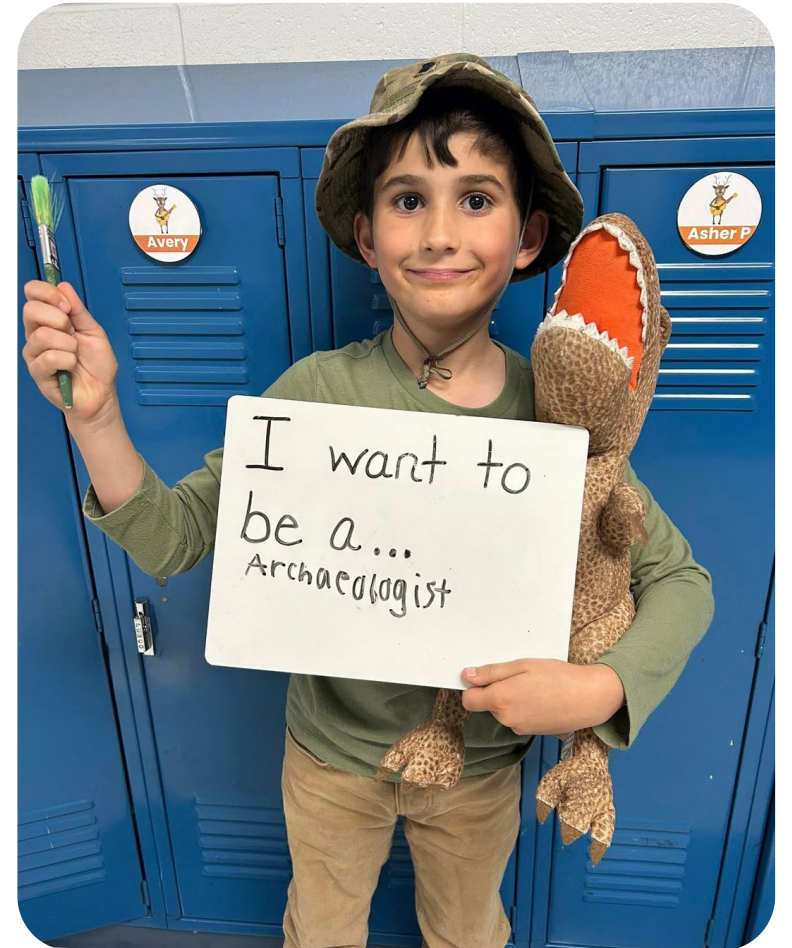


TOTAL MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION

17,154



TOTAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT PARTICIPATION





- BRINGING THE COLLEGE CAMPUS TO THE CLASSROOM
- SENIOR PANEL DISCUSSIONS
- CFWV/CAEW RESOURCES
- VIRTUAL TOURS
- GUEST SPEAKERS
- VISITING COLLEGES
- COLLEGE TRIVIA
- CAEW BULLETIN BOARDS
- PARENT INTERVIEWS
- CAREER FAIRS
- FINANCIAL AID NIGHTS

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

WHAT WAS MOST IMPACTFUL FOR STUDENTS

POSITIVE CHANGE

- BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF OPTIONS
- GOAL SETTING
- MORE AWARE OF CAREER OPPORTUNITIES
- KNOW OF CFWV RESOURCES
- BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF LEVELS OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
- UNDERSTANDING THE APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT PROCESS
- UNDERSTANDING COST
- TRYING ON A CAP AND GOWN
- UNDERSTANDING THE JARGON



MOMENTS THAT MADE US SMILE



OBSERVED CHANGES THAT HAPPENED
DURING CAEW

FINAL THOUGHTS



"LOVE THE CAEW ACTIVITIES! I THINK IT'S A GREAT WAY FOR THE STUDENTS TO LEARN MORE ABOUT POST HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS."

**SISSONVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL
KANAWHA COUNTY**



**"I'VE GOT MY LIFE TOGETHER!"
-AFTER COMPLETING THE GET A LIFE PROGRAM**

**HERITAGE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
LOGAN COUNTY**



"I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT DORM ROOM I GET!"

-ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT

**MARY C. SNOW/WESTSIDE ELEMENTARY
KANAWHA COUNTY**

THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR JOURNEY.
LET'S MAKE 2026 EVEN MORE AMAZING TOGETHER!

CFWV

HERE'S TO 2025!



PRESENTED BY CFWV

JANUARY 2026

CAEW: Feedback from the Field

College Application and
Exploration Week: Feedback from
the Field



- **We Want to Hear From You!**
- As we continue supporting students across West Virginia on their path to postsecondary education and career exploration, we're exploring possible updates to College Application and Exploration Week.
- **Options under consideration:**
 - Expanding the event into a **season**
 - Extending it into a **month**
 - Allowing schools to **choose their own week**
 - Keeping it as a **dedicated week**
- Your input matters. This brief survey invites you to share your preferences and concerns so we can shape an approach that best supports students, schools, and educator workload statewide.
- **Thank you for sharing your perspective!**
- **SURVEY:** <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/ngGCfLq4k9>

High Schools:

- **FAFSA Completion:** last day to qualify is July 1, 2026 – updated online by Midday on Mondays/early morning Tuesdays
<https://www.cfwv.com/fafsa-completion-rates/>
- **CDD:** Due within 7 days of the event/no later than May 15, 2026 – in progress of updating

High Schools:



Champions Trackers

Before you email me to ask about your status, first, head to

<https://www.cfwv.com/champion/>

and click on school level to determine what is missing or where you stand.



Once on the proper school-level page, click on “track your school’s progress.” This is updated weekly by Friday.

THANK YOU!



Congratulations!!!!

BRIDGEPORT HIGH SCHOOL
CAMERON HIGH SCHOOL
CENTRAL CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
CROSS LANES CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
HERBERT HOOVER HIGH SCHOOL
INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL
LOGAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
MADONNA HIGH SCHOOL
PAW PAW HIGH SCHOOL
TRINITY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
TYGARTS VALLEY MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL
VAN JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL
WEBSTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
WESTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL



FAFSA™
FREE APPLICATION for FEDERAL
Step One (Student): For or
Your full name (exactly as it appears
Last
First
Middle
Your mailing address
(number and street
city and state and zip number)



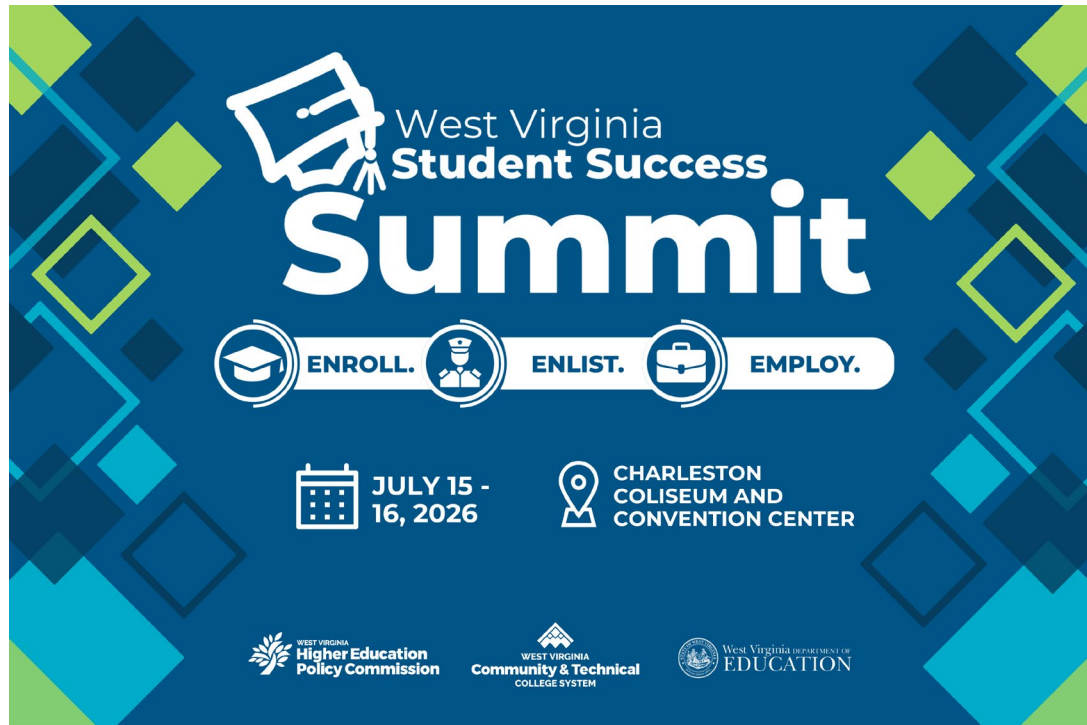
60%
GOAL
MET
or 5% point improvement from last year

Congratulations!



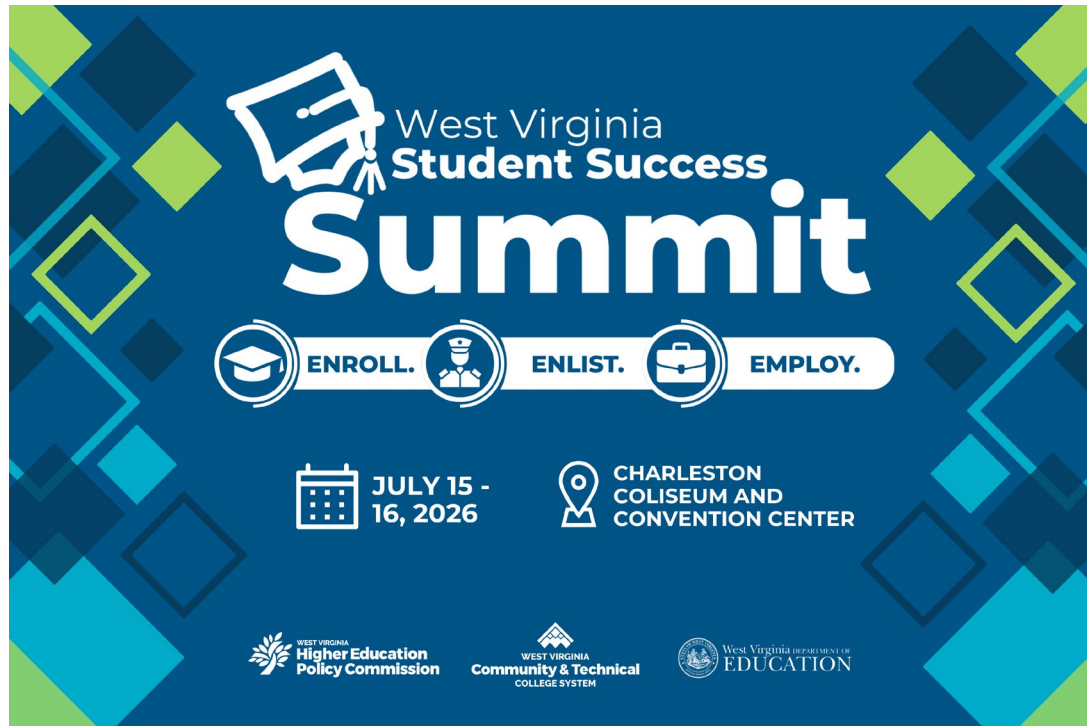
College for West Virginia
CFWV

SAVE THE DATE: Student Success Summit



- **When:** July 15-16, 2026
- **Where:** Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center
- This year, Elementary School, Middle School, High School, and Higher Education Institution Champions, as well as the ACAC School of Excellence Awardee and all Higher Education Action and Impact Awardees, will be recognized during the Summit.

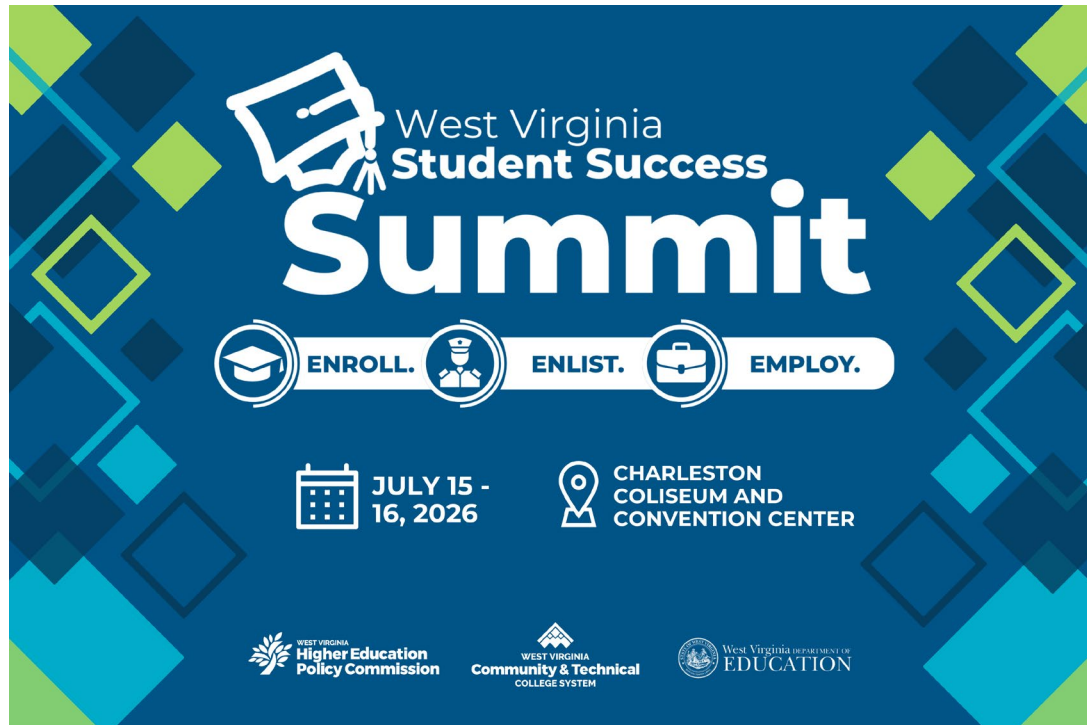
SAVE THE DATE: Student Success Summit



- **Details:**

- Team of 6
- Work with County Coordinator to utilize county budget for travel/hotel
- WVGEARUP meeting on July 14th, time TBD, at Charleston Coliseum and Convention Center

SAVE THE DATE: Student Success Summit



- **Registration:**
- <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-student-success-summit-tickets-1982978484026>
- **Hotel and Additional Information:**
- <https://www.cfwv.com/student-success-summit/>



Contact

Heather McChesney, Director of Statewide Access Initiatives
Heather.Mcchesney@wvhepc.edu | 304-558-0655





Level All Presentation

Manavi Mongia, Level All



GEAR UP Data and Evaluation

Lesli Taylor, Assistant Director of Research and Evaluation

Susana Mazuelas Quirce, Senior Research Analyst, ICF

Survey Response Rate – Final Student Report

District	School	Enrollment	Student	
			Surveys Received	% Surveyed
TOTAL		6,898	5,116	74.2%
Boone	Scott High School	409	338	82.6%
Boone	Sherman High School	220	191	86.8%
Boone	Van Junior/Senior High School	47	39	83.0%
Clay	Clay County High School	377	311	82.5%
Lincoln	Lincoln County High School	583	473	81.1%
Logan	Chapmanville Regional High School	440	232	52.7%
Logan	Logan Senior High School	375	166	44.3%
Logan	Man Senior High School	233	200	85.8%
Mason	Hannan Junior/Senior High School	111	21	18.9%
Mason	Point Pleasant Junior/Senior High School	483	330	68.3%
Mason	Wahama Junior/Senior High School	206	140	68.0%
Mingo	Mingo Central Comprehensive High School	428	303	70.8%
Mingo	Tug Valley High School	244	197	80.7%
Nicholas	Nicholas County High School	487	392	80.5%
Nicholas	Richwood High School	203	166	81.8%
Roane	Roane County High School	328	262	79.9%
Wayne	Spring Valley High School	693	580	83.7%
Wayne	Tolsia High School	240	139	57.9%
Wayne	Wayne High School	363	295	81.3%
Webster	Webster County High School	229	187	81.7%
Wirt	Wirt County High School	199	154	77.4%



WVGU External Evaluation—Surveys, Focus Groups, and Interviews

3/10/2026

Susana Mazuelas Quirce, PhD
ICF External Evaluator



Agenda

- School Personnel Survey: April 6-May 15, 2026
- Cohort #1 Student Interviews: Grade 11, April 2026
- HEROs Focus Groups: April 2026

School Personnel Survey (April 6 – May 15, 2026)

- **Overview:**

- Survey of school personnel at all WVGU high schools to collect the following data:
 - Background information on personnel and school (no identifiable data will be collected)
 - College-going culture
 - Involvement in school-level activities
 - Student engagement
 - Knowledge of college costs, options, and financial aid
- Survey results can be used to help program staff customize activities and services accordingly
- Survey items are largely the same as last year to allow for longitudinal analysis

- **Logistics:**

- **Monday, April 6 – Friday, May 15:** Administrators, teachers, counselors, and other student support staff (including site coordinators) from all

Cohort #1 Student Interviews: Grade 11 (April 2026)

Why

- To follow academic & career decision trajectories of students (from Cohort #1) in each year of the grant
- Findings will be used to tailor college and career resources and programming

Susana Mazuelas Quirce

susana.mazuelasquirce@icf.com

Three schools

Sherman HS

Lincoln County HS 

Webster County

Participants





The same 13 participants who have been enrolled since the beginning of the grant (*currently Grade 11*)



Format

In-person interview
During school hours
Around 60 minutes



Task		Timeline
ICF will reach out to site coordinators and provide guidelines		By March 13
Site visit scheduling		By March 27
Site coordinator distributes & collects parent consent forms		By March 27
Site visits & collection of signed parent consent forms		April 1-30

MARCH 2026						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	★ 13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	★ 27	28
29	30	31				


Cohort #1 Student Interviews: Grade 11 (April 2026)

Why

- To determine impact and outcomes of being a HEROs on students & schools
- Findings will be used to tailor college and career resources and programming

Susana Mazuelas Quirce
susana.mazuelasquirce@icf.com

Five schools Participants

- Roane HS
- Richwood HS
- Scott HS
- Man HS 

Around 8 HEROs members per focus group
 Grades 10 & 11



Format

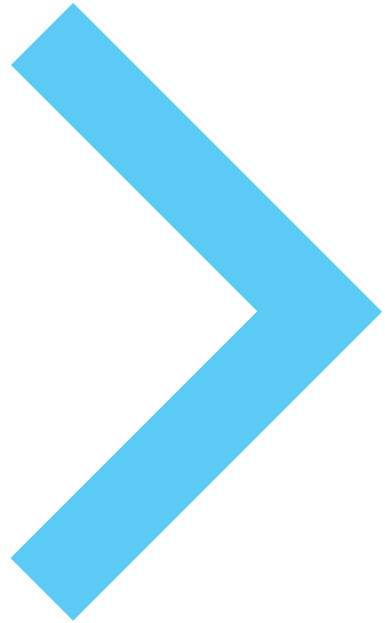
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22	23	24	25	26	★ 27	28
29	30	31				



Any questions?



Thank you!



Career Academy

Janine Coutu, College Access and Success Program Director

Career Academy

- Date: Wednesday, April 29, 2026
- Arrival time: 9:00 – 10:00 AM
- Departure time: 12:15 – 1:00 PM
- Registration deadline: Friday, March 13, 2026
- This registration is for YOU (the site coordinator) to complete for your school
- You can bring up to 50 total 10th and 11th grade GEAR UP students
- You will need to make sure to secure a bus (or buses), driver, and additional chaperone(s) for this event
- Lunch is provided



SAT Boot Camps Follow-Up

Cambridge Educational Services

Lunch



Regional Breakouts



GEAR UP U!



Chelsea Stickelman, College Access and Success Program Director

General Info



June 23 – 27, 2026
(we are extending it an
extra day!)



Glenville State University



Rising 11th and 12th
graders



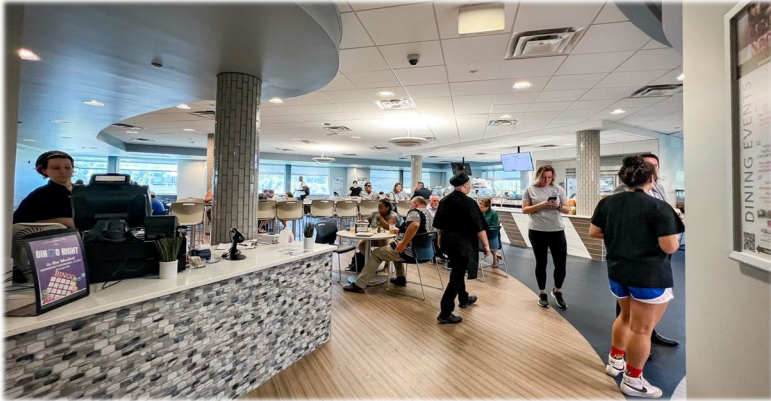
FREE



GLENVILLE
STATE UNIVERSITY

Glenville State University

Campus Dining



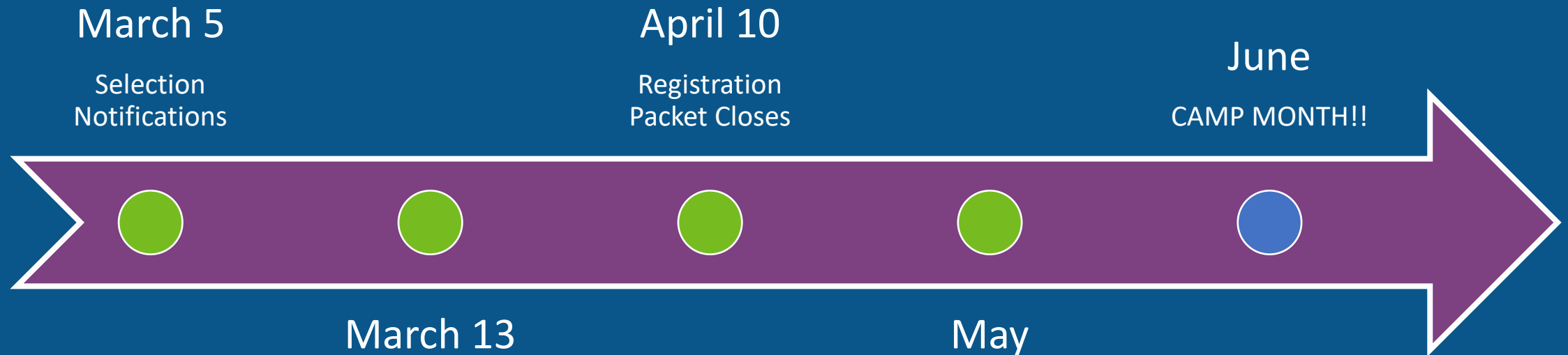
Goodwin Hall



Highlighted Events/Courses

- Trip to Columbus Zoo & Cosi in Columbus, Ohio
- Etiquette Dinner
- Classes with GSU faculty to learn more about the careers associated with major
- CoolSpeak will provide our leadership component

Timeline



Registration Packets

1. Registration Packets- OPEN NOW
 - Please help students and families' complete packets.
 - Host an in person packet completion workshop
 - Packets due April 10th
2. Site Coordinators are responsible for letting students know they have been chosen for camp.
 - You should have received an email with your list of approved camp applicants.





Communications Update

Emily Hammond, Assistant Director of Communication and Outreach



Transition and Post Secondary Readiness Initiatives

Tiffany Anderson, Director of Post Secondary Readiness Programs

2026 – 2027 WV GEAR UP Ambassador Program

Your College Story Starts Now - Apply to Be a GEAR UP Ambassador

The WV GEAR UP Ambassador Program is an exciting leadership opportunity for college freshmen who want to make a difference by helping high school students across West Virginia prepare for college and careers. Ambassadors gain valuable professional experience through outreach, event participation, and sharing their own college journeys to inspire the next generation of students. Join a statewide team of student leaders who are passionate about education, leadership, and helping West Virginia students see that college is possible.

[GEAR UP Ambassador Mashup.mp4](#)

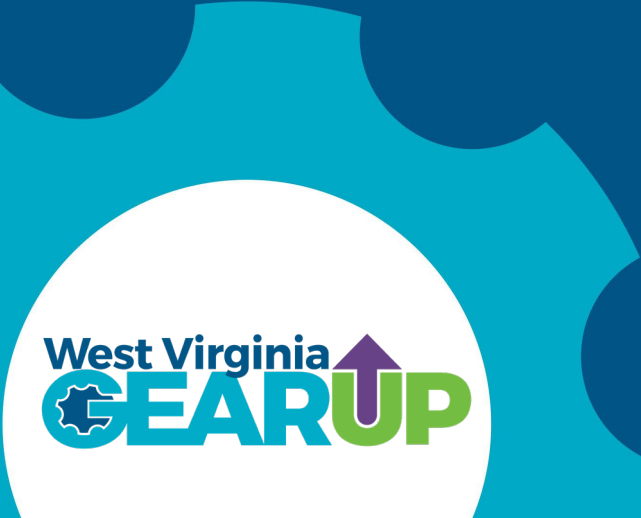
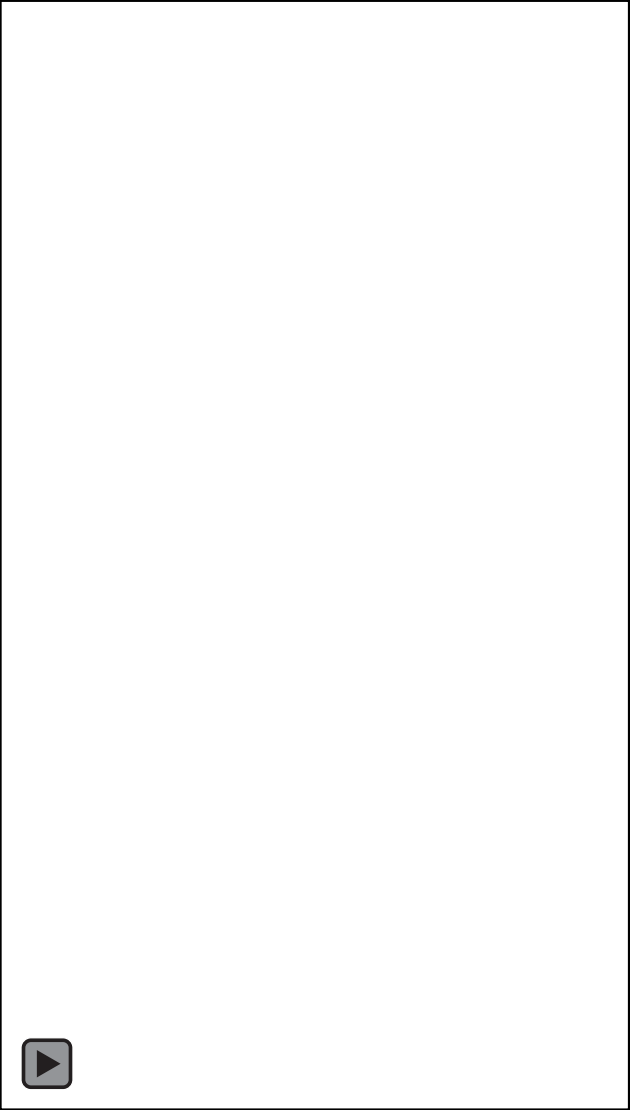
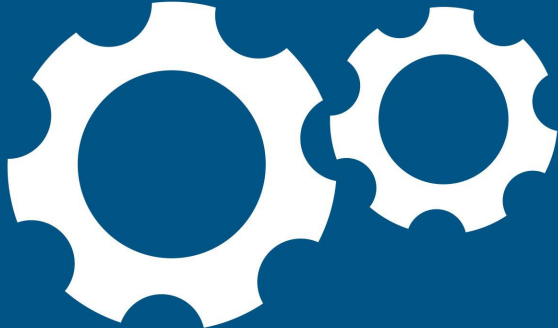
College Decision Day Ideas

- Webster County High School
- Mingo Central High School
- Clay County High School

Mingo Central College Decision Day 2025



Video Featuring Alumni





Veteran's Affairs Presentation

Rikki McCormick, Director of Veterans' Education and Training Programs



Sunset of Chapter 35 - HS

**School Certifying Official Meeting and
Workforce Collaborative**

February 19 and 20, 2026

The change of the law:

From Public Law 117-328 section 215:

SEC. 215. USE OF ENTITLEMENT UNDER DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS SURVIVORS' AND DEPENDENTS' EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION. (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 3501(a)(6) of title 38, United States Code, is amended— (1) by striking “secondary school,”; and (2) by striking “secondary school level” and inserting “postsecondary school level”. (b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall take effect on August 1, 2026, and shall apply with respect to an academic period that begins on or after that date.

Title 38 USC §3501(a) currently reads:

(6) The term “[educational institution](#)” means any public or private secondary school, vocational school, correspondence school, business school, junior college, teachers’ college, college, normal school, professional school, university, or scientific or technical institution, or any other institution if it furnishes education at the secondary school level or above. Such term also includes any private entity (that meets such requirements as the Secretary may establish) that offers, either directly or under an agreement with another entity (that meets such requirements), a course or courses to fulfill requirements for the attainment of a license or certificate generally recognized as necessary to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment in a profession or vocation in a high technology occupation (as determined by the Secretary).

Beginning August 1, 2026, 38 USC §3501 (a)(6) will read:

(6) The term “[educational institution](#)” means any public or private vocational school, correspondence school, business school, junior college, teachers’ college, college, normal school, professional school, university, or scientific or technical institution, or any other institution if it furnishes education at the post-secondary school level or above. Such term also includes any private entity (that meets such requirements as the Secretary may establish) that offers, either directly or under an agreement with another entity (that meets such requirements), a course or courses to fulfill requirements for the attainment of a license or certificate generally recognized as necessary to obtain, maintain, or advance in employment in a profession or vocation in a high technology occupation (as determined by the Secretary).

Sunset of Chapter 35 - HS



- **TAPS**
- **High School Diploma v Delimiting Date**
- **Washington Representatives**
 - The original intent...
 - Personal Stories...
 - Data over Dogma (apologies to Dan McClellan)
- **WV's Plan**



FAFSA All-Star Recognition

Jason Luyster, Senior Director of Student Affairs

West Virginia GEARUP

FAFSA Completion




55.1% GEAR UP FAFSA Completion Rate

48.7% Statewide FAFSA Completion Rate

1 **82.4%** Van Jr/Sr HS

2 **69.2%** Webster Co HS

3 **64.7%** Mingo Central HS

School	County	Last Week	This Week
Scott High School	Boone	40.8%	42.3%
Sherman High School	Boone	56.1%	62.1%
Van Junior/Senior High School	Boone	70.6%	 82.4%
Clay County High School	Clay	53.5%	58.8%
Lincoln County High School	Lincoln	46.9%	48.6%
Chapmanville Regional High School	Logan	55.6%	59.9%
Logan Senior High School	Logan	59.5%	61.1%
Man Senior High School	Logan	49.2%	52.3%
Hannan High School	Mason	42.9%	45.7%
Point Pleasant Junior/Senior High School	Mason	45.3%	50.8%
Wahama High School	Mason	52.2%	56.7%
Mingo Central Comprehensive High School	Mingo	63.2%	 64.7%
Tug Valley High School	Mingo	41.8%	45.6%
Nicholas County High School	Nicholas	57.7%	59.6%
Richwood High School	Nicholas	54.9%	60.6%
Roane County High	Roane	41.1%	46.3%
Spring Valley High School	Wayne	51.3%	58.9%
Tolsia High School	Wayne	46.8%	49.4%
Wayne High School	Wayne	43.4%	47.6%
Webster County High School	Webster	69.2%	 69.2%
Wirt County High School	Wirt	51.4%	56.9%



Legislative Update

Joseph Jenkins, General Counsel

Meeting Adjourned