

THE CALIFORNIA GEAR UP PROGRAM

The First Five Years: 1999-2004

A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

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THE NATIONAL GEAR UP PROGRAM

In his State of the Union address in 1998, President Clinton requested that the Congress join him to:

support our efforts to enlist colleges and universities to reach out to disadvantaged children starting in the sixth grade so that they can get the guidance and hope they need so they can know that they, too, will be able to go on to college.

Based upon this request, a new initiative -- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) – began on October 1, 1998. GEAR UP provides federal funding for state and local partnerships serving more than 1,236,600 low-income secondary school students in 47 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Micronesia, and Puerto Rico. These partnerships include public schools, community colleges, universities, businesses, and civic and education organizations.

Although GEAR UP was enacted as part of the 1998 Higher Education Act (Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2, Chapter 2, P.L. 105-244), its primary focus and impact on schools makes it a program that contributes to the mission and goals of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. In this regard, GEAR UP seeks to create systemic change throughout the education pipeline and to facilitate the pathway to college for *ALL* students.

GEAR UP has received funding for a sixth year that begins on September 1, 2004 and extends until August 31, 2005. Although this program began under President Clinton's administration, the signs from Washington indicate that the current administration views the program favorably. As such, the GEAR UP community remains optimistic that the program will be re-authorized for another five years.

A MODEL OF COLLABORATION

GEAR UP is designed to "give more low-income students the skills, encouragement, and preparation needed to pursue postsecondary education" (GEAR UP regulations, p. 2). GEAR UP's regulations speak to strengthening academic programs and student services at participating schools. However, this initiative is unique from other programs in key facets of its administrative mandates and programmatic design:

- **Partnerships:** GEAR UP stipulates that middle schools, higher educational institutions, community organizations, and the private sector must collaborate to ensure that students prepare for college. This mandate recognizes that all sectors of our society share responsibility for ensuring our youth learn the skills, knowledge, and competencies that they will need to compete in the global marketplace and it recognizes that our nation's future is dependent upon achieving this outcome.
- **Matching Funds:** Concomitant with its collaborative focus, federal funds allocated through GEAR UP must be matched by resources from participating partners. This requirement has several consequences: 1) it leverages federal dollars; 2) it expands the funds that are available to support low-income students in preparing for college; and, 3) it ensures commitment by all partners to the success of participating students and the project.
- **State Involvement:** GEAR UP calls upon states to actively participate in furthering the academic achievement and preparation for college of low-income students through State grants. This incentive encourages states to consider and develop effective mechanisms for collaborating with the federal government and local partnerships in preparing low-income students for college.

- **Outcomes-Oriented:** The effectiveness of GEAR UP will be singularly determined by the extent to which its goals have been achieved. As such, this focus embodies the federal government's emphasis on effectiveness rather than compliance.
- **Early Preparation for College:** Students begin participating in GEAR UP by no later than the seventh grade -- an acknowledgement that college preparation must start early in a student's educational journey.
- **Continuous Assistance to Students:** Students receive mentoring, tutoring, advising, and counseling from their initial entry into GEAR UP through high school graduation. This aspect incorporates evidence that college preparation requires constant and persistent attention and support.
- **Whole Grade Approach:** All students in a specific grade at a school participate in GEAR UP based upon research demonstrating the importance of creating a culture that supports the skills and activities preparatory for college.
- **Scholarship Awards:** State grant recipients are required to allocate one-half of federal GEAR UP resources to scholarships for program participants to attend college. This requirement is based upon knowledge that financial constraints often deter students from preparing for, and attending, college.

In combination, these unique features of GEAR UP offer a new opportunity to both prepare individual students for college and to create systemic change in schools. With enhanced organizational capacity, schools will be able to educate all students to the high levels of mastery required for college admission and graduation and for the increasingly technological world in which the contributions of their graduates are needed for both individual and societal benefit.

CALIFORNIA GEAR UP PROGRAM

In 1999, Governor Davis requested that the California Education Round Table -- the voluntary association comprised of the chief executive officers of California's educational sectors and its higher education coordinating agency -- develop and sponsor California's application to the United States Department of Education for a GEAR UP State grant. All the educational sectors in the state -- public and independent, schools, colleges and universities -- participated in developing California's proposal and the University of California was chosen to administer the California GEAR UP grant.

The California GEAR UP program has the following goal:

To develop and sustain the organizational capacity of middle schools to prepare *all* students for high school and postsecondary education through the establishment of a statewide infrastructure, or network of support, for the adults who influence middle school students, specifically their counselors, faculty, school leaders, and families. As a result of this expanded capacity, a higher proportion of students, particularly those from backgrounds and communities that have not historically pursued a college education, will enroll and succeed in postsecondary education.

As such, this grant is unique among GEAR UP Programs nationally in that its services focus on schools and on adults. Moreover, its desired result is systemic change and whole school reform.

The California GEAR UP Program has been enormously effective from the perspective of its collaborative nature. From the day that the proposal development team first met to today,

the collaboration among the original 17 partners and those included later has been exemplary. That collaboration has resulted in the delivery of valuable services to middle schools throughout the state by emphasizing student achievement, school accountability, and evaluation.

THE CALIFORNIA GEAR UP PROGRAM PARTNERS

Services to support the adults who influence a student's education -- teachers, administrators, counselors and parents -- are provided through California GEAR UP Program's partners:

Achievement Council
ACT, Inc.
Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
California Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
California Business Roundtable
California Community Colleges
California Department of Education
California Postsecondary Education Commission
California State University
California Student Aid Commission
California Subject Matter Projects
Chela Financial
College Board
ED Fund
KVIE Channel 6 (Sacramento)
Pacific Gas and Electric Company
Parent Institute for Quality Education
University of California
WESTOP

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Seven components form the foundation of the California GEAR UP Program:

- **Professional Development for Middle School Educators** utilizes data-driven analyses to enhance knowledge with respect to the state's middle school reform efforts and to engage them actively in preparing all students for success in college preparatory courses;
- **Articulation and Standards Frameworks** functions to make progress in aligning skills in English and Mathematics from elementary through high school with higher education's expectations;
- **Support System for Families of Middle School Students** guides middle school educators in facilitating the capacity of families to partner with them in fostering high academic achievement and preparing students for college;
- **Resources and Materials Clearinghouse** that consists of materials, services, resources, and information for use by middle school educators and families of middle school students - - both in person and electronically -- to prepare for college;
- **Public Awareness Campaign** to convince Californians of the importance of high academic achievement;

- **Direct Services to Students** who previously participated in the National Early Intervention and Scholarship Program; and,
- **Education Trust Awards** for GEAR UP students when they enroll in a college or university.

Within these seven components of the California GEAR UP Program, there are two major categories of services: School-Based Services that includes the first three components listed above and Statewide Services consisting of the last four components.

School-Based Services

While middle school students are the primary beneficiaries of this grant, the primary recipients of services are middle school educators and the families of middle school students. The program's focus is the 1,206 middle and junior high schools with a seventh grade that enrolled approximately 1,173,869 students in the 2002-03 year.

Since its inception, 158 middle schools have participated in the California GEAR UP Program. California GEAR UP middle schools are selected by application from those with at least 51 percent of their students eligible for free- or reduced-price meals. Of the 158 schools, 95 are part of GEAR UP partnership projects chosen by the United States Department of Education; the remaining 63 schools were selected by GEAR UP based upon their intention to create a *college-going culture*. Table 1 provides an overview of the schools that have participated since the program's initiation.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPANTS IN THE CALIFORNIA GEAR UP PROGRAM

CHARACTERISTIC	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	TOTAL
<i>Schools</i>	47	72	51	55	65	158
<i>School Location</i>						
Northern	24	8	2	10	6	50
Central Valley	4	5	1	3	14	27
Southern	19	12	16	19	15	81
<i>School Districts</i>	20	16	10	18	25	74
<i>Counties</i>	11	10	7	10	13	24
<i>School Size</i>	49,356	76,093	65,091	66,256	70,569	167,982
<i>Students</i>						
English Learners	38%	37%	37%	37%	39%	38%
Low-Income	72%	76%	71%	69%	74%	72%
Recipients of Educational Trust Awards	250	500	750	750	750	3,000

The key aspects of the School-Based Services are:

- **School Leadership Team:** The principal and members of the school team lead the effort to realize their school's vision.
- **Regional Coordinator:** GEAR UP staff that provide on-site guidance and support to schools and serve as a liaison with GEAR UP partners.
- **School Site Coordinator:** The primary school contact with the Regional Coordinator and Leadership Team.
- **School Self-Assessment Rubric (SSAR):** An assessment tool to measure progress towards developing a *college-going culture* and becoming an effective middle school community.
- **Professional Development Action Plan (PDAP):** GEAR UP provides resources to make progress on the elements identified as needing attention on the School Self-Assessment Rubric.
- **Institutes and Forums:** Strategic planning sessions involving all school leadership team members, Regional Coordinators, GEAR UP staff, and partners.**Facilitation Services:** School-specific services provided by GEAR UP staff and trained facilitators from The Achievement Council.
- **Family Engagement:** School-based workshops provided by the Parent Institute for Quality Education and the GEAR UP Family Services Initiative for families at each school.

In 2003-04, 65 middle schools are receiving these direct services from the California GEAR UP Program.

Statewide Services

To support the school-based initiatives that provide direct services to a limited number of schools each year, additional resources are available through the California GEAR UP Program for middle school administrators, counselors, teachers, and families throughout the state:

- ***College: Making It Happen for Middle School Educators:*** Sponsored in collaboration with the California Education Round Table, regional workshops provide information and strategies for educators to support ALL students mastering State Board of Education standards and preparing for college.
- ***California GEAR UP Community Conference:*** Held annually in March, the conference engages school and university faculty, education practitioners, community leaders, program partners, policymakers, and state and local GEAR UP staff in statewide forums focused on data driven assessment, "Lessons Learned", and recommendations for sustainability of effort.
- ***California GEAR UP Education Trust Awards:*** Each year, Educational Trust Accounts of \$2,000 are established for middle school students across California as part of the Golden State ScholarShare College Savings Trust Program administered by the California Student Aid Commission. Recipients are chosen from students at GEAR UP schools, Educational Talent Search projects, and selected California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) projects.

- ***California GEAR UP Newsletter:*** The newsletter is a periodic publication for the middle school community consisting of information about student and school progress, national and statewide activities, program services, and GEAR UP contributions to the middle school reform movement.
- ***California GEAR UP Resources and Materials Clearinghouse:*** The clearinghouse provides a single source of information, materials, and resources to support middle school educators, families, and students in preparing for college. The Clearinghouse is provided in three formats: a website at www.californiacolleges.edu, a convenient Educators Kit, and an interactive, mobile “College Corner” kiosk that is available at middle schools throughout the state.
- ***California GEAR UP Video: Kids on Campus: A Journey that Changes Lives*** is a half-hour “virtual tour” featuring campuses from the California Community Colleges, California State University, University of California and independent colleges and universities. The video offers an exciting introduction to college as experienced by middle school students and families. Over 3,000 copies have been distributed to the middle school community and GEAR UP supporters.

Implementation Teams

A principle guiding the delivery of services in the California GEAR UP Program is the integration of multiple perspectives into the implementation process. These varying views are discussed through Implementation Teams that have representation from the Round Table, the California Student Aid Commission, and California GEAR UP partners. Members of these teams bring specific skills and expertise necessary for program implementation and are responsible for recommending activities to ensure that the goals and objectives of the program are achieved. The teams discuss formative evaluation information gathered on a continuous basis about the effectiveness of services that are provided to middle school educators and families. Implementation Teams meet to discuss the information collected on the efficacy of actions taken and are expected to review progress, recommend modifications, and design strategies for sharing lessons learned with the statewide middle school community.

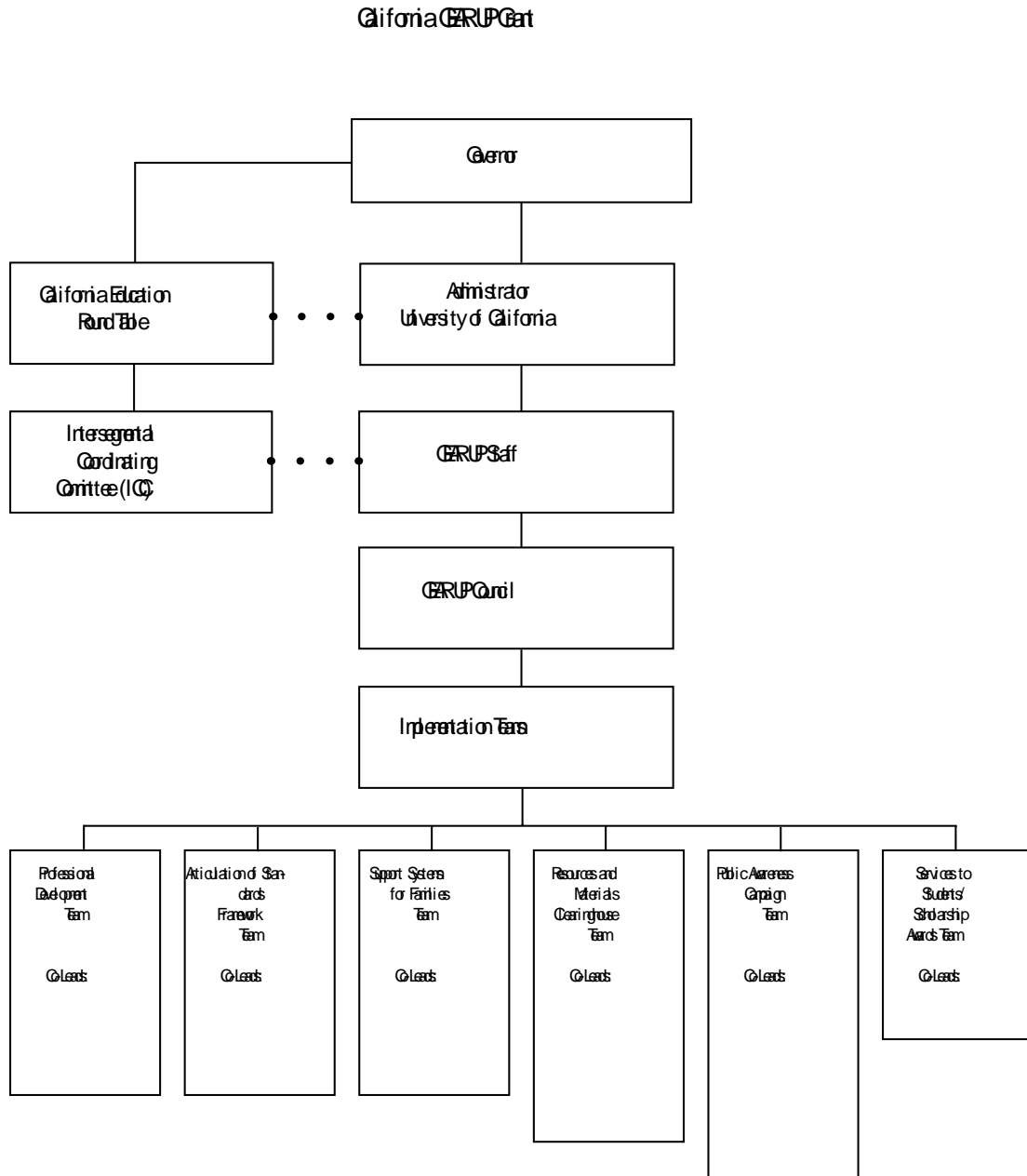
THE ORGANIZATION OF THE CALIFORNIA GEAR UP PROGRAM

The organization of the California GEAR UP Program is complex, as Chart 1 on the next page displays. In addition to the partners and Implementation Teams, the staff performs multiple roles, has vast experience in education, and has coalesced into a team through staff professional development.

Role of Staff Professional Development

As this statewide project was initiated, the importance of staff selection and professional development became clear. Staff -- irrespective of their roles and responsibilities -- needed to be relatively self-reliant because they were geographically dispersed throughout the state. Central to this effort, then, was the development of a unifying theme, or belief, that could mold these dispersed professionals into a team.

**Chart 1
Organization of the California GEAR UP Program**



The Achievement Council provided the unifying theme. Through discussions with the leadership of The Achievement Council, the underlying belief for the program staff became that schools needed to change in order for the goals of the program to be realized. As such, the focus of the program was on school change as contrasted to support for individual students – an exciting new concept to energize and unify a staff that was in the process of being hired. In addition to this belief, The Achievement Council offered a concrete process through which this concept could be implemented.

Because of the compelling and radical nature of that belief for the staff selected early in the program's history, later staff members were chosen because of their commitment to that belief. Added to the selection of program staff was the identification of myriad partners who both shared this belief and were willing to modify their normal practices to accommodate the GEAR UP Program. In a sense, all participants -- staff and partners -- stretched their existing traditional processes to respond effectively to the needs of schools and their changing circumstances.

Among the most crucial aspects of this dynamic is the role of leadership. While there is an organizational hierarchy, the primary nature of the interaction among staff is collegial. This interaction has been facilitated and fostered through monthly meetings and retreats that have ensured that information was shared widely, ideas were offered by all, which are considered and respected, and this geographically dispersed staff have the opportunity to become familiar professionally and personally with each other. From those interactions, a culture of trust has been built that recognizes the contributions of each to the other. Additionally, the support staff has the responsibility to actualize the "dreams" of the managers. In that sense, the director has conveyed to staff that leadership resides in each staff member and each of them should take pride in the accomplishment of others and the program as a whole.

Through the continuing efforts of all staff and partners, the program has developed a winning formula that is characterized by:

- A shared vision;
- Mutual respect;
- High energy on everyone's part;
- An understanding that changes and modifications will occur regularly in the functioning of the program in order to ensure its vitality; and,
- Pride and belief in the program.

EVALUATION RESULTS

In the section that follows, evaluative information is presented on relevant quantitative measures of effectiveness. The results below are based on studies of these changes at schools that have actively participated with the California GEAR UP Program for two consecutive years. To date, there are 32 schools from Years 1 and 2 who completed the two years in 2002, 18 schools from Year 3 who completed the two years in 2003, and 32 Cohort 4 schools completing two years in 2004.

Data are collected for the two years of participation and for the year prior for comparative purposes. On the tables that follow, the entire time span indicated on the table has been used to calculate change and percentage of change presented on the final rows for each of the cohort. In most instances, the change over the entire time span is in the same direction; on occasions; there is a reverse in direction between the second and third year for a cohort. Nevertheless, the calculation of change crosses the entire time span as presented.

DEVELOPING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE

The ultimate goal of the California GEAR UP Program is to ensure that a higher proportion of students will enroll and succeed in high school and postsecondary education. In order to achieve that goal, schools need to develop a self-sustaining *college-going culture* that includes Advanced Course Offerings, Academic Counseling, and Test-Taking Preparation and Career Exploration, among other aspects. Since 1999, the partners of the GEAR UP Program have either made existing services available to schools or developed new ways to assist schools in developing these aspects of a *college-going culture* that are described separately below.

Advanced Courses

Advanced Courses prepare students for Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors classes in high school. The GEAR UP Program assists schools in offering these courses by supporting participation of GEAR UP middle schools at the College Board's *Vertical Teams* and *Interdisciplinary Strategies* workshops, AVID's *Write Path* workshop as well as discussing the importance of offering these courses at the Institutes and Forums.

Table 2 shows the average number of advanced courses sections offered and number and percent of schools offering them.

TABLE 2
ADVANCED COURSES OFFERED IN CALIFORNIA GEAR UP SCHOOLS

Cohort	Number of Schools	School Year	Math			Language			Science			Social Science			Foreign Language		
			Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Sections	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Sections	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Sections	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Sections	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Sections
1 & 2	32	1999-2000	25	78%	4.8	10	31%	7.4	11	34%	5.6	5	16%	6.6	7	22%	4.7
		2000-2001	29	91%	6.6	18	56%	5.8	17	53%	6.1	5	16%	6.8	13	41%	2.5
		2001-2002	30	94%	7.1	19	59%	6.4	15	47%	4.8	12	38%	14.6	13	41%	2.2
		Change	+5	+16%	+2.3	+9	+28%	-1.0	+4	+13%	-0.8	+7	+22%	+8.0	+6	+19%	-2.5
		% Change	20%	21%	48%	90%	90%	-14%	36%	38%	-14%	140%	138%	121%	86%	86%	-53%
3	18	2000-2001	18	100%	6.6	13	72%	5.2	8	44%	4.5	3	17%	3.7	7	39%	2.9
		2001-2002	18	100%	7.6	17	94%	6.3	12	67%	4.8	12	67%	5.7	7	39%	3.3
		2002-2003	18	100%	10.7	17	94%	7.5	12	67%	6.1	13	72%	5.8	6	33%	4.5
		Change	0	0%	+4.1	+4	+22%	+2.3	+4	+23%	+1.6	+10	+55%	+2.1	-1	-6%	+1.6
		% Change	0%	0%	62%	31%	31%	44%	50%	52%	36%	333%	324%	57%	-14%	-15%	55%
4	30	2001-2002	27	90%	10.5	21	70%	8.2	15	50%	9	13	43%	9.8	14	47%	2.6
		2002-2003	29	97%	11.7	24	80%	9.6	18	60%	10.2	16	53%	11.4	15	50%	2.7
		2003-2004	29	97%	12.1	27	90%	8.7	19	63%	7.6	18	60%	8.7	10	33%	3.8
		Change	+2	+7%	+1.6	+6	+20%	+0.5	+4	+13%	-1.4	+5	+17%	-1.1	-4	-14%	+1.2
		% Change	7%	8%	15%	29%	29%	6%	27%	26%	-16%	39%	40%	-11%	-29%	-30%	46%

These data are for schools that completed two years with the GEAR UP Program. Over 90 percent of schools in each cohort offered Advanced Mathematics courses by the end of their involvement in the program. Moreover, the number of Advanced Mathematics sections increased during the time period for all cohorts (in Cohort 1 and 2, the increase was 48 percent; for Cohort 3, the increase was 62 percent; and, for Cohort 4, the increase was 15 percent).

Additionally, Language Arts and Social Science showed growth from the baseline year. There was growth in the number and percent of schools offering Science in all three cohorts, but there was a decline in the number of Science sections for two of the cohorts (14 percent decrease for Cohorts 1 and 2 and 16 percent decline for Cohort 4). Middle school staff report that there is a lack of fully prepared teachers, particularly in Science, at this level.

Enrollment in Algebra and Geometry in Grade 8

A crucial aspect of a *college-going culture* is the enrollment of students in Algebra and Geometry in middle school. The GEAR UP Program addresses this aspect of a *college-going culture* through its Institutes and Forums and through support for participation of teachers in *Vertical Teams* and *Write Path* mathematics workshops.

Table 3 shows the number and percent of schools offering these courses in Grade 8 and the number and percent of students enrolled as compared to the state average, as reported on the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program each spring.

TABLE 3
ENROLLMENT IN ALGEBRA AND GEOMETRY IN CALIFORNIA GEAR UP SCHOOLS

Cohort	Number of Schools	School Year	Total Grade 8 STAR Enrollment	Algebra					Geometry				
				Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students in Algebra	Percent of Students	State % of Students	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students in Geometry	Percent of Students	State % of Students
1 & 2	31	1999-2000	9,730	23	74%	1,664	17.1%	20%	5	16%	162	1.7%	1%
		2000-2001	11,909	27	87%	2,100	17.6%	25%	8	26%	283	2.4%	1%
		2001-2002	12,416	28	90%	2,910	23.4%	29%	8	26%	266	2.1%	2%
		Change	2,686	5	16%	1,246	6.3%	9%	3	10%	104	0.4%	1%
Following active years		2002-2003	12,984	31	100%	3,404	26.2%	32%	11	35%	331	2.5%	2%
		Change	3,254	8	26%	1,740	9.1%	12%	6	19%	169	0.8%	1%
3	18	2000-2001	8,670	18	100%	2,069	23.9%	25%	7	39%	148	1.7%	1%
		2001-2002	8,711	18	100%	1,826	21.0%	29%	5	28%	126	1.4%	2%
		2002-2003	9,551	18	100%	2,445	25.6%	32%	7	39%	198	2.1%	2%
		Change	881	0	0%	376	1.7%	7%	0	0%	50	0.4%	1%
4	30	2001-2002	11,618	27	90%	2,612	22.5%	29%	2	7%	142	1.2%	2%
		2002-2003	12,755	29	97%	3,007	23.6%	32%	3	10%	196	1.5%	2%
		Change	1,137	2	7%	395	1.1%	3%	1	3%	54	0.3%	0%

Examining Algebra and Geometry enrollment for Grade 8 is another way of assessing the level of advanced coursework offered by middle schools. With state encouragement to offer Algebra and Geometry, GEAR UP schools and middle schools statewide have increased the number and percent of students enrolled in these courses.

Over this time period, the percentage of students taking Algebra in California GEAR UP schools has come to reflect more -- although it still lags -- the state average for each cohort (for Cohorts 1 and 2, 26.2 percent of students in GEAR UP schools enrolled in Algebra as contrasted to 32 percent statewide in 2002-03 -- the year following participation in the GEAR UP Program). With respect to Geometry, a higher proportion of students at GEAR UP schools in Cohorts 1 and 2 and 3 enrolled in Geometry than did students statewide. Because the population at GEAR UP schools consists of at least 51 percent of students from low-income families, the growth of the number of these students taking Algebra and Geometry and its greater approximation to the state average, which consists of all schools, is encouraging.

Academic Counseling

Academic Counseling is advisement and guidance by teachers, counselors, or others that results in an individual academic plan for each student through high school as well as attendance at meetings about postsecondary education. Traditionally, counseling to assist students in planning for postsecondary education was the responsibility of high schools, although providing informational meetings in Grade 8 has become more common recently. Individual counseling has usually been limited to the ending year of middle school, with high school counselors helping students plan their first year of high school.

Because of the importance in creating a *college-going culture* of establishing an individual academic plan for students in middle school, the GEAR UP Program has encouraged schools to place emphasis on developing these plans and discussing them with the family of each student. The intent of these plans is that they will follow the student from middle to high school and become a guide in the schools and for families in developing subsequent course schedules. To that end, the GEAR UP Program provides support for middle schools in strengthening this aspect of a *college-going culture* through discussions at the Institutes and Forums that demonstrate the importance of counseling, through the *College: Making It Happen* for Middle School Educators series, and through distribution of *College: Making It Happen* materials.

Table 4 on the next page shows the number and percent of schools offering individual plans and informational meetings with the families of students. California GEAR UP middle schools have increasingly assisted students in developing individual academic plans and have provided informational meetings at earlier grades, with the goal that all students will plan to enroll in postsecondary education. However, not all schools have a counselor. In almost all cases, schools have enlisted teachers, administrators, coordinators, volunteers, mentors, and postsecondary partners to provide guidance in developing individual academic plans and in providing postsecondary and financial aid information. Some schools have "Homeroom for College" day once a week throughout the year.

Test-Taking Preparation and Career Exploration

Schools that have developed a *college-going culture* provide students the opportunity to practice taking standardized tests that simulate college admissions examinations in order to develop familiarity and reduce anxiety. Likewise, these schools create occasions for students to explore career options and their aptitudes for them early in their educational journeys. In keeping with this aspect of a *college-going culture*, the GEAR UP Program requested that ACT develop a middle school module of its EXPLORE Program and encouraged the use of the College Board's PSAT in middle school. These resources give students an early indication of

their academic strengths and weaknesses, useful information for developing an academic plan, and preparation for taking the SAT or ACT late in their high school careers.

TABLE 4
ACADEMIC COUNSELING AT CALIFORNIA GEAR UP SCHOOLS

Percent of schools providing individual academic plans									
Cohort	Number of Schools		School Year	Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8	
				Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools
1 & 2	Gr 6	Gr 7-8	2000-2001	6	24%	17	53%	21	66%
	25	32	2001-2002	10	40%	18	56%	23	72%
			Change	4	16%	1	3%	2	6%
3	Gr 6	Gr 7-8	2000-2001	4	33%	8	34%	10	56%
	12	18	2001-2002	6	50%	12	67%	14	78%
			2002-2003	9	75%	16	89%	16	89%
			Change	5	42%	8	55%	6	33%
4	Gr 6	Gr 7-8	2001-2002	8	32%	12	40%	17	57%
	25	30	2002-2003	12	48%	19	63%	24	80%
			2003-2004	12	48%	21	70%	24	80%
			Change	4	16%	9	30%	7	23%
Percent of schools providing postsecondary informational meetings									
1 & 2	Gr 6	Gr 7-8	2000-2001	14	56%	20	62%	24	75%
	25	32	2001-2002	18	72%	23	72%	23	72%
			Change	4	16%	3	10%	-1	-3%
3	Gr 6	Gr 7-8	2000-2001	4	33%	11	61%	13	72%
	12	18	2001-2002	9	75%	16	89%	17	94%
			2002-2003	10	83%	17	94%	17	94%
			Change	6	50%	6	33%	4	22%
4	Gr 6	Gr 7-8	2001-2002	10	40%	18	60%	21	70%
	25	30	2002-2003	17	68%	25	83%	27	90%
			2003-2004	17	68%	24	80%	24	80%
			Change	7	28%	6	20%	3	10%

Table 5 on the next page shows the number and percent of schools offering the PSAT or EXPLORE and the number of students taking these protocols. In the past two years, a shift has occurred from the PSAT to EXPLORE suggesting that middle schools are becoming increasingly interested in supporting students in exploring careers as well as becoming familiar with standardized college admissions tests. This conclusion is reinforced by the increased usage of ACT's DISCOVER career exploration website in 2003-2004. However, as the format of admissions tests change for the Class of 2006, a rebound of interest in the PSAT may occur.

TABLE 5
PSAT & EXPLORE TEST TAKING

Cohort	Number of Schools		School Year	PSAT Exam from College Board									EXPLORE from ACT, Inc.								
	Grade 6	Grades 7-8		Grade 6			Grade 7			Grade 8			Grade 6			Grade 7			Grade 8		
				Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students	Number of Schools	Percent of Schools	Number of Students
1 & 2	25	32	2000-2001	2	8%	343	1	3%	2	1	3%	8	0			0			0		
			2001-2002	2	8%	336	2	6%	203	2	6%	71	1	4%	4						
			Change	0	0%	-7	1	3%	201	1	3%	63	1	4%	4	0				0	
3	12	32	2000-2001	5	42%	76	2	11%	78	0			0			0			0		
			2001-2002	4	33%	87	0			1	6%	30	0			0			0		
			2002-2003	3	25%	171	1	6%	13	0			3	25%	27						
			Change	-2	-17%	95	-1	-5%	-65	-1	-6%	-30	3	25%	27	0				0	
4	25	30	2001-2002	8	32%	347	4	13%	47	1	3%	66	5	20%	86	2	7%	6	0		
			2002-2003	7	28%	290	1	3%	5	1	3%	85	10	40%	143	3	10%	17	0		
			2003-2004	1	4%	2	2	7%	22	6	20%	239	0	0%	0%	6	20%	1,102	9	30%	1,770
			Change	-7	-28%	-345	-2	-6%	-25	5	17%	173	-5	-20%	-86	4	13%	1,096	9	30%	1,770

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Standardized Student Achievement

Student achievement in California is reported as a part of the California Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program each spring. Table 6 on the next page shows achievement in Reading, Mathematics, and Language Arts for Grades 6 – 8 in terms of the percent of students at or above the 50th National Percentile Rank (NPR) in the first set of columns. For Cohorts 1 and 2, the scores are compared to the statewide percent for each grade. For Cohort 3, the change reflects the difference in scores between 2000-01 and 2001-02 only; the 2002-03 administration used a different test – the CAT/6 – whose scores are not directly comparable to earlier scores but are presented in italics for informational purposes. For Cohort 4, the scores are reported for 2001-02 and 2002-03 without a calculation for change.

The results of the achievement scores are encouraging. In all three subject areas, students in Cohorts 1 and 2 in California GEAR UP schools improved their performance, as did students in Cohort 3. Moreover, the California GEAR UP schools made greater gains in the percentage of students at the 50th National Percentile Rank than did schools statewide (for example, the growth in the percentage of students reaching the 50th NPR was 1.2 percentage points for Cohort 3 in Reading as contrasted to a decline of four percentage points for students statewide from 2000-01 to 2001-02).

California Standards Tests (CST)

The California Standards Tests (CST) are a part of the STAR program that measures proficiency in specific subjects. Table 6 on the next page shows the percent of Grade 8 students scoring at the proficient and advanced levels in four subjects compared to the

statewide percent for Grade 8 in the second set of columns. Reporting proficiency levels for English/Language Arts began in Spring, 2001, while Mathematics began Spring, 2002.

TABLE 6
STANDARDIZED TESTING AND REPORTING (STAR) RESULTS
IN CALIFORNIA GEAR UP SCHOOLS

Cohort	Number of Schools	School Year	Standardized Achievement Percent at 50% Percentile or Above, Grades 6-8			California Standards Tests Proficiency Percent Proficient or Above, Grade 8			
			Reading	Mathematics	Language	English/ Language Arts	General Mathematics	Algebra	Geometry
1 & 2	32	1999-2000	26.6%	31.1%	33.7%				
		Statewide	47%	50%	52%				
		2000-2001	28.0%	33.7%	35.7%	15.0%			
		Statewide	52%	52%	54%	32%			
		2001-2002	28.4%	36.5%	38.6%	15.4%	8.1%	21.0%	47.1%
		Statewide	48%	54%	55%	32%	20%	39%	65%
		Change	1.8%	5.4%	4.9%	0.4%			
		Statewide	1%	4%	3%	0%			
Following active years		2002-2003	26.0%	31.8%	25.3%	16.5%	10.6%	24.4%	44.7%
		Statewide	44%	48%	41%	30%	24%	29%	74%
		Change				1.5%	2.5%	3.4%	-2.4%
		Statewide				-2%	4%	-10%	+9%
3	18	2000-2001	24.3%	27.8%	31.6%	14.4%			
		Statewide	52%	52%	54%	32%			
		2001-2002	25.5%	32.0%	35.4%	14.2%	7.2%	17.4%	69.5%
		Statewide	48%	54%	55%	32%	20%	39%	65%
		2002-2003	23.3%	28.3%	22.9%	15.5%	9.6%	16.7%	65.7%
		Statewide	44%	48%	41%	30%	24%	29%	74%
		Change	1.2%	4.2%	3.8%	1.1%	2.4%	-0.7%	-3.8%
		Statewide	-4%	2.0%	1.0%	-2%	4%	-10%	+9%
4	30	2001-2002	31.0%	38.1%	40.7%	18.2%	8.9%	25.9%	58.7%
		Statewide	48%	54%	55%	32%	20%	39%	65%
		2002-2003	27.7%	32.7%	27.3%	17.4%	11.5%	23.5%	46.9%
		Statewide	44%	48%	41%	30%	24%	29%	74%
		Change				-0.8%	2.6%	-2.4%	-11.8%
		Statewide				-2%	4%	-10%	+9%

Academic Performance Index (API) and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

For the standards tests, the results are mixed. For English/Language Arts and Algebra, the increases for GEAR UP schools were greater, or the losses were less, than the statewide scores (for example, the growth in English/Language Arts for GEAR UP schools in Cohort 3 was 1.1 percentage points as contrasted to a decline of 2.0 percentage points statewide). For General Mathematics, the gains were less for GEAR UP schools than statewide. For Geometry, scores for GEAR UP schools decreased from 2002 to 2003, while the statewide scores rose. Significantly, Cohort 1 and 2 schools made gains in English/Language Arts, General Mathematics, and Algebra in the year following their active participation with the GEAR UP Program.

This table should be understood in light of the information on Table 3. That is, there were increases in the percent of students enrolled in Algebra and Geometry in GEAR UP schools. Students in Geometry in Grade 8 presumably took Algebra in Grade 7, so their proficiency in Algebra was not captured. As schools increased the percentage of students in these advanced classes, it changed the mix of students in all classes and, therefore, may have affected the scores. Teachers are challenged to teach at a higher level to a wider range of students. Additionally, as more Algebra and Geometry classes were added, it is likely that they were taught by teachers with a weaker background in these subjects because the most experienced teachers were already teaching these courses. As such, the overall proficiency level of the teachers could have been initially lower and the range of student mathematical backgrounds wider which may have compounded the challenge and affected the results. If this inference is accurate, then teacher professional development becomes even more critical.

Academic Performance Index (API)

The Academic Performance Index is a California measure of the academic performance of schools. The scale is 200 – 1000 and consists of the combined results of the Stanford 9 or CAT/6 test and the California Standards Tests. Table 7 on the next page contains the mean API for California GEAR UP schools compared to the statewide mean for middle schools.

Results of the Academic Performance Index (API) show that California GEAR UP schools have made significantly larger gains over three years than middle schools statewide (for example, GEAR UP schools in Cohort 3 increased their API score by 56.1 points while the corresponding increase for the state that year was 17 points). Moreover, this trend is consistent even following active participation in the GEAR UP Program, as is evident when examining the growth in API for Cohort 1 and 2 schools in the 2002-03 year. This finding supports the importance of capacity building at schools to sustain longer-term improvement.

Adequate Yearly Progress

The federal *No Child Left Behind* Act requires schools to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), with an eventual goal that all students are proficient or above in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics by 2013-2014. For Grades 2-8, the California Department of Education uses the California Standards Tests in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. Table 7 on the next page shows the percent of students at the proficient level or above for GEAR UP schools compared to the statewide percent for middle schools.

California GEAR UP schools showed gains in both English/Language Arts and Mathematics on the AYP measure for all cohorts, including the year following participation in the program (for example, Cohort 4 increased their AYP scores for English/Language Arts by 3.5 percentage points and 1.8 percentage points in Mathematics). Comparative information was unavailable for the whole state.

For Further Analyses

In assessing course-taking patterns and student achievement, Cohort 4 often showed less progress than did other cohorts. Cohort 4 was the first set of middle schools in the California GEAR UP Program that did not have a majority of schools also involved with local GEAR UP partnerships. While further analyses of these data will be conducted to determine the validity of this hypothesis, it may be that the combination of professional development for educators, coupled with direct services to students, is the model that produces the most impressive results.

TABLE 7
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX (API) AND
ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP) IN CALIFORNIA GEAR UP SCHOOLS

Cohort	Number of Schools	School Year	API	AYP English Language Arts	AYP Mathematics
1 & 2	31	1999-2000	534.5		
		Statewide	657		
		2000-2001	558.3		
		Statewide	668		
		2001-2002	557.1	15.4%	15.5%
		Statewide	667		
		Change	+22.6		
Statewide	+10				
Following active participation		2002-2003	605.7	19.9%	17.4%
		Statewide	685	35.5%	38.8%
		Change	+71.2	+4.5%	+1.9%
		Statewide	+28		
3	18	2000-2001	537.3		
		Statewide	668		
		2001-2002	565.1	13.4%	12.6%
		Statewide	667		
		2002-2003	593.4	16.8%	14.4%
		Statewide	685	35.5%	38.8%
		Change	+56.1	+3.4%	+1.8%
Statewide	+17				
4	30	2001-2002	594.4	17.5%	17.5%
		Statewide	667		
		2002-2003	618	21.0%	19.3%
		Statewide	685	35.5%	38.8%
		Change	+23.6	+3.5%	+1.8%
		Statewide	+18		

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires all schools and districts to demonstrate Adequate Yearly Progress, with an eventual goal that 100% of all students are proficient or above in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics by 2013-2014. For grades 2-8, the California Department of Education (CDE) uses the California Standards Tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics, as reported by the STAR program. Table 7 shows the percent of students at proficient or above for GEAR UP schools, compared to the statewide percent for middle schools. No statewide data was reported for 2002 which was the base year.

Results of the Academic Performance Index (API) show that California GEAR UP schools have made significantly higher gains over three years than middle schools statewide, including the Cohort 1 & 2 schools in the year following their active participation.

Although there are no 2002 scores for statewide middle schools for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) results, GEAR UP schools showed gains in both English Language Arts and Mathematics.

In summary, California GEAR UP middle schools are offering more advanced courses to more students, students are enrolling in higher numbers, and the students are showing increased achievement. Moreover, California GEAR UP middle schools are providing information about postsecondary education to increasing numbers of students at all grades, and assisting those students in developing individual plans to achieve their goals.

OUTCOMES FOR PARENTS

Because of the importance of families in the educational lives of their students, since 1999 the California GEAR UP Program has provided support to 16,065 family members to participate in a nine-week course offered by the Parent Institute for Quality Education (PIQE). Table 8 displays the results of the workshops in terms of changes in the knowledge and behavior of families in supporting their children to be prepared for postsecondary education.

**TABLE 8
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT AT CALIFORNIA GEAR UP SCHOOLS**

	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5
Number of graduates	2,971	3,024	3,581
HOME LEARNING ENVIRONMENT			
Homework	17%	25%	70%
Praise academic progress		25%	69%
Limit television		13%	65%
Encourage daily reading	17%	31%	82%
Take my child to the library		12%	49%
Talk to my child about what they do at school		22%	81%
TALK TO TEACHER AND/OR COUNSELOR			
Visit child's classroom		10%	48%
Conference with teacher and/or counselor	48%	41%	69%
Volunteer at school		4%	23%
NAVIGATE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM			
Use Report Card to monitor child's progress	11%	25%	80%
Use school resources and programs		14%	56%
Request academic help		12%	45%
Use SAT 9 scores to monitor child's progress	2%	14%	57%
ENCOURAGE COLLEGE ATTENDANCE			
Talk about the importance of going to college		32%	80%

Obtain information about colleges		20%	49%
“STEPS TO COLLEGE” 5-POINT STAR, to demonstrate knowledge of the five following steps			
1. Made the decision for college	61%	98%	79%
2. Know requirements; made a 4 year plan	96%	97%	81%
3. Maintaining a good GPA	90%	97%	83%
4. Taking PSAT, SAT, ACT	93%	94%	79%
5. Knows application/financial aid process	95%	95%	84%

In general, the proportion of families who report actions that encourage and assist children to achieve in school and prepare for college has increased with each succeeding cohort of families. The one exception to this generalization is the response of families in Cohort 5 with respect to the “Steps To College” component; in this instance, a smaller proportion of families reported that they knew the actions that their children needed to take in order to be prepared for college. Further analyses will be conducted to determine the reason(s) for this finding.

In 2003-2004, the National GEAR UP program office began requiring State and Local grantees to administer a GEAR UP Parent Survey at least every two years. The Parent Institute for Quality Education added the Parent Survey to their evaluation beginning in Fall 2003. Table 9 on the next page shows the results of that survey.

TABLE 9
GEAR UP PARENT SURVEY

Percent responding "Yes"	N= 969
1. Has anyone from your child's school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about college entrance requirements or the courses your child will need to take in high school in order to prepare for college?	72%
2. Has anyone from your child's school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about the availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?	49%
3. Have you spoken to your child about attending college?	95%
4. What is the highest level of education that you think your child will achieve?	
High School or less	9%
Some college, but less than a 4-year degree	23%
4-year college degree or higher	68%
5. Do you think that your child could afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?	
Definitely	60%
Probably	27%
Not sure	10%
Probably not	1%
Definitely not	2%

Table 9 shows that aspirations about college attendance among families participating in the GEAR UP Program is quite high. Over 90 percent of families have discussed college with their children and 68 percent expect their children to attend a baccalaureate-granting institution.

ASSESSMENT OF THE CALIFORNIA GEAR UP PROGRAM

The Principals and Site Contacts of participating schools were surveyed as to their assessment of the various services offered by the California GEAR UP Program. Participants were asked to rate each of the services on a scale from 1 to 4; 1 was not effective and 4 was the most effective, while NA indicates activities that did not apply to the school. Table 10 presents the findings from this survey.

TABLE 10
ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE GEAR UP PROGRAM

Evaluation Of California GEAR UP Activities	Cohort 3		Cohort 4		Cohort 5	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Parent Institute for Quality Education	N = 64	3.5	N = 83	3.6	N = 95	3.6
Professional Development Action Plan			N = 89	3.6	N = 98	3.6
Facilitation Services on-site at schools			N = 28	3.5	N = 14	3.6
Regional Coordinators	N = 70	3.4	N = 92	3.6	N = 99	3.5
Institutes and Forums	N = 70	3.2	N = 94	3.5	N = 99	3.5
College Board workshops	N = 51	3.0	N = 58	3.1	N = 75	3.4
Facilitation Services	N = 24	3.1	N = 73	3.1	N = 78	3.3
AVID "Write Path" Mathematics workshops					N = 58	3.3
<i>College: Making It Happen</i> guide & video			N = 88	3.4	N = 97	3.2
Regional Networking meetings	N = 54	2.9	N = 72	3.1	N = 77	3.1
ACT Discover software & training	N = 25	2.9	N = 57	2.6	N = 66	2.7

Clearly, the participants regard the services offered by the California GEAR UP Program as quite effective. All the services received a rating that was higher than 2.5 -- the mid-point of the range. In fact, most of the ratings were above 3.0 -- a designation of an effective service. The Parent Institute for Quality Education that provides workshops for parents at schools, the Professional Development Action Plans that provide funds to support specific school-identified needs, Facilitation Services at schools, Institutes and Forums for Principals and Leadership Teams, and the Regional Coordinators, who are staff engaged in providing direct services to the schools, were assessed as the most valuable GEAR UP services.

The only GEAR UP activity that was rated below 3.0 was ACT *Discover* software and training which may be a function of the small number of staff that responded to this item in each of the three cohorts. However, further analyses will be conducted to identify the specific reasons for the lack of positive response to ACT *Discover* software and training.

The Achievement Council -- a GEAR UP partner -- collects evaluations from participants at each of the Institutes and Forums. The results of these evaluations are presented on Table 11. Ratings are on a 5-point scale, with "1" being lowest and "5" being highest.

TABLE 11
EVALUATION OF THE CALIFORNIA GEAR UP INSTITUTES AND FORUMS

	Cohort 3	Cohort 4	Cohort 5
Two-Day Principal and Leadership Team Institute			
Planning and Organization		4.3	4.0
General Session, Day 1	3.7		3.7
General session, Day 2			4.0
Facilitated Breakout Session, Day 1	3.8	4.2	4.2
Facilitated Breakout Session, Day 2	3.8	4.2	4.2
School Gallery Walk		4.3	4.1
Partner Gallery Walk			3.8
Planning session with the Regional Coordinator	4.3	3.7	4.2
Overall Content of Institute	3.8	4.4	4.2
Handouts and Notebook	3.9	4.3	4.1
One-Day Principal & Leadership Forum			
General Session	3.6	4.2	3.7
Leadership Facilitated Session	4.2	4.0	
Academic Rigor Facilitated Session	4.2	4.1	4.4
Family-Neighborhood -School Connection Facilitated Session	4.2		
Multicultural College-Going Identity Facilitated session	4.1		
Usefulness of handouts and Notebook	4.2	4.1	4.4

All ratings are above 3.0 -- the mid-point of the range. The highest ratings, 4.2 and above, are primarily for the small-group facilitated sessions.

SUMMARY

California GEAR UP middle schools are offering more advanced courses to more students, students are enrolling in higher numbers, and the students are showing greater achievement. Moreover, California GEAR UP middle schools are providing information about postsecondary education to increasing numbers of students at all grades and assisting students in developing individual plans to achieve their goals. Finally, participating family members and middle school educators assess this program as effective in providing specific services to schools that are expected to lead to systemic change.

SCHOOLS ON THE MOVE

While the previous section presented a quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of the California GEAR UP Program, this section of the report presents the most compelling examples of whole school change -- the primary unit of analysis -- and the effectiveness of the program. These school profiles -- in the school's own words -- are intended to "put a face" on the efforts and accomplishments involved in the middle school reform movement of which California GEAR UP is a partner.

DR. RALPH J. BUNCHE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Background

This school is named for Dr. Ralph J. Bunche, an international statesman, who was the first African American to win the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts at the United Nations in 1950. He graduated from UCLA in 1927 and earned a Ph.D. at Harvard in 1934. Built in 1957, Bunche Middle School is located in Compton, north of El Segundo, and is now undergoing a major renovation.

Demographics

Historically, the school population consists primarily of Latino students.

Enrollment by Grade	
Grade 5	191
Grade 6	391
Grade 7	343
Grade 8	304
Total	1,229

Enrollment by Race-Ethnicity	
American Indian	3
Asian	0
Pacific Islander	2
Filipino	2
Hispanic	999
African American	206
White	0

English Learner Students	
Spanish	550

History with California GEAR UP

Bunche Middle School has been involved with the California GEAR UP Program since 2002 and is the only GEAR UP school in Compton.

Primary Focus

- Develop a *College-Going Culture*
- Parent, Family, and Community Connection

Strategies

- Initiated a campaign supported by the California GEAR UP Program that included District wide publicity to identify the school as a GEAR UP For College School
- Sponsored two series of Parent Institute for Quality Education classes that led to increased parental involvement in raising student achievement
- Parents ensured that homework was monitored, compiled a School Date Book distributed to each student, and recognized students for achievement through an Honor Roll and recognition on the Principal's Student Advisory Committee
- Directed assistance to teachers through the Urban Learning Center

Implementation

- Governance Leadership Team collaborated with staff, parents, and students to gain knowledge of standards-based teaching and learning
- Parents participated in a Parent Leadership Academy on Saturdays presented by educational consultants -- Reginald Clark and Associates -- and attended Parent Institute for Quality Education classes
- Educated students about the opportunities available to them through higher education through a partnership with the University of California, Irvine's Center for Educational Partnership and the Office of Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP)

Primary Service Providers and Partners

- Parent Institute for Quality Education
- University of California, Irvine's Office of Educational Partnerships,
- Reginald Clark and Associates, Nell-Soto Grant, and the Urban Learning Center
- This year, Bunche Middle School participated in Compton Community College's "Yes You Can Go to College" Program

Challenges

- Lack of time to dialogue with receiving high school and feeder elementary schools in order to align curriculum with California State Standards and to implement the University of California, Irvine's Focus Curriculum maps

Data Driven Practices

- Continued progress in meeting our Academic Performance Index (three years in a row)
- Parents involved in committees, including Homework, Uniform, and Attendance
- Maintained high number of "qualified staff" relative to other local district schools

Monitoring Progress

- Surveys, more positive attitudes, and increased participation indicate progress in instilling a *college-going culture* and the belief among adults that all children can go to college and have a successful career
- Parent involvement initiatives are proving effective, particularly in the areas of monitoring homework, uniform compliance, and improved attendance

How is this Effort Systemic?

- Through the California GEAR UP Program, academic assemblies, Back-to-School Nights, Open House, and on-going training of staff as part of the Professional Development Action Plan.
- Parents have collaborated with staff to establish higher expectations of students
- Students have benefited from academic and award assemblies that have instilled a *college-going culture* schoolwide

Next Steps

- Continue building a *college-going culture* through on-going campaign, publicity, and academic assemblies
- Staff training workshops in the areas of ACT, Pre-SAT, and other assessments
- Continue to involve parents directly in initiatives in the areas of Attendance, Uniform Compliance, and Homework Completion
- Distribute information to staff regarding second year GEAR UP for College Program (i.e. update Professional Development Action Plan)
- Governance Leadership Team/School Advisory Council to plan next steps, including annual College Career Day

GEAR UP complements our overall improvement program and strengthens our push toward academic excellence and postsecondary opportunities.

RICHARD E. BYRD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Background

This school is named for Admiral Richard E. Byrd who was an Antarctic and Arctic explorer, aviator, and navigator between 1928 and 1957. The school opened in 1959 and is located in Sun Valley, California.

Demographics

Most students at Byrd Middle School are from families who have not attended college. The California GEAR UP guides and videos have opened their eyes to new possibilities and opportunities.

Enrollment by Grade	
Grade 6	680
Grade 7	670
Grade 8	605
Ungraded	132
Total	2,087

Enrollment by Race-Ethnicity	
American Indian	2
Asian	47
Pacific Islander	5
Filipino	58
Hispanic	1,789
African American	48
White	138

English Learner Students	
Spanish	774
Filipino	13
Armenian	11
Thai	5
Korean	2

History with GEAR UP

Byrd Middle School has been a California GEAR UP school since 2002 and is in its second year of funding and implementation.

Primary Focus

- Intensive Academic and College-Going Support
- Parent, Family, and Community Connection

Strategies

- Counselors attended *College: Making It Happen* in December 2002
- Counselors recruited students for California State University, Northridge's "Future Scholars" and "Mothers and Daughters" programs and for the California Junior Scholastic Federation
- California State University, Northridge held a Parent Night at the school
- Parents attended nine-week workshops sponsored by Parent Institute for Quality Education at the school site
- GEAR UP newsletter published jointly with Parent Center for parents

Implementation

- Counselors began meeting with students during Guidance Room Period to discuss "how to make college happen for them" and visited classrooms to discuss post-secondary choices.
- Over 350 parents participated in Parent Institute workshops offered during school hours as well as in the evening for maximum participation
- College Board's Advanced Placement Vertical Team training for teachers in partnership with primary receiving high school, Francis Polytechnic High School
- Administrators and counselors met monthly with parents to motivate and encourage them to "make college happen" for their children
- Professional development by California GEAR UP Team helped focus teachers on preparing students for Advanced Placement and college-preparatory classes.
- Weekly meetings and workshops held at California State University, Northridge for parents, teachers, students, counselors, and administrators
- Sent home more materials and held informational meetings to guide parents and students toward a path to college

Primary Service Providers and Partners

- California State University, Northridge's "Future Scholars" and "Mother-Daughter"
- Young Latina Forum and Eighth Grade Symposium
- *College: Making It Happen* workshop
- Selected to pilot the California GEAR UP College Corner computer kiosk that provides access to information on colleges and universities nationwide
- Parent Institute for Quality Education

Challenges

- Lack of time is the greatest challenge
- Three-track school trying to implement three new Language Arts Programs
- Shifting from a three- to a four-track schedule
- Counselors assigned to student programming and testing are unable to attend some scheduled workshops
- Busy teachers struggling to implement new programs

Data Driven Practices

- 18 applications submitted to the GEAR UP Educational Trust Account Program last year and all were accepted (each receiving a \$2,000 scholarship)
- Increase in the number of students participating in "Future Scholars" and "Mothers and Daughters" programs
- Increased parent participation in classes and activities

Monitoring Progress

- Monitoring student participation in college-going activities
- Monitoring parent participation in Parent Institute programs
- Counselors are monitoring student progress using progress reports and attendance records

How is this Effort Systemic?

- This year, the school re-organized into small learning communities which has enabled it to focus GEAR UP activities by providing more structured and intensive professional development
- Added members to school-based GEAR UP Team
- New librarian is committed to collaborating with GEAR UP team and support School Self-Assessment Rubric goals
- All eighth graders attended informational meetings to prepare for visits by high school counselors
- The more informed teachers became, the more they encouraged their students toward programs like “Future Scholars” and engaged their classes in activities, such as writing letters to colleges and goal-setting.

Next Steps

- Will participate in 2003 Leadership Institute
- Will organize and present College Fair for first time this year
- Implement College Corner school-wide
- Continue to offer the Parent Institute
- Train teachers in Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) in order to open an elective class for promising students in the second semester
- Encourage participation by business and industry and develop partnerships with resource agencies

We all became more focused on the bigger picture. There is life beyond middle school!

CHIPMAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

Background

Chipman Middle School is located in Alameda. The mission of the school is to engage students in a body/brain compatible learning community to achieve academic and personal growth for all students.

Demographics

The majority of Chipman students come from the neighboring community.

Enrollment by Grade	
Grade 6	262
Grade 7	231
Grade 8	260
Total	753

Enrollment by Race-Ethnicity	
American Indian	55
Asian	193
Pacific Islander	6
Filipino	34
Hispanic	834
African American	111
White	217

English Learner Students	
Spanish	117
Hmong	10
Cambodian	7
Vietnamese	5
Lao	2

History with California GEAR UP

Chipman Middle School has been involved with the California GEAR UP Program since 2001 and found the program complemented existing reform efforts.

Primary Focus

- Rigorous Academic Courses

Strategies and Implementation

- Collecting student work
- Analyzing the extent of school alignment to standards
- Training teachers to calibrate student work to standards
- Providing follow-up coaching and support

- Hired Data Works to train teachers to calibrate student work to standards and analyze alignment to standards
- Coaching for the entire school two days per month with a focus on instructional practices and teaching to mastery
- Utilizing the Cycle of Inquiry to engage staff to focus on closing achievement gaps by identifying problems, teachers looking into student achievement and teacher practice, data being collected and analyzed, and continuing the cycle.

Primary Service Providers and Partners

- The Achievement Council
- Parent Institute for Quality Education
- The College Board

Challenges

- Varying interpretations of academic rigor and consensus at each grade level.
- Parental involvement with underrepresented families.
- Students who need remediation and yet should have access to grade level materials so that they will not always be “catching up”

Data Driven Practices

- Reading intervention courses resulted in African-American students making gains of 1.5 years. While this is progress, the school does not consider this fast enough, so they have altered their schedule to provide more effective programs and initiatives
- The API continues to rise
- Fewer students are in intervention classes
- There are increased numbers of students in benchmark or advanced classes
- 10 students are enrolled in Geometry at the high school

Monitoring Progress

- Clearly identifying problems
- Restructuring the schedule to address the problems
- Collecting data on their efforts to inform next steps

How is this Effort Systemic?

- With staff cooperation, completely restructured the master schedule to meet the needs of the students
- Set a goal of high academic achievement for *ALL* students tied to the standards
- Faculty voted on the changes, including professional development and coaching

Next Steps

- The school will continue to identify Problem Statements followed by teacher practice and student achievement questions
- Data are collected around this effort and the staff responds accordingly
- Although the school would like to change everything at once, the California GEAR UP Program assisted the school by giving them necessary tools and contacts to make progress in developing a culture that supports postsecondary education

JOHN A. SUTTER MIDDLE SCHOOL

Background

This school is named for John A. Sutter, recipient of a large land grant in the Sacramento Valley in 1839. Built in 1949 on 28 acres, it was the only junior high or middle school west of the San Diego freeway.

Demographics

Enrollment by Grade	
Grade 6	521
Grade 7	465
Grade 8	434
Ungraded	122
Total	1,542

Enrollment by Race-Ethnicity	
American Indian	3
Asian	100
Pacific Islander	4
Filipino	46
Hispanic	1,133
African American	95
White	161

English Learner Students	
Spanish	523
Vietnamese	13
Armenian	7
Farsi (Persian)	7
Other	30

History with California GEAR UP

Sutter Middle School received GEAR UP funding in 2001 for two years and is a continuing school in the third year of implementation.

Primary Focus

- Developing a *College-Going Culture* because the results of School Self-Assessment Rubric completed at the first Institute indicated this was “an area that needed attention”

Strategies

- Sutter Middle School offers rigorous academic courses, such as eighth grade Algebra for all students, and it inaugurated a School for Advanced Studies for gifted and talented students last year
- Provides intervention classes and tutoring
- In August, 2002, The Achievement Council’s facilitators conducted a retreat for teachers, counselors, and administrators to address the challenge of collaborating to create a *college-going culture*
- Staff members have participated in College Board Workshops and utilized techniques that they learned in their classrooms and taught them to other teachers.

- In August 2002, several staff members attended an Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Summer Institute and started an Eighth Grade AVID class
- Eighth grade students are encouraged to take the PSAT that is administered on campus
- Parents are encouraged to take Parent Institute for Quality Education classes; to date, more than 200 parents have graduated from these classes

Implementation

- The Parent Center's director, who is paid by the school, continues to offer parenting classes that encourage parents to pursue their own education while gaining college awareness and information for their children
- During College Awareness Month, activities such as college field trips, the *College Making It Happen* Program, UCLA Express, posting A-G requirements in all classrooms, college sweatshirt day, college poster contests, in-service for staff, and morning announcements are focus on opportunities after high school graduation
- This year, four teachers attended the 2003 AVID Summer Institute and five AVID elective classes are offered which focus on strategies for 6th and 7th graders
- A GEAR UP grant through the Eisenhower Professional Development Program made possible math articulation workshops led by the math coach and Assistant Principal for Sutter Middle School that included math teachers and teachers from three feeder elementary schools. The California GEAR UP Program plans to use the workshops and a notebook of teaching strategies as a statewide model
- All counselors have had GEAR UP training and include postsecondary information in advisement sessions with students

Primary Service Providers and Partners

- GEAR UP Partners, including The Achievement Council, College Board, and the Parent Institute for Quality Education (240 graduates in 2002-03)
- Parent Center
- *Beyond the Bell Program* comprised of LA Bridges Program, Keep Youth Doing Something (KYDS), mentors from Rotary Clubs, and the local Chamber of Commerce
- Eisenhower Grant (math articulation with neighboring schools)
- California State University Northridge's Early Outreach and Academic Program (EAOP) and *College: Making it Happen* event

Challenges

- At a staff retreat in 2002 facilitated by The Achievement Council, staff responses to an assessment indicated evidence of low expectations and less than a rigorously delivered curriculum
- The GEAR UP team felt that these areas needed to be addressed and the school has moved forward due particularly to a structured professional development program and the "incredible assistance" of the mathematics and literacy coaches.
- Some of the staff participated in a video where they were candid in sharing their own college-related experiences
- Staff evaluations after a GEAR UP Team staff development presentation in December, 2002 were generally positive and indicated that the staff was more interested and willing to participate in creating and sustaining a *college-going culture*

Data Driven Practices

- API scores rose from 489 to 584 last year
- Number of students taking PSAT increased
- CAT-6 scores and standardized test scores improved
- Number of parents attending parenting classes grew
- Number of School for Advanced Studies classes and student participants expanded
- Number and teachers and staff involved in AVID Program accelerated

Monitoring Progress

- Tracking students and teachers involved in AVID Program
- Number of students taking the PSAT. This year, the test will be given during the school day rather than on Saturday to increase numbers
- Students in the School for Advanced Studies Program (SAS)
- Teachers attending College Board Workshops and continuing education
- Parents participating in parenting classes, PTSA, and site council meetings
- Students enrolled and consistently attending Intervention classes

How is this Effort Systemic?

- Staff is participating more and generating innovative ideas on college awareness
- Plan to expand the AVID program to include more classes
- Staff is using academically rigorous curriculum strategies to challenge students and using the Intervention Program to support this effort
- Parents are asking about postsecondary education for their children
- Implemented the School for Advanced Studies (SAS) this past year

Next Steps

- College Awareness Week and “College Awareness” staff development is planned for November, 2003
- Review AVID Program with continuing staff and introduce it to new staff members
- Continue on-site staff development and encourage staff attendance at outside workshops that focus on academic rigor
- Continue to develop student-centered college awareness activities and academic dialogue to raise student achievement
- Keep generating new ideas and encourage parent and community outreach efforts
- Continue to cultivate partnership with colleges to provide more opportunities for students and families

One of Sutter's main goals is to create and promote a learning environment that provides ALL students with an array of opportunities to be successful, excel in their academic achievement, and pursue a postsecondary education.

SHARING AND BUILDING ON LESSONS LEARNED FOR SUSTAINABILITY

As the program moves into its sixth year, the commitment is to maintain the high level of quality service offered to GEAR UP schools and the middle school community. The results are promising. As the previous sections of this report indicate, there are solid indications of whole school change in support of ALL students mastering the State Board of Education standards and preparing for college. However, a critical need exists to share the lessons learned and the resources being developed with teachers, administrators, and families throughout the educational pipeline.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

After nearly five years of operation, the California GEAR UP Program offers the ten following recommendations for sustainability by the categories of School-Based and Statewide Services:

School-Based Services

- **Monitor the progress of students in GEAR UP middle schools through high school graduation:** While the unit of analysis for the California GEAR UP Program is the school, the ultimate measure of program effectiveness is student achievement. Therefore, developing a process by which middle school students can be followed until high school graduation will be crucial in assessing the long-term impact of the program.
- **Assess and involve continuing GEAR UP middle schools:** Normally, a middle school participates intensively in the Program for a maximum of two years. Nevertheless, the California GEAR UP Program has a saying that “once a GEAR UP school, always a GEAR UP school” in the sense that it continues to receive statewide -- as contrasted to direct school-based services -- indefinitely. Continuing to monitor a school’s progress in developing a *college-going culture* is another critical measure of program effectiveness. Additionally, continuing to engage these schools provides the opportunity to share the lessons learned with newly participating schools.
- **Create opportunities for partner services at GEAR UP middle schools:** The California GEAR UP Program, through its partners, provides myriad types of support to the schools when they are part of the cohort currently receiving direct services, as discussed previously. However, schools need to be able to fund those services from their own resources after the two-year period with the GEAR UP Program has ended, if the momentum is to be sustained. Assisting schools to identify resources at their disposal and encouraging them to use them for this purpose ought to be an activity incorporated into the program’s school-based services in the future.
- **Determine the extent of curricular alignment at selected GEAR UP middle schools with State standards:** The California GEAR UP Program has implemented an articulation effort in mathematics between several middle schools with their feeder elementary schools. Exploring student achievement over time at these schools will provide valuable information as to the feasibility and importance of aligning curriculum across educational levels and with State standards.

- **Follow recipients of California GEAR UP Education Trust Awards:** As previously described, the California GEAR UP Program provides \$2,000 Education Trust Awards to students at its middle schools, Educational Talent Search Programs, and Cal-SOAP Programs. Monitoring the progress of these students who, in middle school, received these funds as an encouragement to continue their preparation for college is essential in determining if this component of the GEAR UP Program should be continued both nationally and in California.

Statewide Services

- **Cultivate relations with businesses and private industry:** Part of the original conceptualization of the GEAR UP Program nationally was the involvement of the private sector for it has a large stake in the outcome because it employs the graduates of the educational system. Moreover, these relationships can provide both the human and fiscal capital to further the dissemination of the resources, materials, and activities that have proven to be effective in creating a *college-going culture*.
- **Enhance involvement with community-based organizations:** While engagement with schools has been the primary avenue through which to impact student achievement, involvement with community-based organizations offers another means by which to disseminate the resources, materials, and information developed by the California GEAR UP Program. Expanding the participation of these trusted and respected organizations that function in most communities, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, will complement the school-based services model that has been developed thus far.
- **Host statewide forums with experts and practitioners about the lessons learned:** Efforts at school reform must eventually reach the graduate and credential programs that train future teachers, counselors, and administrators. They must learn the importance of high expectations for all students and the processes, materials, and resources available to make these expectations a reality from the beginning of their education programs. To that end, the California GEAR UP Program intends to seek and develop opportunities to influence the curriculum, pedagogy, and values of these graduate and credential programs.
- **Establish regular and continuing communication with other State programs:** While local partnerships are the predominant type of projects, the grants to states are a unique feature of the GEAR UP Program nationally. As such, there exists an opportunity to learn from the experiences of other states and to share "best practices" in the interest of strengthening the linkages between state efforts, local activities, and the policies that affect programmatic effectiveness. Moreover, this communication has the potential to impact national educational policy as well.
- **Communicate on a regular basis with policy-makers at national, state, and institutional levels:** While functioning at the programmatic level, the California GEAR UP Program recognizes the impact of the policies that are enacted at different levels on the potential for achieving its goals. As a consequence, the lessons that have been learned through this program ought to be communicated and inform the decisions of policy-makers.

Based upon the actions to date of the current administration in Washington, the future for the GEAR UP Program nationally is promising. As such, the California GEAR UP Program is optimistic that the unanticipated sixth year of this grant can be a bridge to a new five-year commitment from the United States Department of Education that would begin on September 1, 2005.

As a model of collaboration, California GEAR UP is committed to advancing the school reform movement and ensuring that more students are prepared to pursue college opportunities and success. To that end, the recommendations offered above and the lessons learned to date will provide the foundation for constructing

A BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

California GEAR UP Programs

GEAR UP is a national, federally-funded, research based initiative. Administered by the U.S. Department of Education, grants support Statewide and local programs in 47 states, three territories and the District of Columbia. Local partnership grants focus on cohorts of low-income students beginning no later than seventh grade. Statewide programs support whole school reform efforts and effective interventions for *all* students.

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