

# ***FY 2008 GEAR UP State Abstracts***

***PR Award Number*** P334S080003  
***Grantee:*** Louisiana Board of Regents for Higher Education  
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The 2008-14 Louisiana GEAR UP will help targeted schools increase the numbers of low-income, low-performing students who enroll and succeed in college. Extensive partnerships among key stakeholders in the government, postsecondary, K-12 and private sectors demonstrate the depth and quality of the statewide commitment to LA GEAR UP's success, ensuring institutionalization of reforms implemented.

LA GEAR UP will serve a single cohort of 7,000 sixth - seventh graders through the twelfth grade at 51 schools in twelve districts. The GEAR UP sites selected has met defined criteria indicating a need for dramatic intervention: student eligibility for Free or Reduced Lunch; composite ACT scores; and percentage of high school graduates eligible for Louisiana's Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS). Also considered were qualitative criteria: priorities reflected in School Improvement Plans; leveraging and matching opportunities; and commitments to data collection and reporting. Districts selected to participate represent diverse urban and rural areas of the state, including several most profoundly impacted by the 2005 hurricanes.

LA GEAR UP will address both the general school setting and the targeted student cohort through 2008-14.

**Objective:** To enhance the academic preparation, leadership skills and career awareness of students  
**Activities/Services:** Summer Learning Camps/Academic-Year Clubs (Project 100)

**Objective:** To accelerate the academic achievement of at-risk students by ensuring access to high-quality, standards-based classroom instruction and assessment, infused with appropriate technology  
**Activities/Services:** Professional Development and Curricula (Project 200)

**Objective:** To provide meaningful financial advice and aid to all LA GEAR UP students  
**Activities/Services:** Financial Aid Awareness (Project 300)

**Objective:** To provide additional academic support to students who are challenged by more rigorous coursework  
**Activities/Services:** Tutoring and Mentoring (Project 400)

**Objective:** To leverage GEAR UP monies in a manner that increases reform opportunities at each school  
**Activities/Services:** Cooperative Agreements and Contracts (Project 500)

**Objective:** To provide information networks which ensure continuous access to accurate information regarding postsecondary education opportunities and career options  
**Activities/Services:** Web site, Newsletters, and ePortal (Project 600)

Insights and data across all projects will be aligned to continuously address a single recurring question: To what degree are LA GEAR UP's initiatives integrated with state/local reforms, effectively addressing pressing needs of targeted schools and students? Best practices evolving from feedbacks and evaluations will be disseminated among LA GEAR UP schools and statewide.

**PR Award Number** P334S080005  
**Grantee:** Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education  
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The Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) is seeking a six-year, \$18-million GEAR UP state grant to implement a comprehensive strategy of academic improvement and early college awareness for 3,700 low-income youth. The Pennsylvania State GEAR UP program will operate in Philadelphia, Harrisburg and Allentown, targeting youth beginning in the seventh grade and following them through to high school graduation. Poverty is a major issue in all three communities, with some schools reporting that up to 90 percent of students come from low-income households.

Student services will include tutoring, mentoring, one-on-one and small group advising, enhanced college visits, and workshops on financial aid and college admissions. Parents also will participate in the financial aid/college workshops among a variety of outreach activities. To promote school-wide change and improvement, all three sites will expand professional development to improve instruction in the core academic subjects. Harrisburg and Allentown will use GEAR UP to fund new coaches for teachers along with related professional development services; Allentown also will provide university mentors to math teachers. Both districts will pick up the cost of these programs after grant funding ends. Philadelphia will support existing coaches through professional development activities and also will fund opportunities for teachers to receive graduate-level coursework and seminars to promote college-level writing among students.

Partners include the school districts of Allentown, Harrisburg and Philadelphia; the Pennsylvania Department of Education; Philadelphia Youth Network, East Stroudsburg University, Kutztown University, West Chester University, Cheyney University, Shippensburg University and the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency. Goals are to increase the academic performance of students, increase rates of high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment and increase student and parent knowledge of college. Among many objectives within this framework, the state seeks to: raise student proficiency on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment; increase the number of schools making adequate yearly progress; raise high school graduation rates; and increase the number of students in rigorous courses, including honors and AP. The program will serve these high-poverty schools:

Allentown (1,400 students) Middle Schools: Harrison-Morton, Raub, South Mountain, Trexler; High Schools: William, Allen, and Louis E. Dieruff

Harrisburg (600 students) K-8/Middle schools: Ben Franklin, Camp Curtin, Downey, Lincoln, Marshall, Math Science Academy at Ben Franklin, Melrose, Rowland, Steele; High Schools: Harrisburg, SciTech, Career and Technical Academy

Philadelphia (1,697 students) K-8/Middle Schools: Leidy, Beeber, Daroff, Heston, Roosevelt, Henry, Houston, Carnell, Creighton, Finletter, Franklin, Grover Washington, McCall, Jackson, Kirkbride, Nebinger, Taggart, Washington; High Schools: Overbrook, Germantown, Fels, Furness

Total to be served: 3,697 students Total federal request: \$3 million annually

**PR Award Number** P334S080007  
**Grantee:** West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission  
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West Virginia's GEAR UP project is designed to promote academic rigor, student achievement, and enhance awareness of the need to expand access to postsecondary education statewide, especially in those areas of the state that are traditionally underserved. Through the creation of early intervention programs, enhanced academic assessments, and a broad-based outreach campaign articulating the importance of postsecondary access, the state aims to significantly improve transition rates across all facets of the P-16 educational pipeline. The statewide GEAR UP project will incorporate best practices from ongoing site-specific GEAR UP activities in the state in order to maximize programmatic impacts. Through the implementation of the initiatives articulated above, WV GEAR UP will work toward achieving five distinct goals. Those goals are:

Goal One: To significantly increase the academic performance and rigorous preparation of cohort students for participation in postsecondary education;

Goal Two: To significantly increase the number of high-poverty, at-risk students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education;

Goal Three: To significantly increase the rate of high school graduation and participation of cohort students in postsecondary education;

Goal Four: To significantly increase cohort students' and families' knowledge of postsecondary educational institutions, admissions requirements, and financial aid; and

Goal Five: To ensure effective, efficient, and most appropriate use of resources through intentional collaboration with identified partners that are committed to GEAR UP goals.

The WV State GEAR UP plan as outlined in this application is one based upon solid research and expertise. Academic enrichment activities for students, parents, and educators have been carefully crafted to include tutoring, mentoring, counseling, and 21st Scholar Certificates, as well as many others aimed at enhancing the academic performance of the students within the GEAR UP school districts. Likewise, activities to enhance students', parents', and educators' understanding of how to plan, apply, and pay for higher education are outlined in this grant based upon proven methods of success.

Through a strong management plan, a rigorous evaluation process, and strong leadership, we expect to achieve the goals outlined in the grant. More importantly, we strive to create a cultural shift within these underserved communities so that our GEAR UP efforts may be sustained over time.

**PR Award Number** P334S080012  
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The four primary partners in GEAR UP Iowa-- Iowa College Student Aid Commission, Iowa Department of Education, Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, and Iowa Association of Community College Trustees--will collaborate to create a "college-going culture" through statewide and school-based services to over 5,000 low-income and minority students. Additional partners will include higher education institutions, local businesses, civic groups, faith-based organizations, and community service agencies. Goals for the project include:

1. Significantly increase the number of minority and low-income students in GEAR UP partner schools who graduate from high school prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education;
2. Support GEAR UP partner middle and high schools in redesigning educational programs to ensure low-income and minority students master a rigorous college-preparation curriculum and graduate from high school;
3. Foster a statewide "college-going culture" among low-income, minority, and first-generation students and families to increase their knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation, and financing; and
4. Facilitate the development of a more cohesive PreK-16 educational system in terms of curriculum alignment, increased support for student success, access to postsecondary education, securing financial aid, and links to economic development.

Services to low-income students and families will include: implementation of the Model Core Curriculum, professional development, academic support, Graduation Plans, GEAR UP Curriculum Transitions web-based program, campus activities, and outreach services to support families as they plan for college, develop financial literacy, and seek financial aid.

***PR Award Number*** P334S080014  
***Grantee:*** Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning  
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Led by the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, the constitutional governing body of the state's eight public universities, the 2008-2014 State GEAR UP grant represents the largest college access and readiness initiative in Mississippi. GEAR UP MS will provide essential support 9,492 seventh grade students and their families from 24 low-income school districts with a high degree of minority students underrepresented in higher education.

GEAR UP MS is a high-functioning partnership between school districts, institutions of higher education, state agencies, national and state non-profit organizations, and community-based organizations, focused on: 1) ensuring that Mississippi's low-income students have the requisite academic preparation to succeed in higher education; 2) significantly increasing the number of students who graduate from high school and enroll in higher education; and 3) ensuring that students, families, and whole communities have the motivation and knowledge required to prepare for, apply and finance higher education.

GEAR UP MS will implement a comprehensive and holistic strategy sharply focused on correcting specific weaknesses in Mississippi's educational pipeline. Services include: 1) strengthening the capacity of schools to deliver high-quality instruction; 2) enrolling students in a college prep curriculum; 3) creating college-bound cultures in schools and communities; 4) providing students with enriching support services; 5) improving public awareness through a college access marketing campaign; 6) expanding outreach to students and families about the college search, application, and enrollment process; and 7) ensuring that students and families will benefit from federal and state financial aid resources.

***PR Award Number*** P334S080019  
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Students who graduate from high schools in rural Oregon are only half as likely as their urban counterparts to obtain a bachelor's degree. The Oregon University System is committed to addressing this gap through our second GEAR UP program. After more than five years of working successfully with schools around the state (both rural and urban), we are eager to turn our attention to rural communities to bring about changes in school systems and cultures that will decrease this access gap.

Twelve schools have been selected to participate in this project based upon their readiness to engage and their commitment to not only participate for six years, but sustain their efforts once the grant funds have been exhausted. Schools in these twelve communities will partner with colleges and universities and local businesses and community members to create sustainable school cultures that support rigorous academic programs and high achievement for all students.

The work of this grant will focus on five goals: provide appropriately rigorous courses for all students; link students' career aspirations with their educational goals; coach students early in their school careers about the curriculum that will prepare them for college-level work and future careers; foster relationships that encourage students' academic success; and address perceived and real affordability concerns of students and families. Each school will utilize a variety of activities and strategies to address these goals. Statewide training opportunities and partnership development will support them in their work.

The result of our efforts will be school traditions that promote student achievement, encourage postsecondary enrollment, and build partnerships to sustain these efforts. With our outstanding personnel, comprehensive management plan, and robust evaluation strategy, we are poised to continue our success in the next six years.

**PR Award Number** P334S080020  
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The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has institutionalized the idea that a culture of student achievement can be effectively implemented by basing its education programs on enhanced accountability, maximum flexibility, expanded parental awareness and options, and replicating what works based on scientific research-based models. Florida's GEAR UP program is designed to provide early intervention for prioritized students in targeted schools that will set, align, and apply rigorous and relevant academic standards to increase student rates of learning, completion, postsecondary enrollment, and will align with employer needs. The GEAR UP program will include strong parent involvement, student/parent awareness, dedicated guidance at the school level, and state financial assistance to complete postsecondary education. FDOE Goals for the GEAR UP program and for all Florida students are to: ensure high student achievement; provide seamless articulation to postsecondary education and careers; develop a skilled workforce; and provide quality efficient services that offer a coordinated seamless system of education from Pre-K through graduate school. This coordinated K-20 system is student-centered, maximizes student access, safeguards equity, supports academic excellence, and provides for local operational flexibility while promoting accountability for student achievement.

Direct GEAR UP program services include implementation of Florida's Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) at targeted schools. Other direct services include: interactive web-based virtual tutoring and homework help programs; online practice items and mini-assessments aligned to state standards and the state assessment; before- and after-school programs and summer camps; curricula designed to assure completion of Algebra by the end of grade nine, with a target completion by the end of grade eight; increased curricula rigor and relevance; inclusion of a high school major to align academic and career goals; and progress monitoring plans designed to lead students into immediate postsecondary transition. Comprehensive support services include: targeted professional development for school administrators and teachers; technical assistance; alignment with parent resource centers; career exploration; strong articulation agreements and career programs; and parent/student assistance in pre-college planning and financial assistance. Florida will develop an Executive Advisory Board for the project to assist with project implementation. Florida's GEAR UP program will be designed to link targeted students and their parents into a seamless pipeline of education and life-long learning using a priority approach.

The GEAR UP program will provide services to six of the state's highest need high schools and four feeder middle schools. All school feeder patterns have at least 75 percent eligibility for Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL). 6,404 students will be served in six targeted middle and high school feeder patterns in north Florida. Partners in the Florida GEAR UP program include Apple, Inc; Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID); College Board; Florida Agricultural & Mechanical University (FAMU); Florida State University (FSU); Gadsden, Jefferson and Leon County Schools; Leon County Schools' Foundation; Pearson Publishing; Tallahassee Community College (TCC); University of Florida (UF); and University of South Florida (USF). Average cost per student served by this project will be \$468.