Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

US DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Partners for Education
BEREA COLLEGE
Designed to increase the number of low income students who enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

Two types of awards
State and Partnership

Whole school approach

Begins no later than 7th grade

7-year awards (to provide service to students in their first year of post-secondary.)

Maximum award amount of $800 per student number cited in the application
Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

1999 – 1 school district
2005 – 6 school districts
2011 – 2 grants (19 districts)
2014 – 12 districts
2017 – 5 districts
2018 – 2 proposals submitted
The Promise Zone poverty rate is 212% of the U.S. poverty rate.

Per capita income is $15,659, as compared to $32,563 in the nation.

Thirty-nine percent of our children live below the poverty level, compared to 22% of children nationally.

Within the Promise Zone over 3,500 youth are classified as homeless.
GEAR UP Theory of Change

- Influenced by the practices of place-based education, promoting learning that is rooted in what is local

- Collaborate with well-coordinated partners to work with families to implement research-based programs

- Local staff closely coordinate services and monitor individual outcomes for students.
Becoming GEAR UP Partners

• We meet with the superintendents of the school districts prior to grant writing.
• We collect a lot of school level data, require a designated POC, request dedicated classroom space and technology for staff, etc.
• Each school district must agree to provide MATCH and meet with our finance staff on regular basis.
• We require partnership meetings made up of specific school leadership yearly.
• We require district specific yearly MOAs signed by our Executive Director and the superintendent.
Being GEAR UP Partners

• We provide funding for staff members (Academic Interventionist and College and Career Navigators) to work within the schools as district employees and guide GEAR UP “on the ground.”

• We provide district level dollars (on a yearly basis) with strict funding guidelines and a Results-Plan document.

• We serve as technical assistance providers for the district and offer committee support and grant writing expertise.

• In addition to school clearance policies, we require GEAR UP staff training using a strict Code of Conduct, additional background checks and social media checks.
Implementing GEAR UP Strategies

- Lifting Educational Aspirations
- Building Academic Skills
- Connecting College and Career
- Engaging Families as Partners
Sample GEAR UP Objectives

- Increase in academic gains annually
- Increase in educational aspirations
- Improvement in high school graduation rates and college going rates
- Family increased knowledge in financial literacy and college planning.
How Are We Doing?

• Surpassed the math goal for ACT around the number of students making benchmark

• Raised the graduation rate at Leslie County High School from 67 percent in 2011 to 98 percent

• Increased the current FAFSA filing rate in our schools to a combined 70% of students
Lessons Learned

• Local people must do the work locally.
• Consistent and high quality training of all staff is essential.
• Protocols in place to ensure safety of a vulnerable population
• Local and national partners must assist in doing the work.
The Challenges

Peer reviewers often do not seem to understand rural America.

There is a lack of evidence based programs tested in rural communities and rural schools.

Guidelines on allowable activities and costs are sometimes not consistent with rural realities.

Appalachian culture can work against “need for project.”

Similar funding opportunities can cause confusion and duplication of services.
Opportunity to Network and Learn from the Berea Partners for Education Team!!!

2nd Annual Rural College Access Summit
Lexington, KY
Hold the dates!
April 28, - 30 2019
GEAR UP

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