

2004

gear up

KENTUCKY



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The Lane Report



Helping Kentucky's At-Risk Students Go to College

GEAR UP at a Glance

The U.S. Department of Education awards GEAR UP grants based on an annual competitive process. State grants are awarded to a state entity selected by the Governor; partnership grants are awarded directly to a local education agency or school district in cooperation with at least one postsecondary institution.

GEAR UP Kentucky, the state grant administered by the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education (CPE), was awarded a 5-year grant for \$10 million in 2000. Cash and in-kind services from state and other sources provide an additional \$10 million to the program.

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal initiative that encourages young people to stay in school, study hard and take the right courses for college. The program is focused on helping at risk students learn skills and influencing their educational choices through early guidance in school.

GEAR UP helps students become aware of college and financial aid opportunities, and how to prepare for going to college.

GEAR UP is different from many other programs in that it is comprised of partnerships between schools, colleges, businesses, community and non-profit organizations. Partners provide early intervention services for students and work to transform schools with low college participation rates to ones with a "college going" culture. A second difference is that GEAR UP supports entire cohorts (all students in one grade), beginning as early as the seventh grade.



The GEAR UP Network

GEAR UP Kentucky is comprised of 15 non-school partners, 22 postsecondary institutions, and 32 middle schools in which over half of the students qualify for federal free or reduced-price lunch. All sectors of Kentucky's postsecondary education system participate in the program – public and independent, two and four-year institutions. Postsecondary partners are linked with specific schools and facilitate a variety of campus based activities for both students and school personnel.

The participation of non-school organizations helps make GEAR UP Kentucky a complex and interconnected network of local partnerships serving every region across the state. GEAR UP non-school partners understand the specific needs of the schools and regions they serve.

They include the following organizations: the Center for People, Quality and Organization (a non-profit entity of Toyota Motor Manufacturing Company), Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, Kentucky Department of Education, Prichard Committee for Excellence, Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation—Appalachian Regional Systemic Initiative, and the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning.



Successful Students Receive Financial Benefits

GEAR UP students who successfully complete an early intervention program preparing them for college, are assured of having adequate academic and financial support to attend college. The state of Kentucky is continuing to provide support through existing grants programs and scholarships. GEAR UP Kentucky partners will offer scholarships for the neediest students who meet the program's criteria.



Early intervention programs provide disadvantaged students with the opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge, confidence, aspirations, and overall preparedness for college early enough in their school to influence their ultimate educational attainment levels.

Policy Analysis—Early Intervention Programs,
collegeboard.org/policy/html/int4.html

Program Design

GEAR UP Kentucky's mission is to support and expand Kentucky's education infrastructure and to increase the college completion rate of all students.

Middle schools are linked to colleges, universities, technical and community colleges that support the mission of the program. Cooperating schools create and maintain a "college-going" culture that embraces all students and address five strategic priority areas.

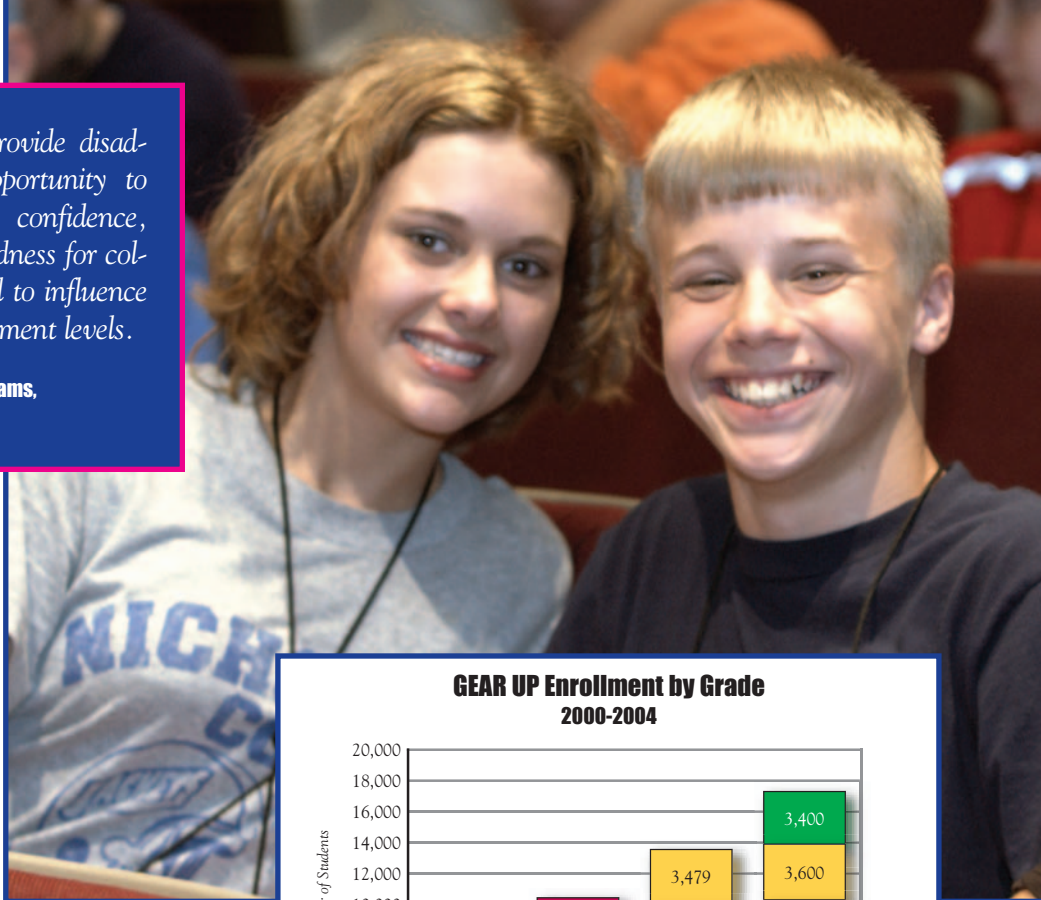
A variety of reasons influence whether students attend college or not. Among the factors are academic preparation, adequate academic counseling, career advice,

and information about college choices and financial aid.

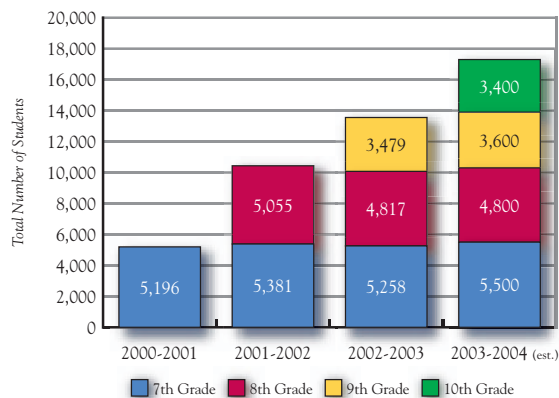
Nearly 70 percent of participating GEAR UP Kentucky students come from low-income households and attend high schools from which only a small percent of students go to college. Students that live in poverty are generally at

greater risk of not going to college. GEAR UP Kentucky works with other initiatives and partners to create an environment of success at the school level that will encourage all students, not just the most successful ones, to attend college. GEAR UP's professional development program builds leadership skills amongst principals and their school's management teams.

GEAR UP participants begin as seventh-graders. As the students progress through high school they receive guidance and encouragement to enroll in postsecondary education. The same schools participate for the duration of the five-year grant. Each year a new cohort of seventh grade students is added to the program. As of January 1, 2004, more than 17,000 students were enrolled in grades seven through ten.



**GEAR UP Enrollment by Grade
2000-2004**





GEAR UP Helps Students in Five Strategic Priority Areas

1. Awareness of College Opportunities and Benefits

The program provides counseling and information to students about the value of college, pre-college preparation, college admissions requirements, costs and financial aid. Special events include:

- College expos
- Guided college tours
- College planning workshops
- Career awareness

Statewide Activities

For Schools and Communities:

Leadership training and coaching
Professional development – content and pedagogy
Curriculum alignment
Parent leadership development

For Students:

GEAR UP Expos
Customized college and financial aid information
Scholarships
Academic enrichment

2. Enriched Educational Experiences for Students

Ensuring that all students have access to rigorous coursework, quality teaching practices and enriched instruction; GEAR UP plans activities that include:

- Program improvement reviews in mathematics, science and writing
- Skills assessment for college preparation
- Targeted professional development
- Summer enrichment camps for students

3. Involving Students' Parents

Getting parents to set high expectations for students is vital to the success of the GEAR UP program. Parents participate in these programs:

- Workshops about the Individual Graduation Plan and choosing the right courses to go to college

- Parent workshops and seminars about the importance of higher education and planning for college
- Parents learn skills to help their children plan for college

4. Financial Assistance for College-Bound Students

GEAR UP presents information about financial aid resources and helps ensure that no student is denied college for financial reasons. Special programs include:

- Financial aid workshops for parents and students
- Workshops about financial aid applications and college admissions procedures (eleventh and twelfth grade)
- Information for parents about financial planning for college
- Internet resources for students

5. Helping Students Succeed

GEAR UP helps students by providing academic and development assistance. Support includes:

- Mentoring
- Tutoring
- Service learning
- Social/cultural enrichment





GEAR UP's Essential Activities and Performance Goals

GEAR UP Schools are expected to provide students with experience in five priority areas.

GEAR UP Kentucky has identified "essential" activities in which performance is measured. To ensure systematic progress toward GEAR UP objectives, all schools are monitored for the completion of the following activities:

- Student visits or tours to campuses during middle and high school years
- Program Improvement Reviews (PIR) and improvement plans aligned with PIR's and used to develop professional development resources
- Guidance activities on completion of Individual Graduation Plan (IGA) and high school course selection for eighth graders including parent/student/teacher conferences.
- General financial aid workshops that introduce middle school students and their parents to the primary sources of state and federal aid, as well as discussing college savings plans.
- Guidance on how to qualify and apply for college admission.

Objectives of the GEAR UP Program

The program's goal is to help GEAR UP students develop the requisite behaviors and characteristics that will ensure their success in college.

The primary objectives of GEAR UP Kentucky are to:

- Enroll more students in postsecondary institutions after high school graduation.
- Reduce the number of students performing at the novice level in math, science and writing.
- Encourage more middle school students to take algebra.
- Increase the awareness of students and parents about preparing for and financing a college education.
- Qualify more students for state financial aid programs, especially the Kentucky Education Excellence Scholarships (KEES) and the Kentucky College Access Program (KCAP) grant.



Organizational Structure and Staffing

GEAR UP maintains a small administrative staff, including a state project director, at the Council on Postsecondary Education in Frankfort. Four postsecondary schools, designated as area coordinating institutions, assist CPE with administration and implementation of GEAR UP across the state.

Murray State University, University of Louisville, Morehead State University and the Kentucky Technical and Community College System—Hazard Community College each employ an area director and program coordinator. The area director approves and monitors project activities and grant spending within their geographic areas. Additionally, eight program coordinators (two per area) work directly with middle and high school site facilitators and college partners to oversee or assist with project activities and data collection.



Western Area

Terry Waltman, area director
Murray State University
College of Education
PO Box 9
Murray, KY 42071-0009

Northeastern Area

Lauren Joseph, area director
Morehead State University
Waterfield Hall
Morehead, KY 40651-1689

Central Area

Becky Crump, area director
University of Louisville
Room 123A, Nystrand Center
Louisville, KY 40292

Southeastern Area

Heather Musick, area director
Hazard Community College
One Community College Drive
Hazard, KY 41701

Cooperating Institutions

Participating colleges, universities, community and technical colleges:

Ashland Community College
Bowling Green Technical College
Eastern Kentucky University
Gateway Community & Technical College
Georgetown College

Hazard Community College

Hopkinsville Community College

Jefferson Community
& Technical College

Kentucky Christian College

Kentucky State University

Laurel Technical College

Lexington Community College

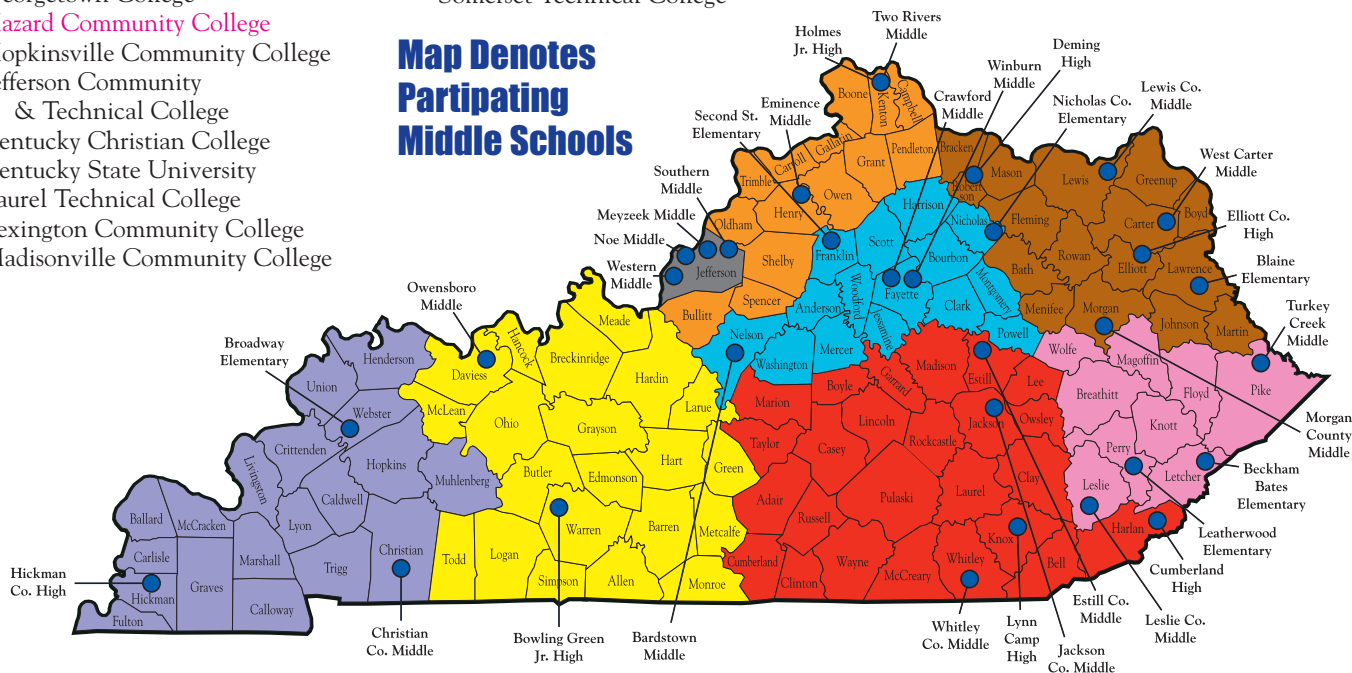
Madisonville Community College

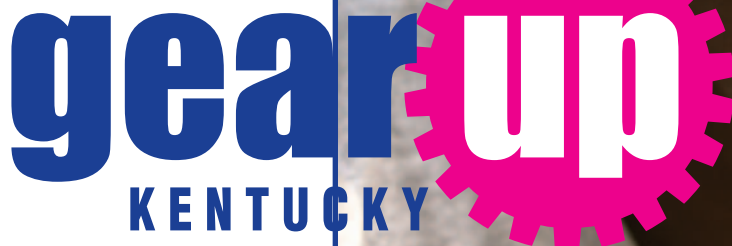
Maysville Community College
Morehead State University
Murray State University
Owensboro Community College
Pikeville College
Prestonsburg Community College
Somerset Community College
Somerset Technical College

Southeast Community College
Thomas More College
University of Louisville
University of Kentucky
Western Kentucky University

* Schools denoted in pink are area coordinating institutions.

Map Denotes Participating Middle Schools





Opportunities for Sponsors and Donors to Support GEAR UP Kentucky

Partnerships are an important feature of GEAR UP. The Council on Postsecondary Education offers excellent opportunities for partners to work with schools and provide information about postsecondary education to students and their families while there is adequate lead time to plan for college. Partners can provide in-kind or cash resources to support GEAR UP students. Representative investments include:

For information on how your company or organization can partner with this exceptional program, contact:

GEAR UP Kentucky

**Yvonne Lovell,
State Project Director
c/o Council on
Postsecondary Education
1024 Capital Center Drive
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 573-5114 ext. 136
www.gearupky.org**

Sponsor conferences and workshops about planning for higher education

- Be a principal sponsor/donor for the GEAR UP Kentucky Career EXPO
- Sponsor in-school college awareness activities for students and parents
- Provide speakers
- Partner with GEAR UP to teach entrepreneurship

Support student entrepreneurs

- Be a mentor
- Fund mini-grants to support student start-up costs
- Judge a business plan competition
- Sponsor scholarships for business plan winners
- Donate money-prizes for student competitions

Support a GEAR UP Scholar

- Donate scholarships to support students at Kentucky postsecondary institutions
- Underwrite summer internships for students
- Sponsor students for pre-college summer programs



The photos in this publication were made by Lexington photographer Lee Thomas at various GEAR UP programs and expos at Eastern Kentucky University.