



Winter/Spring 2020

Oklahoma GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), a federally funded program administered by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, partners with 10 school districts and five regional colleges across the state to provide college preparation services and information to 7th-12th grade students, college freshmen, and their families.

The program is designed to prepare middle and high school students for college success through direct student support services, effective educator professional development and leadership opportunities, and parent and family outreach activities and events. Coaches provide college freshmen who graduated from GEAR UP high schools with assistance in acclimating to college life.

While school buildings remained closed following spring break due to the outbreak of COVID-19, Oklahoma GEAR UP continued to help students toward their path to college. Using virtual platforms, the GEAR UP staff helped students and their families complete FAFSA and Oklahoma's Promise applications, complete their college admissions, and coordinate placement testing for college course work.

The GEAR UP staff offered additional support to counselors and teachers by checking on seniors to ensure they were on track to graduate, setting up student user names and passwords on okcollegestart.org so teachers could use that platform as an online resource and coordinating virtual senior celebration events.

SOCIAL MEDIA OUTREACH

(Jan. 1 - July 31, 2020)



235,207
impressions



390,828
impressions



188,116
impressions



okgearup.org
12,296
page views

01

Increase the academic performance and preparation for post-secondary education for GEAR UP students.

02

Increase the rate of high school graduation and enrollment in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students.

03

Increase GEAR UP students' and their families' knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing.

GEAR UP Objectives

LOOKING AHEAD...

The daily challenges our school districts will continue to face as COVID-19 impacts all aspects of their communities are like none other anyone has experienced before. But, one thing that has not and will not change...the support of Oklahoma GEAR UP.

The GEAR UP staff is working diligently to provide online meeting and mentoring opportunities for school faculty and staff, students and families. We plan to deliver college preparation information, as well as host FAFSA nights, college application events and Oklahoma's Promise workshops, through our social media channels, other user-friendly virtual platforms and an updated website.

Despite the outreach methods we use, Oklahoma's GEAR UP students remain our top priority.

OKLAHOMA GEAR UP ACTIVITIES

Direct Student Services

COLLEGE APP WEEK is designed to build excitement around the college application process and provide Oklahoma high school seniors a convenient opportunity to apply for college. GEAR UP schools set aside time and space for seniors to complete at least one application for admission while receiving the encouragement and assistance of school, college and community volunteers.

CONNECT U is a program designed specifically to help high school seniors with the college enrollment process. CONNECT U helps ease the transition to college by providing specialized support for the first day of class.

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS WORKSHOPS are designed to be grade specific. They help students understand the importance of identifying resources and creating a future story as part of their plan to prepare for and succeed in college.

COLLEGE COACHES are housed on five regional college campuses across the state to help students transition from high school to college. The college staff help entering freshman students from GEAR UP schools find academic and emotional support as they begin campus life.

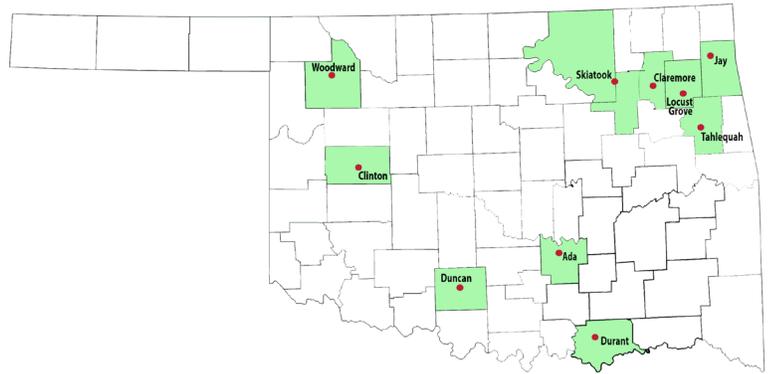
ACT PREP provides test preparation, study skills, and reading for information training for juniors and seniors prior to taking the ACT exam. The ACT is a recognized college entrance exam in Oklahoma.

GEAR UP provides a **LIVE ACT** opportunity for all juniors to test in their home schools.

GEAR UP works to expand the awareness of **OKLAHOMA'S PROMISE** among students and their families and enroll those who qualify.

GEAR UP school specialists provide one-on-one advice and mentoring to high school seniors and their families to ensure **FAFSA** completion.

CHECK AND CONNECT is an intervention and support program designed to promote students' engagement at school and with learning. Check & Connect mentors seek to build long-term, sustained relationships with participating students that will connect them with their school and help them make academic progress.



Academic Support

GEAR UP is working with schools to implement **Professional Learning Communities** (PLCs) throughout their sites. Through the PLC structure, schools are committing to helping teachers and faculty address student achievement, academic interventions and common assessments. The strength of community serves to identify students who most need support.

The **Superintendents' Roundtable** is an opportunity for GEAR UP superintendents to meet quarterly to discuss topics such as *Challenging the Leader in You* and *What Does An Instructional Leader Look Like*. The superintendents utilize this time to collaborate with each other on concerning issues that are unique to each of their districts.

OnPoint, a yearlong program offered by Oklahoma GEAR UP, is designed to offer individual coaching to emergency-certified, alternatively certified and first-year teachers on: classroom management and instruction techniques, Oklahoma's academic standards and the professional learning process.

"My OnPoint coach is very approachable; I reach out to her often for advice. She is always available to provide assistance. For example, I was having some class decorum issues. I visited her and explained the situation. She was very prompt in developing a strategy to handle the situation. I feel very connected with my instructional coach and I have nothing but good words about her." ~ OnPoint teacher

For more information about the impacts Oklahoma GEAR UP continues to make, please visit okgearup.org/impact.shtml.

The U.S. Department of Education awarded Oklahoma with a state GEAR UP grant totaling \$20.5 million in 1999. The grant was supplemented with a one-year extension of \$4.4 million in 2004. Oklahoma received additional GEAR UP grants totaling \$20.6 million in 2005 and \$34.9 million in 2011. In September 2017, the State Regents were awarded a fourth, consecutive GEAR UP grant in the amount of \$24 million over the next seven years.

OKLAHOMA
Grant **G** IV
GEAR UP
PREPARING OKLAHOMA
STUDENTS FOR COLLEGE