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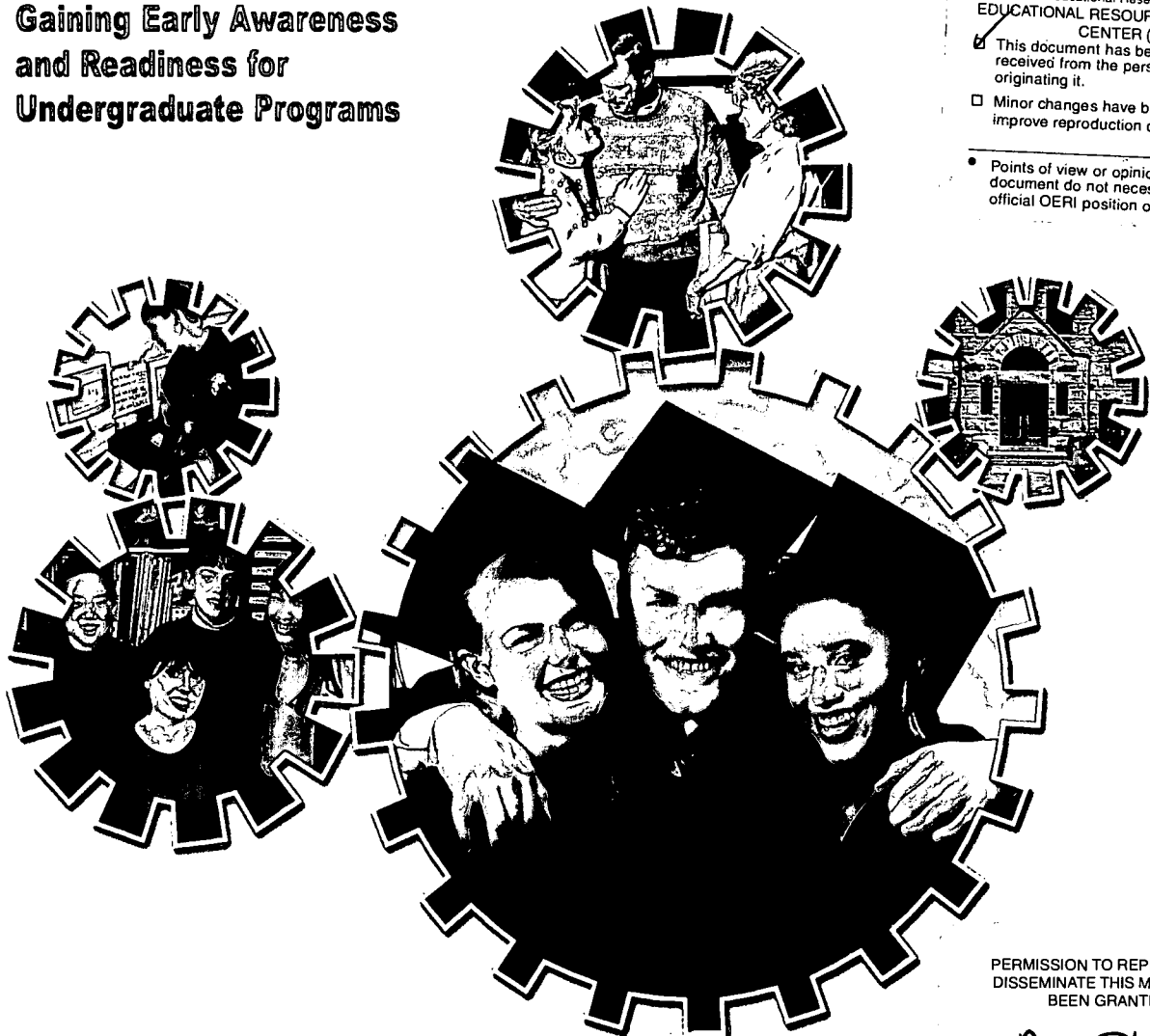
Project GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally funded program focused on encouraging disadvantaged youth to have high expectations, stay in school, and take academically rigorous courses to prepare them for college. A 5-year GEAR UP grant in rural southern West Virginia funds academic and support services for seventh-grade students and their parents and follows those students for 4 years. This report summarizes findings from two sets of surveys administered in fall 2002: a baseline survey of incoming seventh-graders and their parents, and a follow-up survey of ninth-graders. Usable responses were received from 1,371 seventh-graders (68 percent return rate), 979 mothers, 660 fathers, and 1,301 ninth-graders (85 percent return rate). Overall, seventh-grade students had positive views of their academic abilities and efforts, and their parents' perceptions were similarly positive. Student and parent aspirations were high for students' postsecondary education. Students viewed parents and teachers as their best sources of information about college, but only a third of parents felt knowledgeable on the subject. Most ninth-grade students were satisfied with GEAR UP. Students' postsecondary plans had been influenced by program activities, particularly college campus visits. This group showed a 10 percent gain since seventh grade in their knowledge of college requirements and a 12 percent increase in having discussed academic requirements with family or school staff. However, only a third had held such conversations with school staff. Recommendations are offered for program improvement. Appendix presents survey questionnaires. (Contains 19 references and 33 data tables and figures) (SV)

West Virginia Department of Education

GEAR UP Project:

Year 3 Baseline Seventh-Grade Survey and Ninth-Grade Follow-Up Survey (2002-2003)

Gaining Early Awareness
and Readiness for
Undergraduate Programs



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**West Virginia Department of Education
GEAR UP Project:
Year 3 Baseline Seventh-Grade Survey and
Ninth-Grade Follow-Up Survey
(2002-2003)**

May 2003

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1999, the U.S. Department of Education funded 21 state and 164 college and middle school partnership grants for Project GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs). These grants focused on encouraging disadvantaged youth to have high expectations, stay in school, and take academically rigorous courses to prepare them for college. A second round of funding awards was granted in 2000, with GEAR UP monies allotted to 7 state departments of education and 73 partnerships.

The 2000 West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) five-year partnership grant includes early intervention, partnership, and scholarship components for its mostly rural constituents in southern West Virginia. Collaborating agencies include eight county boards of education (Clay, Hampshire, Lincoln, Mason, McDowell, Monroe, Pocahontas, and Roane) and a number of state, business, and organizational partners. The grant initially funds academic and support services for seventh-grade students and their parents and follows those students through the next four years. In addition, a new pool of seventh graders is added each successive year.

As part of its GEAR UP grant, WVDE contracted with AEL to administer and analyze surveys to gather baseline information on incoming seventh-grade students' and parents' awareness and perceptions of, interest in, and aspirations for students' postsecondary education. In 2002, AEL and WVDE also administered a follow-up survey to ninth graders. This report summarizes findings from the third administration of the surveys to seventh graders and their parents and the follow-up survey to ninth graders at the 33 participating middle and high schools in September 2002 (originally 34 schools, but two middle schools consolidated this year). The main objectives are to analyze and summarize regional GEAR UP baseline and follow-up survey data.

Three surveys were used for data collection—one for seventh-grade students, one for their parents (one copy for mothers and one copy for fathers), and one for ninth-grade students. All surveys were in a format compatible for scanning and, based on data from the second-year administration of the seventh-grade student and parent surveys, a small number of response options were clarified. The seventh-grade student survey contained 90 selected-response items, the parent survey contained 30 selected-response items, and the ninth-grade student survey contained 50 selected-response items, with various response options. To assess the degree to which items measure the same construct (internal consistency), Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for this set of respondent scores: the seventh-grade student survey coefficient was .92; the parent survey coefficient was .81 for the fathers and .79 for the mothers; and the ninth-grade student survey coefficient was .62. Thus, the surveys possessed sufficient internal consistency reliability.

In July 2002, AEL staff photocopied the final surveys and assembled student packets (containing a cover page, a seventh-grade student survey, and two copies of the parent survey) to be distributed to middle school staff. Student packets for the ninth-grade students consisted of a cover page and a student survey and were distributed to high school staff. A WVDE staff member picked up the boxed materials from the AEL office the first week of August. Each

participating school received an appropriate number of student packets, as well as envelopes for returning the completed surveys to AEL. The total number of seventh-grade students at the participating schools was 2,008 and ninth-grade students was 1,534.

For student packets, teachers were instructed to complete the demographic cover page, transfer the corresponding identification number to all surveys, and then remove the cover page before distributing the packets to students. The cover pages were to be collected and sent to WVDE staff. Students were given time during a class period to complete their surveys and seventh-grade students were instructed to take the parent surveys home for their parents to complete and then return them to their teacher. When all surveys for a school were completed and returned, a staff member packaged the materials in the envelopes provided and mailed them to AEL.

Although no specific deadline was given for returning the completed surveys, school staff were urged to administer them as soon as feasible so that planning for GEAR UP activities could be finalized and project implementation could continue. Of the 33 participating schools, 14 returned their surveys in September and 17 in October; 2 schools did not return any surveys.

Response rates varied by type of survey. A total of 1,371 usable seventh-grade student surveys was received (68% return rate). Parental participation rates are estimates only, based on the assumption that each student has both a male and female parent or guardian: 979 mother surveys were received (49% return rate) and 660 father surveys were received (33% return rate). These return rates are all lower than last year's, which were 80%, 58%, and 45%, respectively. A total of 1,301 ninth-grade student surveys was returned for a response rate of 85%.

In order to provide timely data to WVDE staff for finalizing GEAR UP activities, data analyses and summarization were completed in April 2003. School-specific and county-specific summaries for the seventh-grade student and parent data and regional summaries for seventh grade, tenth grade, and parent data were prepared on survey facsimiles, with response percentages printed in red ink to aid readability. In May, the following materials were transmitted to WVDE staff: a complete set of the school, county, and regional summaries for WVDE use; county-specific summaries for sharing with the eight county GEAR UP coordinators; and school-specific summaries for sharing with principals from the participating middle schools who returned surveys.

Findings are presented for the regional overview by type of survey and include narrative text, 15 tables, and 18 figures. Some of the key conclusions and recommendations follow.

Conclusions

- Overall, seventh-grade students have a positive view of their academic abilities and of the effort they put into their studies. More than three fourths view themselves as good or excellent students. Further, two thirds believe they work as hard as other students and almost a third report that they work harder or much harder. Parents have a similar perception of the effort their child puts into education. About a third perceive that their child works harder or much harder than other children and more than half believe their

child works about the same; three fourths believe that their child is either an excellent or good student.

- Seventh-grade students report being well supported in the areas of confidence to take action and sense of accomplishment. They report feeling less supported in fun and excitement and belonging. In other words, while students report feeling fairly confident and successful about their learning, they do not seem to view their learning as particularly interesting or exciting and do not feel that teachers particularly value their thoughts or feelings.
- Overall, seventh-grade student and parent aspirations are high for the student's postsecondary education. About two thirds of the students believe that they will obtain either a bachelor's or advanced degree, and also believe their parents want them to get a bachelor's or advanced degree. A higher number of parents (about three fourths) report wanting their child to obtain either degree.
- Seventh-grade students view parents and teachers as their best sources of information about academic choices and most value their input to educational decision making. However, only about a third of the parents are familiar with college entrance requirements and also believe they have enough information about high school graduation requirements.
- The majority of ninth graders indicate overall satisfaction with the GEAR UP program. Further, more than half indicate they participate in the GEAR UP program most of the time or always. However, there is some discrepancy in this self-reported data, because more than half of the ninth graders also most often report they never participate in most of the specified GEAR UP activities. It may be that students are unaware that activities they participate in are actually affiliated with the GEAR UP program. Too, it may be that the first question of participation was too broad and that students did not understand the parameters (i.e., whether it covered multiple years or only the current school year, etc.). Further, it may be that each school or county offers only selected activities.
- Participation in the GEAR UP program is directly impacting students' lives. More than a third of the ninth graders believe their participation is leading to changes in their postsecondary plans. College campus visits are most influential on students, with about half selecting them as the most important experience leading to change; this corroborates students' selection of college visits as the activity in which they most often participated. Students also believe that having information about financial aid and college costs and the benefits of attending college led to changes in their postsecondary plans.
- As the GEAR UP students are maturing, they are becoming more attentive to college requirements. More than two thirds of ninth graders (68%) report knowing what courses in high school will best prepare them for college, a 10% gain over the seventh graders. More than three fourths of the ninth graders report discussing college entrance or academic requirements with family or school staff; a 12% gain over the seventh graders. However, the percentage of students discussing these requirements with adults at home is much higher (about half) than for discussing such requirements with school staff (about a

third), which indicates the majority of students, even at the ninth-grade level, are not holding such conversations with any school staff.

Recommendations

- WVDE and school staff should more strongly emphasize the importance of college-preparatory courses and encourage more students to plan on taking such courses, especially physics, calculus, and trigonometry. WVDE and school staff could review any evaluations of GEAR UP activities related to college-prep courses and make adjustments as needed. And, perhaps additional college-prep activities could be planned and implemented.
- WVDE and school staff should help all students understand that college is a viable option for them and provide information about degree requirements for various career choices and entrance requirements for postsecondary institutions. Still too many students are unaware by ninth grade of these requirements, which may make meeting all the entrance requirements either difficult or impossible.
- WVDE and school staff should provide more students and parents with information about and requirements for financial aid sources for financing postsecondary education. Again, any GEAR UP evaluation reports describing activities in this area could be used to identify possible improvements. Also, expansion of activities in this area could be considered.
- WVDE and school staff should work to find ways to make learning more interesting and exciting for students, and provide more opportunities for individual exploration. The emphasis here would be on making learning “come alive” to students by capturing their interest via activities, content, or explorations that pique their curiosity and creativity.
- WVDE and school staff should work to find ways of increasing students’ sense of belonging in the school community. Students need to feel that teachers care about them personally, and value and respect their opinions. Perhaps some emphasis on activities focusing on school pride would help students feel like an integral part of the school community.
- WVDE and school staff should continue working to increase student participation in GEAR UP activities that are currently being offered. Ninth-grade students seem satisfied overall with the activities in which they participate. Although these activities have the potential to lead to changes in postsecondary plans, most of the students are not availing themselves of these opportunities, especially tutoring and/or mentoring. Perhaps these activities could be redesigned to make them more attractive to students and/or make students more aware of their potential benefits. If the issue is accessibility, perhaps additional transportation could be provided. Of all the GEAR UP activities, ninth graders most value the college visits. Perhaps this activity could be expanded or offered more frequently to reach more students.

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INTRODUCTION

GEAR UP Description

In August 1999, President Clinton announced \$120 million in GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) grants to 21 states and 164 partnerships of colleges and middle schools across the country (Office of the Press Secretary, 1999). Another \$45 million in new grants was awarded in 2000 to 7 states and 73 partnerships (Office of the Press Secretary, 2000). These U.S. Department of Education-funded grants were to encourage disadvantaged youth to have high expectations, to stay in school, and to take academically rigorous courses to prepare them for college. GEAR UP differs from other federal programs in that it

- begins no later than the seventh grade to help ensure that students take appropriate college-preparatory courses and follows them through high school
- transforms schools by working with entire grades of students (cohort or whole-grade approach) to provide a comprehensive array of services including mentoring, tutoring, counseling, strengthening the curriculum, professional development for teachers and staff, parent involvement, after-school programs, summer academic and enrichment programs, and college visits
- leverages local resources by encouraging colleges to partner with low-income middle schools and leverages nonfederal resources with a 1-for-1 match requirement
- provides college scholarships and 21st Century Scholar Certificates (early notification of students' eligibility for financial aid)
- bolsters state efforts by supporting early college preparation programs (Office of the Press Secretary, 1999).

West Virginia Department of Education GEAR UP Grant

In 2000, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) \$10 million over five years to implement GEAR UP in eight county school districts. Students in 33 elementary, middle, and high schools are to be served via this grant (originally 34 schools, but two middle schools consolidated this year).

The WVDE five-year partnership grant includes early intervention, partnership, and scholarship components for its mostly rural constituents in southwest West Virginia. Collaborating agencies include eight county boards of education (Clay, Hampshire, Lincoln, Mason, McDowell, Monroe, Pocahontas, and Roane) and a number of state, higher education,

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business, and organizational partners. Of the 33 schools within the region served by the grant, 30 (91%) have a rural outside MSA Johnson code and 3 (9%) have a small town Johnson code, a system used by the National Center for Education Statistics (2003) to assign locale types. All 55 of West Virginia's counties have been classified as Appalachia by the Appalachian Regional Commission (2003).

The WVDE GEAR UP grant proposes to support students via

- early intervention through tutoring and mentoring that will provide opportunities for more students to attend college and succeed
- concerted efforts of parents, schools, and community that will provide more students with the personal support needed to succeed
- early parental involvement in career and educational planning resulting in more students being prepared to attend and succeed in post high school educational programs
- early awareness of scholarship opportunities, student loans, and other financial information that will lead to greater numbers of students extending their education
- academically challenging courses in middle and high schools that will better prepare students for college or technical schools (WVDE, 2001).

Purpose and Objectives of Study

As part of its scope of work in the GEAR UP grant, WVDE contracted with AEL to (1) administer and analyze student and parent surveys to gather baseline information on incoming seventh-grade students and parents' awareness and perceptions of, interest in, and aspirations for students' postsecondary education and (2) administer and analyze a follow-up survey of ninth graders. This report summarizes findings from the third administration of the surveys to seventh graders and their parents and the follow-up survey to ninth graders at the 33 participating middle and high schools in September 2002. (For results of the first and second baseline surveys, see Howley & Cowley, 2001, and Cowley, Finch, & Blake, 2002.) The main objectives are to analyze and summarize regional GEAR UP baseline and follow-up survey data. The primary audiences are WVDE staff and GEAR UP funding agents. Secondary audiences include West Virginia GEAR UP partners, AEL staff, and others interested in student and parent aspirations.

Review of Literature

Student aspirations extend far beyond individual dreams or ambitions. Aspirations encompass individual and family educational goals, career choices, and self-concept. Quaglia and Perry (1993, p. 2) suggest that aspirations are composed of two components: inspiration and

ambitions. “Ambitions represents an individual’s ability to look ahead and invest in the future. Inspiration can be described as the individual’s ability to invest the time, energy, and effort presently to reach their ambitions.” (For a historical perspective on the aspirations construct, see Quaglia and Cobb’s 1996 “Toward a Theory of Student Aspirations,” *Journal of Research in Rural Education*, 12[3], 127-132.)

Researchers at the University of Maine’s National Center for Student Aspirations have identified eight conditions that support high levels of aspirations in youth: achievement, belonging, curiosity, empowerment, excitement, mentoring, risk taking, and self-confidence (Plucker & Quaglia, 1998). The authors state that these conditions “provide an interpretive template that frames how students can be viewed and how schools can positively support . . . the development of student aspirations” (p. 253). Further research at the university’s College of Education and Human Development resulted in modifications to the eight factors related to student aspirations. These eight conditions, which “emphasize the importance of putting the students at the center of any school initiative or program” (University of Maine, 1999a, p. 1), include

- Belonging: A relationship between two or more individuals characterized by a sense of connection, support, and community
- Heroes: People whom children admire and imitate because of their personal talents
- Sense of Accomplishment: In addition to academic success, recognizes effort, perseverance, and citizenship as important signs of children’s success
- Fun and Excitement: Involves being interested in something, being emotionally involved, or having an intense experience or desire of some kind
- Spirit of Adventure: Characterized as a child’s ability to take on positive, healthy challenges
- Curiosity and Creativity: Characterized as inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a desire to satisfy the mind with new discoveries
- Leadership and Responsibility: Children’s sense of control and responsibility for their actions and words
- Confidence to Take Action: The extent to which children believe in themselves and is related to self-regard, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-respect.

Adolescence is characterized by emotional, physical, cognitive, and social transformations. As patterns of thoughts or choices emerge, youth begin to gain a picture of “who they are,” which is essential for school to have meaning and purpose. Schools can help facilitate those transformations by providing an environment conducive for students to learn how to usefully and productively manage their time, energy, and efforts in ways that are meaningful to them for the future and yet enjoyable to them in the present (Quaglia & Perry, 1993).

Educators can try to influence aspirations with inspiration, realism, and respect (Sizer, 1996). Schools can achieve this, according to Sizer, by attracting “interesting” staff with aspirations of their own, keeping schools small to allow more than casual interactions, making time for students to pursue interests, providing “aspirer” models from the community, and being flexible. He encourages, “Expect every youngster to have a worthy passion of some sort. Work at it, make it a priority, speak about it, make exceptions for it” (p. 126). Quaglia and Cobb (1996) state that youth are pressured toward uniformity by social groups and suggest that schools combat this mind-set by fostering an environment that encourages diversity, excellence, and risk taking among students.

Cobb, McIntire, and Pratt (as cited in Quaglia & Perry, 1993) report that rural youth believe their parents are more supportive of them taking full-time jobs, attending vocational schools, or joining the military than going to college. In addition, Walberg and Greenberg (1996) note that rural youth also face communities in economic decline, limited work opportunities, and increased isolation. Yet youth are a rural community’s greatest asset. When youth migrate from their hometowns, rural communities suffer a loss of talent and vitality crucial to the development or maintenance of a desirable future for these communities (Ley, Nelson, & Belyukova, 1996). Factors affecting out-migration include limited economic opportunities, lack of faith in a community to sustain favorable economic conditions, and a willingness of rural youth to look elsewhere for opportunities. All of these, combined with overall lower aspirations for postsecondary education, make it more difficult for rural youth to achieve career and economic success within West Virginia.

Howley, Harmon, and Leopold (1996) note that educators and community leaders believe that rural youth are becoming less involved in their hometown communities—this disengagement may reinforce students’ inclination to migrate elsewhere. To encourage rural youth to remain active participants in their local communities, community members and schools must encourage and facilitate the development of rural students’ aspirations and, at the same time, transform local communities into appealing places where young adults can prosper and grow while contributing to the quality of rural life.

According to Kampits (1996), rural youth have significantly higher graduation rates from high school than urban youth, yet they are less likely to pursue college degrees and are less likely to graduate from high school with firm plans for the future. In addition, low-income youth are less likely than more affluent youth to enroll in more demanding college-preparatory courses. She challenges educators to focus on the needs of the students:

Regardless of high expectations—even regulations—that students will learn and demonstrate specific knowledge and understanding, first they must want to learn, be inspired to learn, and understand why they should learn. In short, they must be full partners, not just subjects, in the learning process (p. 176).

METHODS

Instrumentation

In July 2002, AEL staff revised the 2001 seventh-grade student and parent surveys and created the ninth-grade student survey. There were only minor revisions to seventh-grade student and parent surveys; these revisions clarified response options based on data obtained from the second-year administration.

Seventh-Grade Student Survey

This survey contained 90 selected-response items utilizing a variety of response options. Students were asked about their school work, knowledge about college, plans for the future, background, and aspirations. Similar to 2001, 28 items from the University of Maine's Students Speak survey were included to capture data on the eight components related to aspirations (belonging, heroes, sense of accomplishment, fun and excitement, spirit of adventure, curiosity and creativity, leadership and responsibility, and confidence to take action) (University of Maine, 1999a). An additional 5 items, developed by AEL staff, were included in the adventure (2) and leadership (3) components in an attempt to strengthen their reliability. Students were asked to rate their level of agreement on a 1 to 5 scale (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree) for 43 items that included the 33 mentioned above, along with 10 others. For analysis purposes, the eight components formed eight separate subscales (see Table 1 for a listing of the items that comprise each subscale). Because each subscale had a different number of items, item-level subscale means (total subscale score divided by number of items in the subscale) were used to enable cross-subscale comparisons.

To assess the degree to which items measured the same construct (internal consistency), Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for this set of respondent scores for the region (using interval and ordinal items, excluding demographic items). At .92, the coefficient was deemed to be very satisfactory for this type of instrument. At the subscale level, the coefficients ranged from .62 to .81 and were slightly higher than those obtained by the University of Maine researchers (1999b) and those obtained last year. See Table 1 for subscale reliability coefficients.

Parent Survey

This survey, drafted by the U.S. Department of Education and revised by AEL staff, contained 30 selected-response items utilizing a variety of response options. Parents were asked to respond to items about their child, their child's future plans, their knowledge about college, and their background. To assess the degree to which items measured the same construct, Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for both mother and father respondent scores for the region (using interval and ordinal items, excluding demographic items). For the mother scores, the coefficient was deemed satisfactory for this type of instrument at .79, slightly higher than the .77 coefficient for last year. The .81 coefficient for the father scores also was slightly higher than last year's .77.

Table 1: Aspirations Subscale Items and Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Subscale and Coefficient	AEL Coeff.*	UoM Coeff.*	Items
Belonging	.81	.80	65. Teachers care about my problems and feelings. 66. Teachers respect my thoughts. 74. Teachers value my opinions. 76. I am proud of my school.
Heroes	.71	.66	64. I am a positive role model to other students. 68. I have a strong caring relationship with an adult. 71. Teachers expect me to succeed. 77. Teachers help me to succeed. 84. I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.
Sense of Accomplishment	.76	.68	69. Teachers care about my success in class. 70. I believe I can always improve. 78. I put forth the necessary effort to reach a goal. 81. Teachers tell me I do a good job when I try my best.
Fun and Excitement	.71	.70	63. I usually have fun in class. 83. Teachers make learning exciting. 86. I am not usually bored in school.
Spirit of Adventure	.70	.59	59. I know what I want and I go after it.** 61. I can select the best way to solve a problem.** 79. Teachers support me when I try something new. 82. I am eager to learn new things. 89. I have opportunities to decide for myself what I learn about in school
Curiosity and Creativity	.62	.57	67. I seek solutions to complex problems. 80. My courses help me to understand what is happening in my everyday life. 85. Teachers allow me to explore topics I find interesting. 90. Teachers encourage me to ask questions.
Leadership and Responsibility	.68	.44	58. I can take control of situations.** 60. I am a good leader.** 62. I do what I say I will.** 75. I accept responsibility for my actions. 87. Teachers expect me to be a good decision maker.
Confidence to Take Action	.71	.56	72. I am confident in my ability to do well. 73. I take action on causes I believe in. 88. Anyone can succeed if they work hard enough.

*"AEL Coeff.:" pertains to findings from the research described in this report; "UoM Coeff.:" pertains to previous University of Maine research.

**Additional items developed by AEL staff.

Ninth-Grade Follow-Up Survey

This follow-up survey included 50 selected-response items, 39 of which were asked in the original seventh-grade survey and 11 of which were new items requested by WVDE staff. The new questions pertained to students' participation in GEAR UP during the intervening years. To assess the degree to which items measured the same construct, Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates were computed for this set of respondent scores for the region (excluding the demographic item on high schools). This resulted in a satisfactory coefficient of .84. The coefficients for the aspirations subscales ranged from .72 (leadership) to .83 (belonging).

Coding Sheets

To keep respondents' identities anonymous in the analysis phase, students were assigned unique code numbers. Coding was done at the school level, usually by the teachers. A Student Demographic Cover Page was completed for each student for both the seventh-grade and ninth-grade surveys and included information about the student and parents. Identification codes included the student's Social Security Number, a two-digit county code, and a two-digit code for the school where the student is attending or did attend the seventh grade. By including these codes on all surveys, it is possible to compare an individual's responses across surveys throughout the five-year period, and to link parent and student responses.

Data Collection

The seventh-grade student survey and the parent survey described earlier were utilized to gather baseline data from seventh-grade students and their parents from the 24 middle and junior high schools in the eight-county area. The 2002-2003 seventh-grade population for these schools was 2,008. In July 2002, AEL staff photocopied the final surveys and assembled student packets to be distributed to school staff. Each packet contained a one-page demographic cover page printed on green paper, a seven-page student survey printed on cream paper, and two copies of the two-page (front/back) parent survey printed on white paper (one copy for mothers and one copy for fathers).

The ninth-grade follow-up student survey described previously was utilized to gather data pertaining to students' participation in GEAR UP during the intervening years. The 2002-2003 ninth-grade population for these schools was 1,534. In July 2002, AEL staff photocopied the final survey and assembled student packets to be distributed to school staff. Each packet contained a one-page demographic cover printed on goldenrod paper and a two-page (front/back) student survey printed on white paper.

Each participating school received an appropriate number of student packets, as well as envelopes for returning the completed surveys to AEL. A WVDE staff member picked up the boxed materials from the AEL office the first week of August.

Teachers were instructed to complete the demographic cover page, transfer the corresponding identification number to all surveys, and then remove the cover page before

distributing the packets to students. The cover pages were to be collected and sent to WVDE staff. Students were given time during a class period to complete their surveys and seventh-grade students were instructed to take the parent surveys home for their parents to complete and then return them to their teacher. When all surveys for a school were completed and returned, a staff member packaged the materials in the envelopes provided and mailed them to AEL.

Although no specific deadline was given for returning the completed surveys, school staff were urged to administer them as soon as feasible so that planning for GEAR UP activities could be finalized and project implementation could continue. Of the 33 participating schools, 14 returned their surveys in September and 17 in October; 2 schools did not return any surveys. See Appendix A for a completed SEDCAR Standards Checklist, which documents the data collection methods used in this project (Cooperative Education Data Collection and Reporting [CEDCAR] Standards Project Task Force, 1991).

Data Analyses

In order to scan completed surveys, templates were created using Remark software. As data were being scanned and saved in Remark, spot-checks were completed by staff to ensure scanning accuracy. Further, item response analyses were generated to aid staff in verifying the data files, which were remarkably clean. In February and March 2003, data were scanned by school into seventh- and ninth-grade student and parent databases and stored both on hard drive and tape backup. Once school analyses were completed, these files were exported to the SPSS statistical analysis software program and merged into county-specific files so these analyses could be conducted, as well as those of the eight student aspirations subscales. Finally, the county files were merged into one master file to prepare a regional analysis by survey.

Response rates varied by type of survey. A total of 1,371 seventh-grade student surveys was received (68% return rate). As expected, parent participation was lower. A total of 979 surveys was received from students' mothers (49% return rate, if one assumes that all students have either a mother or some female guardian such as grandmother or stepmother, which is not ascertainable). A total of 660 surveys was received from students' fathers (33% return rate, with the same assumption about male caregivers). Therefore, response rates for parents should be viewed only as estimates of the population. The return rates were lower than last year's, which were 80%, 58%, and 45%, respectively. A total of 1,301 ninth-grade student surveys was received (85% return rate). See Table 2 for a breakdown of respondents by county and survey.

In order to provide timely data to WVDE staff for finalizing GEAR UP activities, data analyses and summarization were completed in April 2003. School-specific and county-specific summaries for the seventh-grade student and parent data and regional summaries for seventh grade, ninth grade, and parent data were prepared on survey facsimiles, with response percentages printed in red ink to aid readability. In May, the following materials were transmitted to WVDE staff: a complete set of the school, county, and regional summaries for WVDE use; county-specific summaries for sharing with the county coordinators; and school-specific summaries for sharing with the principals from the participating schools. See Appendix B for a copy of the regional summaries by survey.

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Table 2: Number of Respondents by County and Survey

County	Seventh-Grade Student Survey	Parent Survey (Mothers)	Parent Survey (Fathers)	Ninth-Grade Follow-Up Survey
Clay	135	98	72	105
Hampshire	227	183	130	220
Lincoln	184	117	74	224
Mason	277	129	85	267
McDowell	126	130	72	81
Monroe	186	155	111	148
Pocahontas	106	48	32	92
Roane	130	119	84	164
TOTAL	1,371	979	660	1,301

For the seventh-grade student and parent surveys, and the ninth-grade student survey, response frequencies and percentages were generated. In addition, for the aspirations items on the seventh- and ninth-grade student surveys, descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were employed for the eight subscales.

To compare differences between those students who had completed both the seventh-grade survey and the ninth-grade survey (using matched identification codes), two statistical techniques were utilized. For ordinal-level data, the nonparametric Wilcoxon test was used. For ordinal data that were treated as interval-level (i.e., items with responses along a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), the parametric matched pairs *t* test was used.

FINDINGS

This section presents findings from the administration of GEAR UP surveys to seventh-grade students and their parents and ninth-grade students in the participating schools within the WVDE region. Findings are presented by type of survey.

Seventh-Grade Student Survey

A total of 1,371 students responded to this survey. However, due to missing data (skipped items), the number of respondents varies from item to item and is not reported. Fifty-two percent of the students were female, and the majority (70%) were 12 years old. Nearly all the students indicated they were White (90%); 6% said American Indian or Alaska Native; and 1% each said Black or African American, Biracial, or Multiracial. Less than half of the students (40%) reported having one brother, 31% said they had no brothers, and 18% indicated they had two brothers. Likewise, 39% reported having one sister, followed by no sisters (34%), and two sisters (17%). Forty-two percent of the students reported that four people live in their home, followed by 21% with five residents, 20% with three, and 8% with six.

Students were asked who usually helps them with their homework. The most common response was parent or guardian (87%), followed by friend (28%), brother or sister (24%), teacher (19%), grandparent (14%), and some other family member (14%). Students were then asked how hard they worked in school compared with other students. Sixty-three percent said they worked as hard as other students and nearly a third (28%) said they worked harder or much harder (see Figure 1 for further details). When asked what type of student they considered themselves to be, almost two thirds (63%) reported that they were good students, 19% said excellent, and 18% said fair (see Figure 2 for further details).

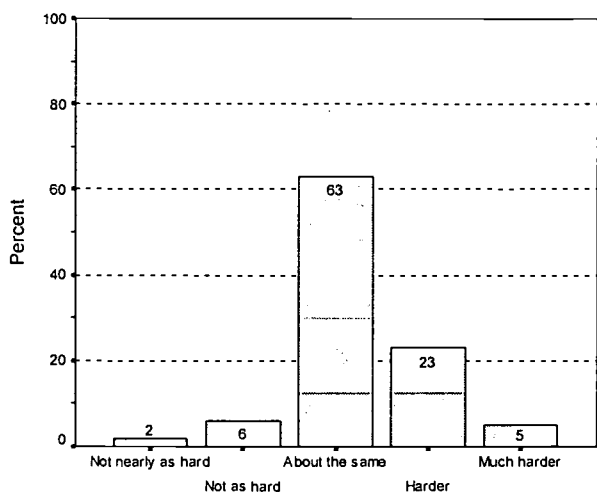


Figure 1: Students' Perceptions of How Hard They Work in School Compared to Other Students

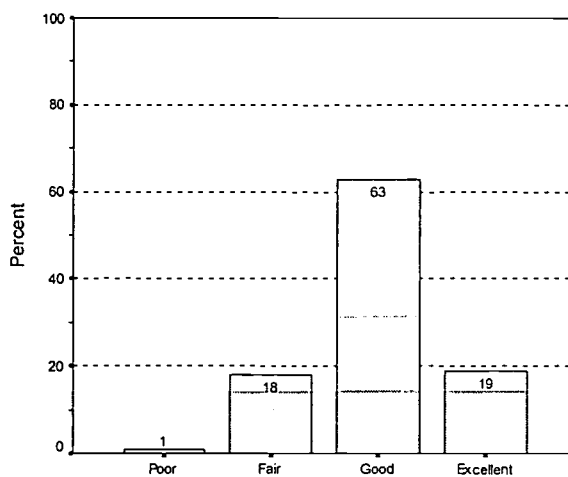


Figure 2: Students' Perceptions of Themselves as Students

When asked how important it was to them what people thought they should do about their education, nearly all students reported that a parent was very important (92%). This was followed by teacher (76%), grandparent (70%), and principal (64%). Thirty-eight percent of the students said other (unidentified) people were not important, followed by religious leader (24%), and sibling (22%) (see Figure 3 for a graphical portrayal of whom students thought were very important in helping them make decisions).

When asked how they were doing in certain subjects, students' responses were fairly similar across all subjects: 83% responded that they were doing well in English, 79% in science, 79% in math, and 76% in history. For students who indicated that they were not doing well, their most frequent explanations were fairly similar for English, history, math, and science: have a C or D (13%, 13%, 20%, 15%, respectively); subject is boring (15%, 17%, 15%, 15%, respectively); do not do well on tests (10%, 13%, 17%, 15%, respectively); and do not like the subject (12%, 13%, 16%, 11%, respectively). When students were asked with which subjects they needed help, 33% indicated math, 23% science, 18% spelling, and 16% selected English (see Figure 4 for further details).

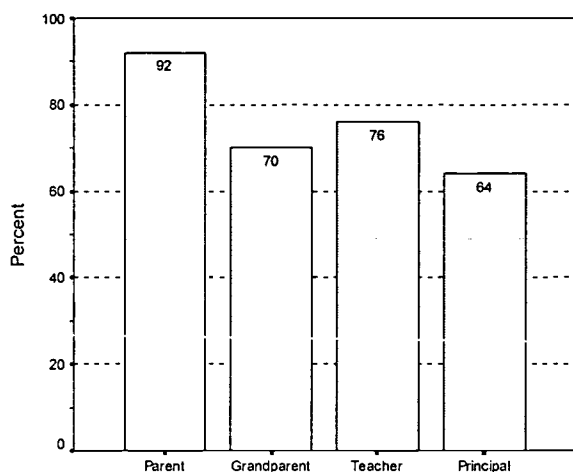


Figure 3: People Who Are Important to Students in Terms of Educational Advice

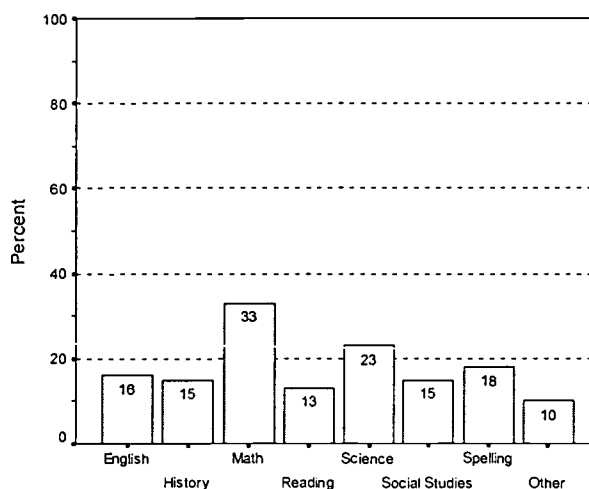


Figure 4: Students' Perceptions of Classes in Which They Need Help

When asked to name their favorite subject in school, 16% of the students indicated math, followed by art and other (14% each), and science (11%). Students were then asked what made a particular subject their favorite. More than half (52%) of the students indicated that they were good at it and that it was fun or cool (51%), 43% indicated that they liked the teacher, 41% each said it was easy to understand or that they liked the subject, 37% said that they liked the activities, and 24% indicated it was challenging.

When asked which courses they planned to take in high school, two thirds of the students (67%) selected a foreign language. Almost half selected algebra (49%) or chemistry (47%). Less than a third selected physics (29%), trigonometry (21%), and calculus (18%).

Students were asked how many hours they spent on homework for specific subjects. About half indicated that they spent a half hour each for English (55%), science (52%), math (49%), and history (48%). Between 16% and 23% of the students indicated they spent an hour per day for these subjects, and between 13% and 21% indicated that they did not have homework in these subjects.

Eighty-nine percent of the students thought they had the ability to go to college and 77% said they had good study skills. Whereas 60% said they would be interested in having a “college-type” mentor or buddy, only 23% indicated they would be interested in attending an after-school tutoring program. Less than half (47%) said they plan to live in West Virginia when they are 30, and 42% indicated they plan to be working in West Virginia when they are 30.

Nearly two thirds of the students indicated that they participated in sports (63%), followed by clubs (34%) and student government (22%). Regarding technology, three fourths said they used a computer for school projects and 76% have used a computer at home; two thirds of these home computers had Internet access (66%) and about two thirds of the students (67%) report that they had taken a computer class at school.

When asked if they had talked to their school counselor or someone else at their school about the entrance requirements for college, 80% indicated that they had not. More than half (55%) indicated that they had an idea of what courses they should take in high school to prepare them for college. When asked if they had heard of various types of postsecondary schools, 81% indicated they were aware of a four-year college or university; 64% were aware of a vocational, trade, or business school; and 63% were aware of a two-year community college. Eighty-four percent responded positively when asked if they thought that a person with a college degree typically earns more money in one year than a person without a degree.

When asked how much they thought one year of tuition cost to attend a four-year public college in their state, 21% each selected \$1,001 to \$5,000 and \$5,001 to \$10,000; 18% indicated \$10,001 to \$15,000; and 13% said \$15,001 to \$20,000 (see Figure 5 for further details). The actual cost of tuition at a four-year public college in West Virginia is \$2,548; the national average is \$3,506 (Snyder & Hoffman, 2002).

Students were then asked how important getting an education beyond high school was to their future. More than three fourths (78%) indicated that it was very important, 11% said it was somewhat important, 8% indicated they did not know, and 2% said it was not important.

Students were asked what they wanted to be when they grew up. The most common responses were athlete and doctor (7% each), veterinarian (6%), and lawyer and nurse (4% each). Nine percent identified an occupation not listed on the survey, and 8% indicated they did not know at this point.

Eighty-nine percent of the students indicated they would continue their education after high school (that is, go to college or attend a trade school). Seventy-three percent said they had heard of GEAR UP before entering the seventh grade.

Students were asked to identify from whom they received most of their information regarding their postsecondary options. The majority of students (81%) indicated a parent or guardian, followed by teacher (44%), grandparent (32%), other family member (27%), or sibling or friend (21% each) (see Figure 6).

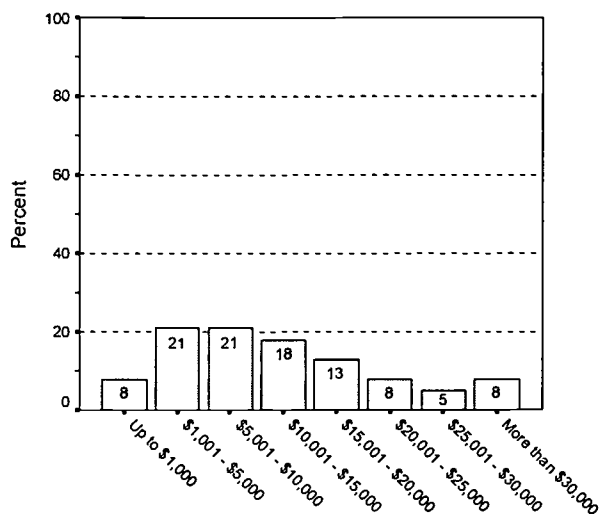


Figure 5: Students' Estimate of Yearly Tuition for an In-State Four-Year Public College

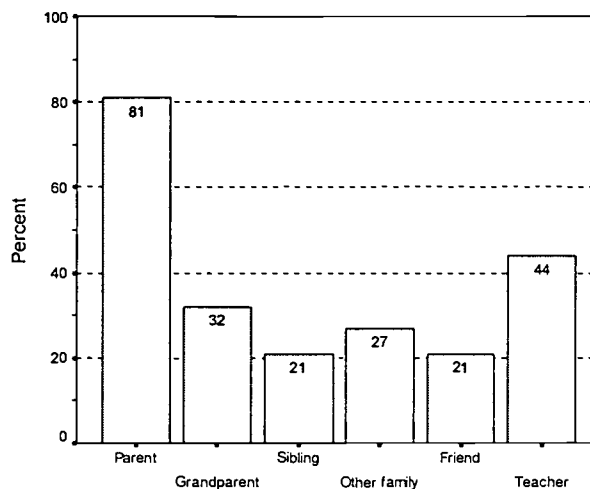


Figure 6: People From Whom Students Get Information on Educational Options

More than a third of the students (35%) indicated they wanted to obtain a bachelor's degree, 32% indicated an advanced degree, and 14% each said an associate's degree or high school graduation. More than a third (38%) indicated that their father would like them to acquire an advanced degree and 33% said a bachelor's degree. Similarly, the students indicated that 41% of the mothers wanted them to earn an advanced degree and 35% indicated a bachelor's degree (see Figure 7 for further details).

Students were then asked to indicate the main reason they would not continue their education after high school. Nearly half (49%) indicated they definitely would go on to college. Twelve percent of the students did not know, 9% said it would cost too much, and 6% wanted to join the military. When asked if they thought they would be able to afford to attend a four-year college or university, almost half (46%) of the students said they probably (29%) or definitely (17%) could afford it; 38% said they were not sure (see Figure 8 for details).

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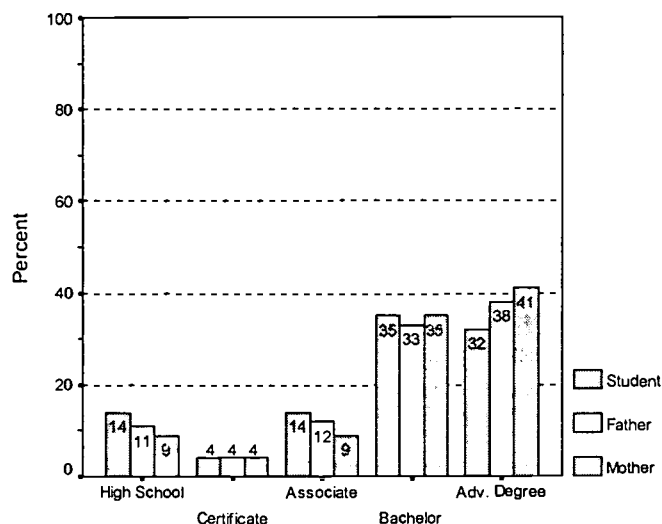


Figure 7: Students' Academic Expectations and Their Perceptions of Their Parents' Expectations

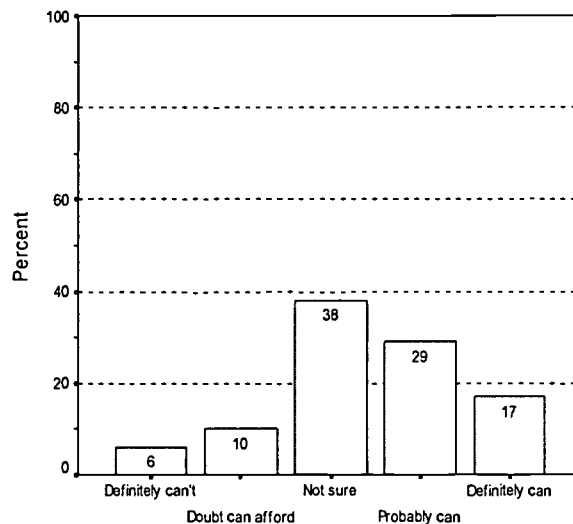


Figure 8: Students' Perceptions of Whether They Can Afford Postsecondary Education

When asked if they had discussed academic requirements for attending a four-year college with any adults in their household, 44% of the students responded they had. Students were then asked if any of their family members had attended college. Forty-six percent said their mother had attended, 35% said a grandparent had attended, 34% indicated a father had attended, and 26% indicated a sibling had attended college.

Students were asked to rate their level of agreement (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) with a series of questions pertaining to post-high school plans. For the following analysis, responses of Agree or Strongly Agree were combined to indicate agreement; responses of Disagree or Strongly Disagree were combined to indicate disagreement.

Of the seventh-grade students surveyed, 76% agreed that continuing their education might help them decide what they want to do, and 72% each agreed that they needed more education or training after high school to obtain a satisfying job and that they planned to continue their education after high school regardless of their career. Only 26% agreed that they can obtain a satisfying job without further education, and only 19% agreed that they would not be able to afford to continue their education. Seventy-six percent agreed that they wanted to pursue employment to earn money immediately after high school, 54% agreed that they were anxious to begin their career as soon as possible after high school, and 49% agreed that getting a job right after high school might help them decide what they want to do. More than two thirds of the students (69%) agreed that the opinions of family members would influence their decision making, while 40% agreed that friends helped in this role.

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The remaining 33 aspirations items were adapted from the National Center for Student Aspirations from the University of Maine's Students Speak survey (28 items) (1999a) or developed by AEL (5 items). These items comprise eight subscales of Belonging, Heroes, Sense of Accomplishment, Fun and Excitement, Spirit of Adventure, Curiosity and Creativity, Leadership and Responsibility, and Confidence to Take Action. Again, students were to rate their feelings from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). In order to give an overall sense of agreement, Figure 9 shows the level of agreement (Agree or Strongly Agree) for each of the 33 items grouped by subscale. Students reported highest agreement with the beliefs that they can always improve (88%) and that anyone can succeed if they work hard enough (87%). Although the percentages varied slightly, these items were the same items with which students most agreed last year. Students reported lowest agreement with items stating that they were positive role models to other students (49%) and that they could select the best way to solve a problem (50%).

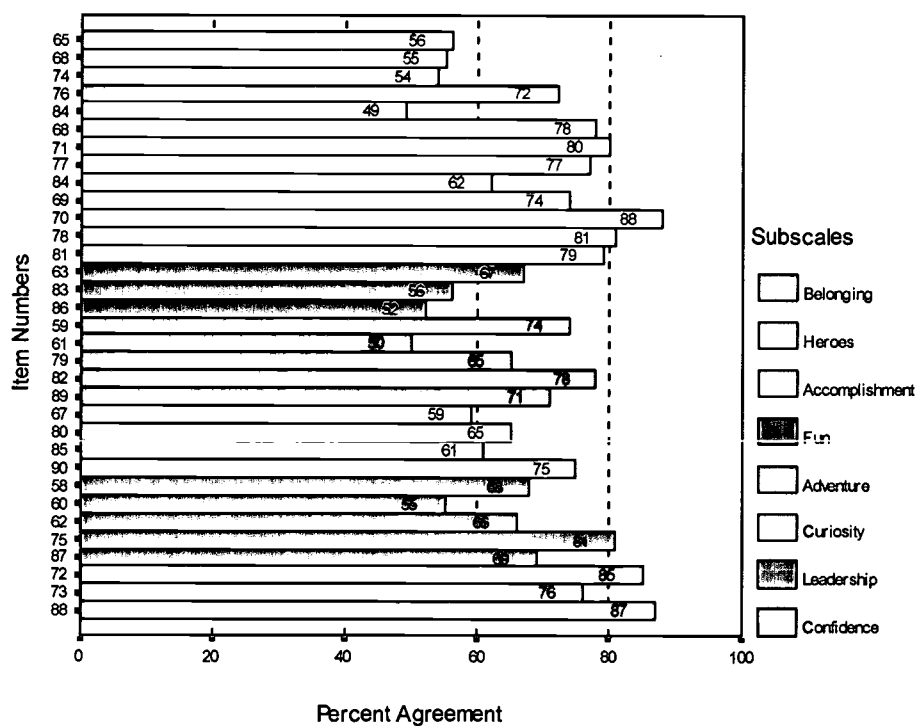


Figure 9: Students' Level of Agreement on Aspirations Subscale Items

All eight subscales had means ranging within a 1-point spread of 3.45 for Fun and Excitement to 4.14 for Confidence to Take Action on the 5-point scale of 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. Standard deviations for seven of the subscales were very similar, ranging only from 0.65 to 0.82. However, Fun and Excitement had a larger standard deviation of 0.93, indicating more variation among respondents' scores for items within that subscale. See Table 3 for descriptive statistics.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Aspirations Subscales

Subscale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Belonging	1,313	3.63	0.82
Heroes	1,317	3.85	0.68
Sense of Accomplishment	1,301	4.05	0.69
Fun and Excitement	1,311	3.45	0.93
Spirit of Adventure	1,315	3.81	0.68
Curiosity and Creativity	1,312	3.73	0.79
Leadership/Responsibility	1,314	3.80	0.65
Confidence to Take Action	1,296	4.14	0.68

Parent Survey

A total of 1,744 parents responded to this survey—979 mothers and 660 fathers. The remaining 105 respondents did not complete either of the two items designed to distinguish between parents (relationship to child and gender); therefore, these 105 surveys were excluded from the following analysis by parent. Further, due to missing data (skipped items), the number of respondents varies from item to item and is not reported. For the mother's responses, 93% indicated they were either the mother or female guardian; other responses included step or foster mother and grandmother. For the male respondents, 89% indicated they were either the father or male guardian; other responses included step or foster father, grandfather, and friend of the child's mother.

Parents were asked how many hours each day their child spent on homework for specific subjects; responses from mothers and fathers were very similar. About two thirds of the mothers and fathers estimated that their child spent a half hour per day each for English (70% mothers, 69% fathers), science (64% mothers, 66% fathers), math (63% mothers, 64% fathers), history/social studies (61% mothers, 66% fathers), and all other subjects combined (59% mothers, 63% fathers). Less than 20% of both groups said that their child spent no time on English (12% mothers, 13% fathers), science (17% each), math (8% mothers, 9% fathers), history/social studies (17% mothers, 16% fathers), and all other subjects combined (18% each).

When parents were asked how often each week they helped their child with homework, about half of the mothers and fathers said they occasionally helped their child with English (50% mothers, 49% fathers), science (50% mothers, 55% fathers), math (46% mothers, 53% fathers), history/social studies (48% mothers, 54% fathers), and all other subjects (52% mothers, 54% fathers). A higher percentage of mothers indicated helping their child with homework in these subjects either frequently (about 23% compared to 17%) or every day (about 15% compared to 8%); further, a higher percentage of fathers responded that they never help with homework (about 20% compared to 12%).

Parents were then asked how hard they thought their child worked in school. Parent responses were very similar: 54% of mothers and 56% of fathers indicated that their child worked as hard as other students; 30% of both mothers and fathers indicated that their child worked harder than other students (see Figure 10 for further details). Also, 58% of mothers and 59% of fathers indicated their child was a good student; 24% of mothers and 25% of fathers indicated their child was an excellent student (see Figure 11 for more details).

Only 18% of the mothers and 16% of the fathers indicated that they had talked with someone at their child's school about the courses or grades needed for high school graduation. Further, only a little more than a third of the parents (36% mothers, 38% fathers) indicated they felt that they have enough information about high school graduation requirements.

Less than half of the mothers (41%) and almost a third of the fathers (30%) indicated that they frequently attended activities or events at their child's school, while 41% of mothers and 38% of fathers indicated they occasionally attended. Eighteen percent of the mothers reported they seldom or never attended such activities, compared to 32% of the fathers.

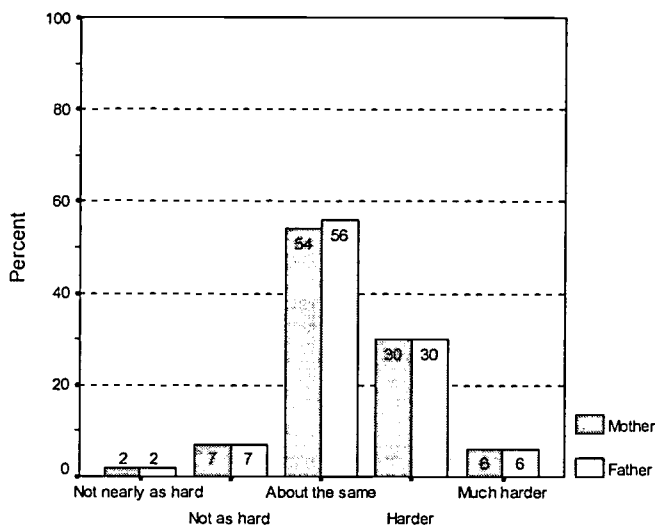


Figure 10: Parents' Perceptions of How Hard Their Child Works in School Compared to Other Students

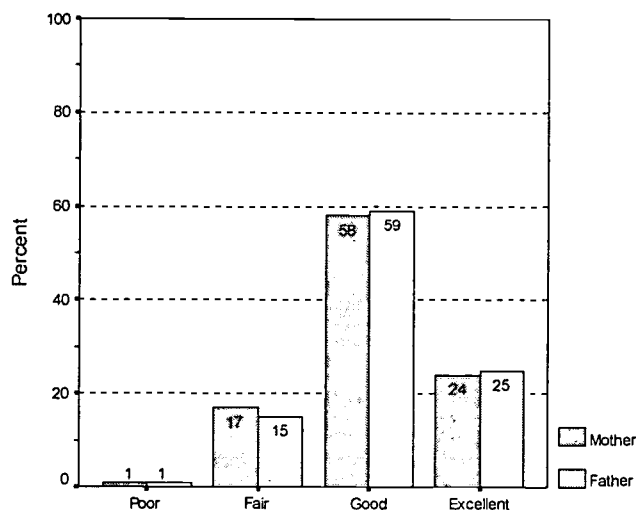


Figure 11: Parents' Perceptions of Their Child as a Student

More than half of the mothers (59%) and more than a third of the fathers (37%) reported that they occasionally or frequently met with their child's teacher to discuss the academic progress of their child. Twenty-eight percent of the mothers and 35% of the fathers indicated that they seldom met with their child's teacher; only 12% of the mothers said they never met with the teachers, compared to 29% of the fathers.

Parents were asked about their satisfaction with a series of aspects of their child's experiences during the school year. Ninety-five percent of the mothers and 94% of the fathers were satisfied or very satisfied with their child's education; more than 90% indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the level of discipline maintained in the classroom by their child's teacher (94% mothers, 91% fathers). More than three fourths of both mothers and fathers were satisfied or very satisfied with each of the following: the school's approach to college preparation (88% mothers, 85% fathers), the respect that teachers and students have for each other (85% mothers, 86% fathers), the level of discipline maintained in the school by the principal or assistant principal (89% mothers, 88% fathers), and the school's encouragement of the family involvement (90% each).

Parents were asked to indicate which ways were helpful in learning about their child's performance in school. Both mothers and fathers viewed all items positively. Parents reported that report cards (98% mothers and fathers), talking to their child (93% mothers, 92% fathers), parent/teacher conferences (91% mothers, 90% fathers), notes from the teacher(s) (91% mothers, 90% fathers), phone calls from the teacher(s) (89% mothers, 87% fathers), and homework sign-off (85% mothers, 86% fathers) were helpful or very helpful in learning about how their child was doing in school.

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Almost half of the mothers (41%) and fathers (44%) indicated they would like their child to obtain a bachelor's degree. More than a third of both groups (38% mothers, 35% fathers) indicated they hoped their child would pursue an advanced degree, followed by an associate's degree (12% and 11%), and high school graduation (6% and 8%) (see Figure 12 for further details). When asked who provided their child with information about options for continuing education after high school, more than three fourths (86% mothers, 87% fathers) reported that they provided that particular information. Both groups indicated that teachers, grandparents, guidance counselors, other family members, GEAR UP staff, and siblings also provided information. See Figure 13 for percentages of the most frequent providers of such information.

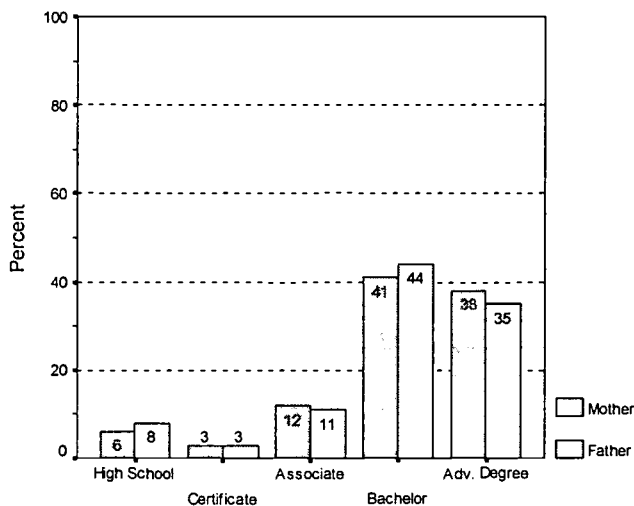


Figure 12: Parents' Academic Expectations for Their Child

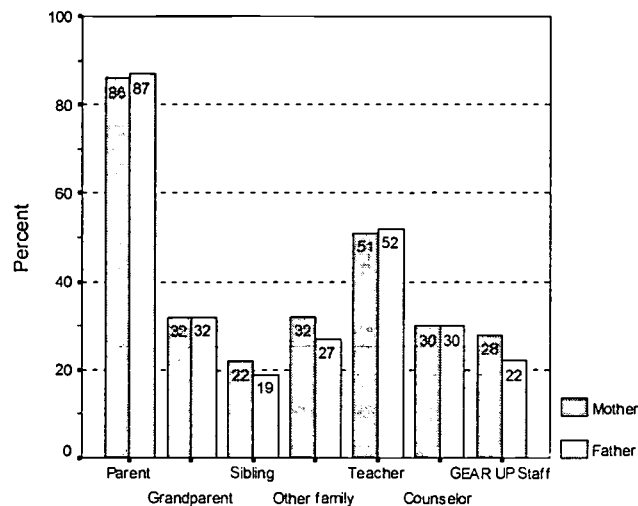


Figure 13: Parents' Perceptions of People Who Provide Educational Information to Their Child

Parents were asked what the main reason would be for their child not continuing his/her education after high school. About a third (36% mothers and fathers) indicated there was no reason and their child definitely would go. However, 29% of mothers and 28% of the fathers reported it cost too much, while 13% and 14%, respectively, indicated they did not know.

Nearly all the parents indicated they have not talked with anyone at their child's school about the courses and grades needed to get into college (88% each). Only about a third of the mothers and fathers indicated they were aware of the entrance requirements for the three basic types of postsecondary schools—two-year or community college; four-year college or university; and vocational, trade, or business school (see Figure 14 for further details). When parents were asked if they had talked to their child about attending college, 93% of the mothers and 86% of the fathers responded positively.

About a third of the parents reported that they have started saving money for their child's college education (36% mothers, 39% fathers). Parents were then asked to estimate the one-year tuition expense for their child to attend a four-year public college in their state. The actual average cost of tuition at a four-year public college in West Virginia is \$2,548; the national

average is \$3,506 (Snyder & Hoffman, 2002). Nearly a third of parents selected the range of \$5,001 to \$10,000 (29% each). Twenty-one percent of the mothers and 19% of the fathers estimated the cost to be \$10,001 to \$15,000. Less than a fourth of the parents (20% mothers, 21% fathers) estimated the cost as \$1,001 to \$5,000, the level that included the state and national averages (see Figure 15 for further details).

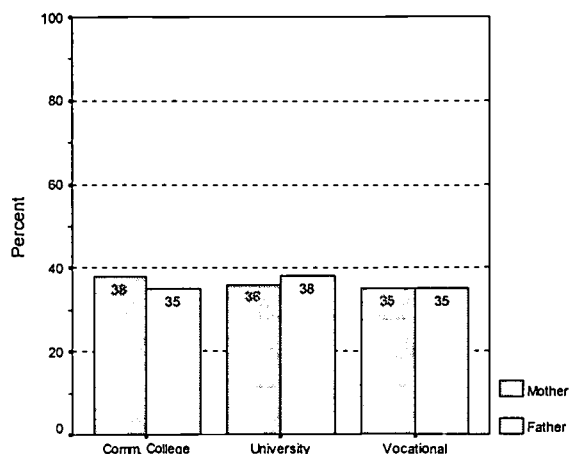


Figure 14: Parents' Awareness of Entrance Requirements for Postsecondary Schools

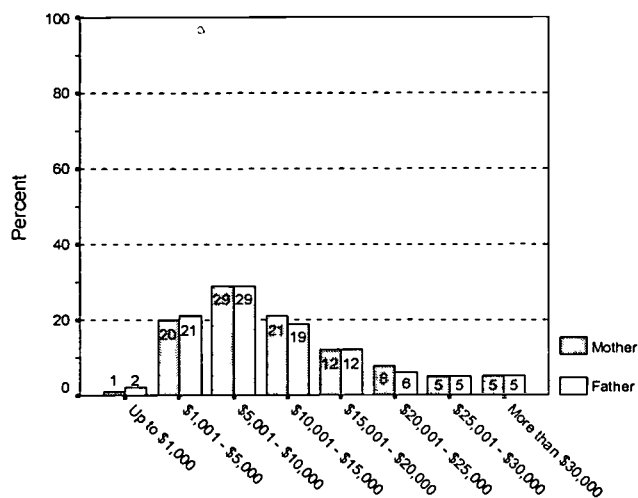


Figure 15: Parents' Estimate of Yearly Tuition for an In-State Four-Year Public College

Parents were then asked if they thought their child would be able to afford to attend a public four-year college or university. Almost half (47% mothers, 43% fathers) indicated that they were not sure; about a third (32% mothers, 38% fathers) reported their child probably or definitely would be able to afford to attend a public four-year college or university (see Figure 16 for further details).

Parents were asked if they had heard of the different financial aid sources available for postsecondary education. Both groups indicated they were most aware of federal student loans (79% mothers, 73% fathers) and athletic scholarships (70% mothers, 69% fathers). More than half reported being familiar with state scholarships (62% mothers, 59% fathers) and federal Pell grants (60% mothers, 52% fathers). See Figure 17 for further details of parents' awareness of financial aid. When asked if they thought their child would likely qualify for enough of the above sources of money to attend college, 71% of both groups responded positively.

Forty-six percent of mothers and 45% of fathers indicated their highest level of education was high school, followed by less than high school (16% mothers, 25% fathers). Eighty-three percent of the mothers indicated that another adult lived in their home; 91% of the fathers indicated the same. Thirteen percent of mothers and 12% of fathers reported that someone in their home was currently attending college. Parents were asked if they used a computer in their home; more than two thirds of both groups (72% mothers, 67% fathers) responded positively.

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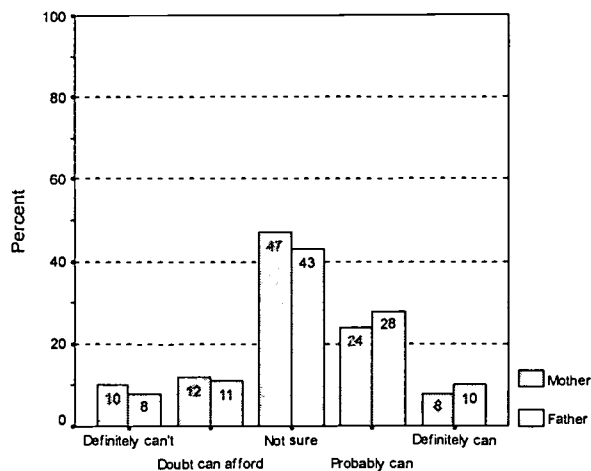


Figure 16: Parents' Perceptions of Child's Ability to Afford Postsecondary Education

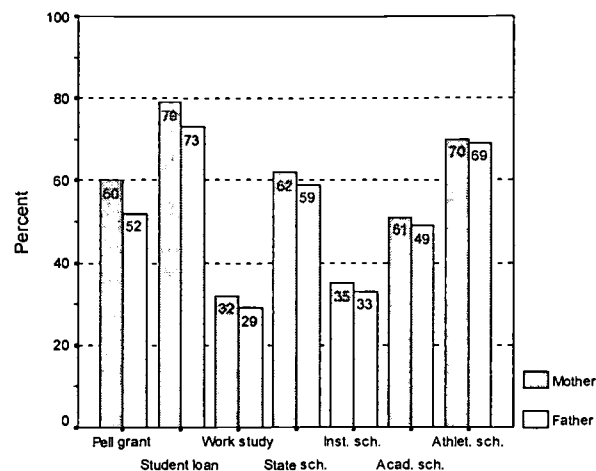


Figure 17: Parents' Awareness of Financial Aid Sources

When asked the total yearly income of all persons in their household, responses were similar across both groups. About half of each group indicated less than \$30,000 (55% mothers, 47% fathers), 18% of mothers and 23% of fathers reported a household income of more than \$50,000, 15% of mothers and 17% of fathers indicated \$30,001 to \$40,000, and 13% of both groups indicated \$40,001 to \$50,000.

Responses to ethnicity were nearly identical for mothers and fathers. Ninety-six percent of mothers and 97% of fathers indicated that they were White, 2% of mothers and 1% of fathers indicated Black or African American, 1% of each group indicated American Indian or Alaskan Native, and 1% of mothers identified themselves as Multiracial.

Finally, parents were given a listing of potential topics for free workshops and were asked to indicate which they would more likely attend if they were offered at a convenient time with free transportation. Both groups indicated most interest in topics relating to computers/Internet and financial aid/scholarships, followed by child rearing and college preparation or requirements. For each of the 12 given topics, the mothers were consistently more interested in attending than the fathers. Both groups were least interested in improving their own academic skills. See Figure 18 for a graphical depiction of the six workshops of most interest to both mothers and fathers.

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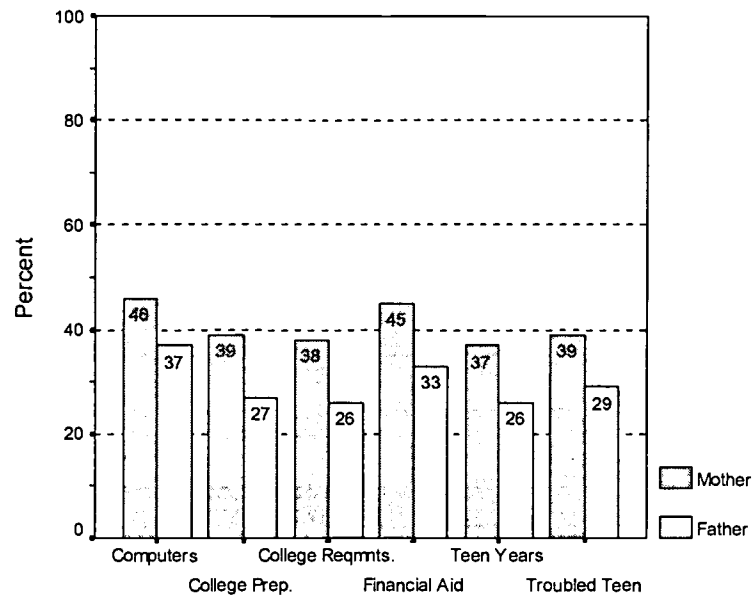


Figure 18: Six Workshop Topics of Most Interest to Parents

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Ninth-Grade Follow-Up Student Survey

A follow-up survey was administered in the 2002-2003 school year to students who were in the ninth grade. This follow-up survey included 50 questions, 39 of which were asked in the original seventh-grade survey and 11 of which were new. The new questions pertained to students' participation in GEAR UP during the intervening years. A total of 1,301 completed ninth-grade surveys was returned for a response rate of 85%. For comparison purposes, the number of returned seventh-grade student surveys in 2000 was 1,643 (87% response rate).

Findings are presented below in two sections, i.e., repeated questions asked of both seventh and ninth graders and new questions asked only of ninth graders. For the section discussing seventh- and ninth-grade responses, data are presented by the level of the data—nominal, ordinal, and interval. Each of these data categories compares percentages from all respondents each year; the ordinal and interval levels also statistically compare the responses of those individual students who completed both surveys.

Repeated Questions for Seventh and Ninth Graders

Nominal data level questions. Question 1 (question numbers refer to the ninth-grade survey) asked students to indicate their gender. For 2000 and 2002, the percentages were identical, with 51% males and 49% females.

Question 9 asked students what they wanted to be when they grew up. For both years, students were given a listing of occupations from which they could select one option. In 2000, 25 options were provided; in 2002, 30 options were provided. In order to make comparisons between the two groups meaningful, the 1999 data were recoded using the 30-option framework. Table 4 presents the response percentages for the seventh and ninth graders, using this framework. Responses changed very little from seventh to ninth grade, with only 5 occupations showing more than a 3% change. Two of these 5 occupations declined: athlete from 13% to 6% and doctor from 8% to 5%. Conversely, three occupations increased: engineer from 2% to 5%, nurse from 4% to 7%, and other career from 9% to 18%.

Table 4: 2000 and 2002 Response Percentages for Students' Desired Occupations

2000-2001 Seventh-Grade Percentages		2002-2003 Ninth-Grade Percentages	
Actor/actress	3%	Actor/actress	2%
Architect	2%	Architect	1%
Artist	3%	Artist	2%
Athlete	13%	Athlete	6%
Astronaut	0%	Astronaut	0%
Beautician	2%	Beautician	2%
Chef	0%	Chef	1%
Computer/video technician	2%	Computer/video technician	4%
Construction worker	2%	Construction worker	2%
Designer/decorator	1%	Designer/decorator	1%
Doctor	8%	Doctor	5%
Engineer	2%	Engineer	5%
Lawyer	6%	Lawyer	5%
Mechanic	3%	Mechanic	4%
Military	5%	Military	3%
Model	1%	Model	1%
Nurse	4%	Nurse	7%
Pharmacist	0%	Pharmacist	1%
Photographer	1%	Photographer	1%
Physical therapist	0%	Physical therapist	2%
Pilot	0%	Pilot	1%
Police officer	3%	Police officer	2%
Race-car driver	2%	Race-car driver	1%
Scientist	1%	Scientist	2%
Singer/musician	2%	Singer/musician	2%
Teacher	4%	Teacher	3%
Truck driver	1%	Truck driver	2%
Veterinarian	7%	Veterinarian	6%
Other career	9%	Other career	18%
Don't know	10%	Don't know	11%

Question 11 asked students to select the main reason they would not continue their education after high school. For 2000, there were seven options: it costs too much, need or want to work, my grades are not good enough, just not interested, want to join the military, want to start a family/take care of my family, and other. For 2002, the response options were expanded to include 12 options: no reason not to go, it costs too much, do not need college for planned job, my grades are not good enough, just not interested, need or want to work, want to join the military, do not want to be away from home, just do not like school, want to start a family, some other reason, and do not know. Table 5 shows the response percentages for each year for each of the reasons. The most striking finding from this table is that nearly half of the ninth-grade students (48%) indicated there was no reason to prevent them from going and that they definitely

would go to college. Even if this response had comprised the majority of the seventh graders' response of 10% for some other reason, this percentage was still much greater. Further, the students' perceptions that college would cost too much declined from 36% to 11%, and their perceptions that their grades were not good enough declined from 14% to 3%.

Table 5: 2000 and 2002 Response Percentages for the Main Reason for Students Not to Continue Their Education

2000-2001 Seventh-Grade Percentages		2002-2003 Ninth-Grade Percentages	
It costs too much	36%	It costs too much	11%
I need or want to work	10%	I need or want to work	3%
My grades are not good enough	14%	My grades are not good enough	3%
I'm just not interested	8%	I'm just not interested	3%
I want to join the military	11%	I want to join the military	6%
I want to start a family	11%	I want to start a family	1%
Some other reason	10%	Some other reason	3%
--	--	No reason, definitely will go	48%
--	--	Don't need for planned job	3%
--	--	Don't want to be away from home	1%
--	--	Just don't like school	5%
--	--	Don't know	13%

Ordinal data level questions. Question 5 asked students if they had talked with any school staff about the entrance requirements for college (i.e., GPA, ACT scores, etc.). In 2000, about a fourth (27%) of the seventh graders responded positively; in 2002, more than a third of the ninth graders (35%) indicated they had discussed college entrance requirements. The nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks statistical test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders, with more ninth graders responding positively ($Z = -4.50, p < .05$).

Question 6 asked if students had discussed college academic requirements with any adults at home. In 2000, 45% of the seventh graders responded positively; in 2002, almost half of the ninth graders (49%) indicated they had discussed college academic requirements. The nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks statistical test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders, with more ninth graders responding positively ($Z = -2.81, p < .05$).

Question 7 asked if students had an idea of what courses they should take in high school to prepare them for college. In 2000, more than half (58%) of the seventh graders responded positively; in 2002, more than two thirds (68%) indicated they had an idea of what courses to take in high school. The nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks statistical test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders, with more ninth graders responding positively ($Z = -4.74, p < .05$).

Question 8 asked students if they had heard of three types of postsecondary schools: two-year or community colleges; four-year colleges or universities; and vocational, trade, or

business schools. In 2000, 67% of the seventh graders had heard of two-year colleges or vocational schools; in 2002, nearly all of the ninth graders (87% and 83%) responded positively. In 2000, 83% of the seventh graders had heard of four-year colleges; in 2002, nearly all of the ninth graders (92%) responded positively. The nonparametric Wilcoxon Signed Ranks statistical test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders for each of these three postsecondary schools, with more ninth graders responding positively for each ($Z = -7.07$, $Z = -5.35$, $Z = -7.95$, $p < .05$).

Interval data level questions. Question 3 asked students to describe their work ethic in terms of how hard they worked in school compared to other students. For both years, response options included not nearly as hard (code of 1), not as hard, about the same, harder, and much harder (code of 5). Table 6 presents percentages for each year. As the table shows, about half of the seventh graders (51%) felt they worked about the same as other students, compared to nearly two thirds of the ninth graders (61%). And, while 10% of the seventh graders felt they worked much harder, this percentage decreased for ninth graders to only 4%. The parametric matched pairs t test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders ($t(649) = -2.14$, $p < .05$, Cohen's d effect size of .05). The mean score decreased from the seventh grade average of 3.35 to 3.27 for the ninth graders (standard deviations of 0.86 and 0.69, respectively), which corroborates the increased percentage of ninth graders feeling they worked about the same as other students.

Table 6: 2000 and 2002 Response Percentages for Students' Perceptions of Their Work Ethic

2000-2001 Seventh-Grade Percentages		2002-2003 Ninth-Grade Percentages	
Not nearly as hard	3%	Not nearly as hard	3%
Not as hard	11%	Not as hard	6%
About the same	51%	About the same	61%
Harder	25%	Harder	26%
Much harder	10%	Much harder	4%

Question 4 asked students what type of student they considered themselves to be, i.e., their quality of work. Response options included poor (code of 1), fair, good, and excellent (code of 4). Table 7 presents percentages for each year. As the table shows, percentages were nearly identical for poor (2% each year) and fair (22% for seventh graders, 23% for ninth graders). The percentage of students indicating they were good students increased from 58% in 2000 to 63% in 2002; conversely, the percentage indicating excellent decreased from 18% in 2000 to 12% in 2003. The parametric matched pairs t test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders ($t(660) = -3.32$, $p < .05$, effect size of .07). The mean score decreased from the seventh-grade average of 3.01 to 2.92 for the ninth graders (standard deviations of 0.62 and 0.60, respectively), which corroborates the increased percentage of ninth graders indicating they were good students and the decreased percentage indicating they were excellent students.

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Table 7: 2000 and 2002 Response Percentages for Students' Perceptions of Their Quality of Work

2000-2001 Seventh-Grade Percentages		2002-2003 Ninth-Grade Percentages	
Poor	2%	Poor	2%
Fair	22%	Fair	23%
Good	58%	Good	63%
Excellent	18%	Excellent	12%

Question 10 asked students to indicate how far they thought they would progress academically. In 2000, the seventh-grade survey included the response options of certificate program (code of 1), associate's degree, bachelor's degree, graduate degree, and do not know (code of 5). For the 2002 ninth-grade survey, response options were revised to include less than high school graduation (code of 1), high school graduation, certificate program, associate's degree, bachelor's degree, and advanced degree (code of 6). Therefore, data will be presented in two ways: each year of original data and each year with only matching response options (i.e., excluding less than high school, high school, and do not know). Table 8 presents the original responses for each year; Table 9 presents the restructured data for exact comparison among similar response options.

Table 8: Original 2000 and 2002 Student Responses for Projected Academic Attainment

2000-2001 Seventh-Grade Responses		2002-2003 Ninth-Grade Responses	
--	--	Less than high school	2%
--	--	High school	19%
Certificate program	3%	Certificate program	5%
Associate's degree	5%	Associate's degree	13%
Bachelor's degree	13%	Bachelor's degree	40%
Graduate degree	30%	Advanced degree	21%
Don't know	49%	--	--

Table 9: Restructured 2000 and 2002 Student Responses for Projected Academic Attainment

2000-2001 Seventh-Grade Responses		2002-2003 Ninth-Grade Responses	
--	--	Less than high school	excluded
--	--	High school	excluded
Certificate program	7%	Certificate program	6%
Associate's degree	10%	Associate's degree	17%
Bachelor's degree	25%	Bachelor's degree	50%
Graduate degree	59%	Advanced degree	26%
Don't know	excluded	--	--

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Inspection of the above tables revealed that the 2000 data were affected most by the exclusion or inclusion of the “don’t know” response option, which accounted originally for about 50% of the responses. For the 2002 data, responses varied by about 20% with the exclusion of “less than high school” and “high school.” From the original comparison (Table 8), the biggest differences between the 2000 and 2002 data were at the bachelor’s degree level, with 13% of the seventh graders and 40% of the ninth graders selecting this option, and 49% of the seventh graders indicated they did not know, which was not an option for the ninth graders. From the restructured comparison (Table 9), wherein only compatible response options were included (excluding “less than high school”, “high school”, and “don’t know”), the largest differences between the seventh and ninth graders involved the bachelor’s and advanced degree options. A fourth of the seventh graders selected a bachelor’s degree, compared to half of the ninth graders. Conversely, more than half (59%) of the seventh graders selected a graduate degree, yet only about a fourth (26%) of the ninth graders selected an advanced degree.

The parametric matched pairs *t* test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders ($t(320) = -6.52, p < .05$, effect size of .20), using the restructured response options of certificate (code of 1), associate’s, bachelor’s, and advanced (code of 4). The mean score decreased from the seventh-grade average of 3.45 to 3.14 for the ninth graders (standard deviations of 0.80 and 0.75, respectively), which corroborates the increased percentage of ninth graders selecting associate and bachelor’s degrees rather than an advanced degree.

Question 12 asked students if they thought they would be able to afford to attend a four-year college or university after high school. For both surveys, response options included definitely could not afford (code of 1), doubt if can afford, not sure, probably could afford, and definitely could afford (code of 5). Table 10 presents percentages for each year. As the table shows, 17% of the ninth graders did not think they could afford college, compared to 15% of the seventh graders; those students not sure increased from 32% in 2000 to 36% in 2002; and, finally, the percentages of students who thought they probably or definitely could afford college decreased from 54% in 2000 to 47% in 2002. The parametric matched pairs *t* test indicated a significant difference between seventh and ninth graders ($t(655) = -3.16, p < .05$, effect size of .07). The mean score decreased from the seventh-grade average of 3.58 to 3.44 for the ninth graders (identical standard deviations of 1.00), which corroborates the increased percentage of ninth graders being less sure they could afford college.

Table 10: 2000 and 2002 Response Percentages for Students’ Perceptions of Their Ability to Afford College

2000-2001 Seventh-Grade Percentages		2002-2003 Ninth-Grade Percentages	
Definitely can’t afford	5%	Definitely can’t afford	5%
Doubt if can afford	10%	Doubt can afford	12%
Not sure	32%	Not sure	36%
Probably can afford	38%	Probably can afford	34%
Definitely can afford	16%	Definitely can afford	13%

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The remaining 33 questions (#18-#50) were adapted from the National Center for Student Aspirations from the University of Maine's Student Speak survey (28 items) (1999a) or developed by AEL (5 items) (although these additional five questions were not included in the 2000 survey). These items comprise eight subscales of Belonging, Heroes, Sense of Accomplishment, Fun and Excitement, Spirit of Adventure, Curiosity and Creativity, Leadership and Responsibility, and Confidence to Take Action. Response options included strongly disagree (code of 1), disagree, do not know, agree, and strongly agree (code of 5); individual questions were averaged to create the subscale scores. Table 11 presents the descriptive statistics for the eight subscales by year. The table shows that each mean score decreased from 2000 to 2002, indicating the ninth graders agreed to a lesser degree with the concepts embedded in these subscales. The largest decline (0.30) occurred in the subscale of Confidence to Take Action, which decreased from 4.17 in 2000 to 3.87 in 2002, although this subscale still had the highest mean for both years.

Table 11: 2000 and 2002 Descriptive Statistics for Aspirations Subscales

Subscale	2000-2001			2002-2003		
	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Belonging	1,633	3.40	0.90	1,271	3.35	0.86
Heroes	1,633	3.71	0.71	1,272	3.55	0.76
Sense of Accomplishment	1,632	4.00	0.71	1,262	3.74	0.75
Fun and Excitement	1,631	3.23	0.98	1,271	3.12	0.97
Spirit of Adventure	1,609	3.77	0.75	1,279	3.61	0.69
Curiosity and Creativity	1,631	3.57	0.75	1,269	3.44	0.75
Leadership and Responsibility	1,611	3.90	0.77	1,278	3.65	0.68
Confidence to Take Action	1,632	4.17	0.67	1,259	3.87	0.77

The parametric matched pairs *t* test indicated significant differences between seventh and ninth graders for all of the eight subscales except Belonging. These mean score decreases from the seventh grade to the ninth grade corroborate the declines described above for all seventh and ninth graders. Again, the largest decline was in the Confidence to Take Action subscale. Effect sizes were fairly small, ranging from .06 to .22. See Table 12 for further statistical details regarding these analyses.

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Table 12: 2000 and 2002 Statistical Detail for Significant Matched Pairs *t* Tests on Aspirations Subscales

Subscale	<i>t</i> value*	<i>df</i>	Difference	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Heroes	5.37	643	.17	.12
Sense of Accomplishment	8.20	639	.26	.19
Fun and Excitement	2.70	643	.12	.06
Spirit of Adventure	3.64	640	.12	.09
Curiosity and Creativity	2.94	643	.10	.07
Leadership and Responsibility	6.77	640	.23	.17
Confidence to Take Action	8.85	636	.30	.22

* $p < .05$

Questions for Ninth Graders

Question 2 asked students which high school they were currently attending. Responses were fairly evenly distributed, with only one school showing more than 15% (Hampshire County, at 17%). See Table 13 for response percentages by school.

Table 13: 2002 Student Representation by High School

School	Percentage	School	Percentage
Big Creek High	6%	Jaeger High	1%
Clay County High	8%	James Monroe High	11%
Duval High	5%	Mount View High	0%
Guyan Valley High	5%	Pocahontas County High	7%
Hamlin High	4%	Point Pleasant High	13%
Hampshire County High	17%	Roane County High	12%
Hannan High	2%	Wahama High	5%
Harts High	4%		

Question 13 asked students how often they had participated in GEAR UP program activities. More than half (52%) indicated they had participated either most of the time (34%) or always (18%). Nearly a fourth (23%) indicated they never participated in such activities. The remainder indicated about half the time (10%) or sometimes (14%).

Question 14 asked students if participating in the GEAR UP program had changed their plans about going to college. If students responded positively, they were asked to indicate the most important program components by selecting as many of the options that applied, which included information about financial aid and college costs, information about benefits of attending college, tutoring or help with school work, mentoring, visits to college campus, or other. Of the 36% of ninth graders who responded positively, nearly half selected college campus visits (48%) or information about financial aid and college costs (41%). Information about benefits of attending college was next frequently mentioned at 37%. Response percentages for the remaining options included tutoring (13%), mentoring (6%), and other (27%).

Question 15 asked students to indicate how often they had attended a variety of listed GEAR UP activities. Response options included not offered, never, a few times, occasionally, frequently, and every day. See Table 14 for response percentages for each activity. The table shows that for each activity except college visits and a GEAR UP family activities, nearly half of the students indicated they never participated. For college visits, about a third (31%) indicated they had visited colleges a few times, which corroborates students' earlier selection of college visits as the most important experience that impacted their decisions about college; about a fourth (22%) indicated they had participated in some other type of visit; and 20% indicated they had participated a few times in a GEAR UP family activity. Responses in this specific category (a few times), in general, ranged between 8% and 20%, excluding the more infrequent lowest and highest responses. Less than 10% indicated they participated in any of these activities either frequently or every day except for a GEAR UP family activity (13%).

Question 16 asked ninth graders to indicate their overall satisfaction with the GEAR UP program. Nearly all of the respondents were either satisfied (64%) or very satisfied (21%). Eight percent indicated they were dissatisfied, and 6% were very dissatisfied.

Question 17 asked students to indicate their level of satisfaction with 11 different services provided through the GEAR UP program. Response options included did not attend, very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied, and very satisfied. However, because the percentage of students who indicated they did not attend these activities was so high (9 of the 11 were about two thirds, the remaining 2 were about half), this question was re-analyzed after excluding those students who did not attend. Table 15 presents these revised response percentages for each specific activity. Response percentages for very satisfied ranged from 7% for mentoring to 31% for college campus visits. More than half of the ninth graders were satisfied with each service, ranging from 57% for college student shadowing to 68% each for tutoring and workshops. Students were least satisfied (either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied) with mentoring (29%), college professional shadowing (29%), college student shadowing (28%), and counseling (27%).

Table 14: 2002 Response Percentages for Students' Participation in GEAR UP Activities

Activity	Not Offered	Never	A few times	Occasionally	Frequently	Every day
Tutoring in math	24%	56%	12%	4%	3%	2%
Tutoring in English	24%	63%	7%	3%	1%	1%
Tutoring in other subjects	23%	63%	9%	2%	2%	1%
Tutoring for SAT, ACT, etc.	26%	60%	8%	3%	2%	1%
Other type of tutoring	25%	62%	8%	3%	2%	1%
Computer-assisted lab	24%	50%	12%	6%	5%	3%
Mentoring	27%	57%	9%	4%	2%	1%
Class at a college	31%	55%	9%	3%	1%	1%
College counseling/advising	25%	53%	14%	5%	2%	1%
Personal counseling	25%	60%	10%	3%	1%	1%
College preparation workshop	26%	55%	13%	4%	2%	1%
Study skills workshop	26%	54%	14%	5%	1%	1%
Careers workshop	25%	49%	18%	5%	2%	1%
Other workshop	24%	54%	14%	5%	2%	1%
College visit	18%	35%	31%	9%	6%	2%
Job site visit	24%	48%	19%	5%	3%	1%
Cultural event	25%	48%	16%	6%	4%	1%
Some other type of visit	22%	45%	22%	7%	3%	2%
Job shadowing	26%	50%	16%	5%	2%	1%
College student shadowing	30%	57%	8%	3%	2%	1%
College professional shadowing	31%	60%	6%	2%	1%	1%
Other shadowing	30%	58%	7%	2%	2%	1%
GEAR UP family activity	18%	38%	20%	11%	11%	2%

Table 15: 2002 Response Percentages for Students' Satisfaction with GEAR UP Activities

Activity	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Tutoring	10%	10%	68%	11%
Mentoring	15%	14%	64%	7%
Class at a college	12%	12%	62%	14%
Counseling	11%	16%	63%	10%
Workshops	8%	9%	68%	16%
College campus visit	6%	5%	58%	31%
Job site visit	9%	10%	64%	17%
Cultural event	9%	13%	60%	18%
College student shadowing	12%	16%	57%	15%
College professional shadowing	11%	18%	60%	11%
Family activity	6%	7%	64%	23%

Note: This table excludes those students who indicated they did not attend these activities.

CONCLUSIONS

A number of conclusions can be drawn from the West Virginia Department of Education regional GEAR UP data for West Virginia seventh-grade students and their parents and the ninth-grade students. These conclusions are presented below by seventh grade, ninth grade, and comparisons across years. The seventh-grade conclusions are further categorized by topical themes.

Seventh Grade

Academics

- Homework seems to be fairly heavy for the majority of students. More than half of the parents and students report that students spend about two and a half hours per day on homework. This estimate may be slightly inflated because a half hour is the smallest increment a student could choose other than “never” in the response options for each of the five subjects.
- Overall, students have a positive view of their academic abilities and of the effort they put into their studies. More than three fourths view themselves as good or excellent students. Further, two thirds believe they work as hard as other students and almost a third report that they work harder or much harder. Parents have a similar perception of the effort their child puts into education. About a third perceive that their child works harder or much harder than other children and more than half believe their child works about the same; three fourths believe that their child is either an excellent or good student.
- In general, students believe they have good study skills and report doing well in English, math, science, and history. For those not doing well, their most frequent explanations are that they have a grade of C or D, that the subject is boring, that they do not do well on tests, or that they do not like the subject.
- A third of the students believe they do need help with math; less than a fourth with science, spelling, English, history, and social studies. However, students do not seem very open to the idea of tutoring, with only 23% expressing interest in after-school tutoring and less than two thirds expressing interest in a mentoring system.
- The majority of students seem to be technologically literate. Three fourths report having used a computer for school projects and more than two thirds say they have already taken a computer class at school. Further, three fourths report using a computer at home; about two thirds have Internet access. Fewer parents (about two thirds) report using a home computer.

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Parent Involvement

- Family members seem to play a critical role in helping students understand and complete homework tasks. The majority of students report that they first look to a parent for such help and also frequently consult with a friend, a teacher, or some other family member. Parents do not seem to place as much value on their contribution to their child's homework. About a third of the parents report helping their child frequently or every day, with mothers helping more than fathers.
- Despite parents' satisfaction with the amount of family involvement encouraged by the school, their participation in school-based activities seems to be limited in scope. About two thirds of the mothers and one third of the fathers report they occasionally or frequently meet with their child's teachers. However, nearly three times as many of the fathers report never meeting with a teacher (29% compared to 12%). About three fourths of the parents report they occasionally or frequently attend activities at their child's school.
- Parents seem pleased with their child's educational experiences for this school year. At least 85% indicate satisfaction with education in general, college preparation, discipline, respect, and family involvement. Further, more than 85% find that conferences, homework sign-off, report cards, talking to their child, and phone calls or notes from the teacher help them stay informed of their child's progress.
- Mothers are consistently more interested than fathers in attending free educational workshops. More than a third of the mothers are interested in topics such as computers, college preparation or requirements, financial aid, and child rearing, compared to only about a fourth of the fathers.

Student Aspirations

- Students report being well supported in the areas of confidence to take action and sense of accomplishment. They report feeling less supported in fun and excitement and belonging. In other words, while students report feeling fairly confident and successful about their learning, they do not seem to view their learning as particularly interesting or exciting and do not feel that teachers particularly value their thoughts or feelings.
- Overall, student and parent aspirations are high for the student's postsecondary education. About two thirds of the students believe they will obtain either a bachelor's or advanced degree and also believe their parents want them to get a bachelor's or advanced degree. A higher number of parents (about three fourths) report wanting their child to obtain either degree.

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College Awareness and Preparation

- Overall, students seem to be at least superficially considering the prospect of college. Nearly all the students believe they have the ability to go to college and believe college graduates earn more money than those without a college degree. About three fourths perceive college to be very important and indicate they do want to attend a postsecondary institution. About three fourths believe they need more education to obtain a satisfying job and continuing their education might help them make career decisions. Further, students most frequently mentioned occupations that require at least an undergraduate education (i.e., athlete, veterinarian, doctor, lawyer, nurse).
- Students' awareness of the various types of postsecondary institutions is fairly high. More than three fourths are aware of four-year colleges, and about two thirds know about two-year colleges or vocational schools. Yet, whereas about half of the students report having discussed college requirements with an adult at home, less than a fourth have talked with a school counselor. Similarly, most parents report they have discussed college options with their child, but have not had discussions with school personnel about required courses and grades.
- Students do not seem to have a real understanding of what is required of them now to begin preparing for college. Only about half know which courses are needed to prepare them adequately and report that they plan to take such academically challenging courses as chemistry, algebra, or a foreign language. Less than a third plan to take physics, and less than a fourth plan to take calculus or trigonometry.
- Students view parents and teachers as their best sources of information about academic choices and most value their input to educational decision making. However, only about a third of the parents are familiar with college entrance requirements and believe they have enough information about high school graduation requirements.
- There seems to be a wide range in parents' awareness of financial aid options for postsecondary education. Between a third and three fourths of the parents are aware of the various types of available financial aid, and nearly three fourths believe their child will qualify for such aid. Further, only about half of the students and a third of parents believe the students probably or definitely will be able to afford college.
- Very few of the students and parents seem to have a realistic estimate of the tuition expense for one year of attendance at a four-year, in-state public college. Less than a fourth of both groups selected the expense range that included the state and national average tuition expenses (\$2,548 and \$3,506 respectively).

Ninth Grade

- The majority of ninth graders surveyed indicate overall satisfaction with the GEAR UP program and, of those who attended specific GEAR UP activities, the majority indicate satisfaction with those activities. Further, more than half indicate they participate in the GEAR UP program most of the time or always. However, there is some discrepancy in this self-reported data, because more than half of the ninth graders also most often report they never participate in most of the specified GEAR UP activities. It may be that students are unaware that activities they participate in are actually affiliated with the GEAR UP program. Too, it may be that the first question of participation was too broad and that students did not understand the parameters, (i.e., whether it covered multiple years or only the current school year, etc.). Further, it may be that each school or county offers only selected activities.
- Participation in the GEAR UP program is directly impacting students' lives. More than a third of the ninth graders believe their participation is leading to changes in their postsecondary plans. College campus visits are the most influential on students, with about half selecting them as the most important experience leading to change; this corroborates students' selection of college visits as the activity in which they most often participated. Students also believe that having information about financial aid and college costs and about the benefits of attending college led to changes in their postsecondary plans.
- Students are less interested in tutoring and mentoring activities, and view them as least influential on their plans for college. However, because ninth graders seem to be less sure of themselves in terms of their aspirations and academic abilities, this is an area in which increased participation may well lead to students increasing their self-esteem, becoming more cognizant of postsecondary opportunities, and improving their academic standing.

Comparisons Across Years

- As the GEAR UP students are maturing, they are becoming more attentive to college requirements. More than two thirds of ninth graders (68%) report knowing what courses in high school will best prepare them for college, a 10% gain over the seventh graders. More than three fourths of the ninth graders report discussing college entrance or academic requirements with family or school staff; a 12% gain over the seventh graders. However, the percentage of students discussing these requirements with adults at home is much higher (about half) than for discussing such requirements with school staff (about a third), which indicates the majority of students, even at the ninth-grade level, are not holding conversations with any school staff.
- As students mature, they become more aware of the various types of postsecondary institutions and now, with a more realistic view of their individual interests and abilities, are choosing degrees that are more attainable and better aligned with their occupational

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aspirations than an advanced graduate degree. However, it should be noted that part of the discrepancy between seventh and ninth graders' responses regarding degree aspirations may be due to wording of the response options. In the seventh-grade version of the survey, the last option read as "graduate degree"; for the ninth-grade version, it read as "advanced degree" so as to clearly indicate this was a degree beyond the bachelor's level and did not simply refer to graduating.

- Over the course of three years, students have become more convinced that nothing will stop them from attending college. When asked for the main reason they would not attend college, nearly half indicate they definitely will pursue postsecondary education. Further, students have a more positive attitude about their abilities to afford college and to keep up academically, though fewer of the ninth graders view themselves as excellent students or as working harder than others.
- Students continue to experience some degree of confusion about what they realistically will be able to accomplish. When asked directly if they could afford college, ninth graders responded in a contradictory manner when compared to their responses concerning their main reason for not continuing their education. Further, fewer students now believe they probably or definitely could afford college, as compared to their earlier perceptions (a 7% decline).
- The GEAR UP students' aspirations have been dampened or lessened somewhat as they progressed from seventh to ninth grade. Mean scores decreased for each of the eight areas of belonging, heroes, accomplishment, fun, adventure, curiosity, leadership, and confidence. And, while these decreases are fairly small, they indicate that students may be feeling less empowered and/or less valued. Perhaps part of that increased insecurity may be due to the actual school environment or academic requirements, if students are moving up from an elementary or middle school into high school.
- Finally, given the number of significant differences found between responses from students who took both the seventh- and ninth-grade surveys, it is apparent that students are improving their awareness of postsecondary institutions and related academic requirements. Yet, at the same time, they are less positive of themselves in terms of aspirations, work ethics, quality of work, and their ability to afford college and have, in fact, lowered their level of expected academic attainment. However, there seems to be some discrepancy in students' viewpoints, given the fluctuation in their responses to individual questions, which could be due to the fact that students are still in the process of thinking about and exploring their options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The GEAR UP project can make a substantial difference in students' lives by working to alleviate some of the educational problems within its region in the state. Based on the findings and conclusions presented in this report, the following recommendations are made to West Virginia Department of Education GEAR UP staff in the interest of increasing students' and parents' awareness of and interest in postsecondary education for the eight-county region served by the project.

- WVDE and school staff should encourage increased student participation in tutoring and mentoring programs, especially in math. Perhaps peer or buddy systems could be implemented to make such activities more appealing to struggling students.
- WVDE and school staff should more strongly emphasize the importance of college-preparatory courses and encourage more students to plan on taking such courses, especially physics, calculus, and trigonometry. WVDE and school staff could review any evaluations of GEAR UP activities related to college-prep courses and make adjustments as needed. And, perhaps additional college-prep activities could be planned and implemented.
- WVDE and school staff should help all students understand that college is a viable option for them and provide information about degree requirements for various career choices and entrance requirements for postsecondary institutions. Still too many students are unaware by ninth grade of these requirements, which may make meeting all the entrance requirements either difficult or impossible.
- WVDE and school staff should provide more students and parents with information about and requirements for financial aid sources for financing postsecondary education. Again, any GEAR UP evaluation reports describing activities in this area could be used to identify possible improvements. Also, expansion of activities in this area could be considered.
- WVDE and school staff should work to find ways to increase parents' involvement in the academic lives of their children, beyond occasionally meeting with teachers or attending school activities. New and/or innovative methods to involve parents could augment whatever is being done to date in the schools.
- WVDE and school staff should establish a schedule of educational workshops for parents on the topics of computers, college preparation or requirements, financial aid, and child-rearing. If this is already being done, then perhaps improved publicity of workshop availability and transportation arrangements would help increase parent participation.
- WVDE and school staff should work to find ways to make learning more interesting and exciting for students, and provide more opportunities for individual exploration. The emphasis here would be on making learning "come alive" to students by capturing their interest via activities, content, or explorations that pique their curiosity and creativity.

- WVDE and school staff should work to find ways of increasing students' sense of belonging in the school community. Students need to feel that teachers care about them personally, and value and respect their opinions. Perhaps some emphasis on activities focusing on school pride would help students feel like an integral part of the school community.
- WVDE and school staff should continue working to increase student participation in GEAR UP activities currently offered. Ninth-grade students seem satisfied overall with the activities in which they participate. Although these activities have the potential to lead to changes in postsecondary plans, most of the students are not availing themselves of these opportunities, especially tutoring and/or mentoring. Perhaps these activities could be redesigned to make them more attractive to students and/or make students more aware of their potential benefits. If the issue is accessibility, perhaps additional transportation could be provided. Of all the GEAR UP activities, ninth graders most value the college visits. Perhaps this activity could be expanded or offered more frequently to reach more students.
- WVDE and school staff should consider offering additional GEAR UP activities. With a fourth of the students indicating specific GEAR UP activities are not available, offering a larger variety of these activities at the individual school or county level might help draw in those students who do not participate in the GEAR UP program.
- WVDE and school staff should work to increase the eight conditions that support high levels of aspirations, i.e., belonging, heroes, accomplishment, fun, adventure, curiosity, leadership, and confidence. As students begin to feel more empowered, valued, and secure, their aspirations should increase, as well.
- Given the continuing decrease in response rates for seventh-grade students and their parents, WVDE staff should provide AEL staff with information about the population of seventh graders at each school within the GEAR UP region. This would allow WVDE and AEL staff to track each school and work with respective school staffs to improve the overall return rates.
- To improve data collection for the next year's survey of seventh graders, two suggestions are offered. Staff may want to consider revising the response options on the student survey item dealing with the number of people living in the student's home. Currently the response options of 0 to 9 are offered. However, it is unrealistic for less than two persons to be living in the home (the student and at least one adult). The item could be changed to include only the response options of 2 to 9. This revision would provide respondents with parameters that more accurately reflect the number of persons living in the home. It is also recommended that GEAR UP or school staff do not make additional copies of the surveys provided by AEL. The AEL-provided surveys are copied on a specific copier and set up to be optically scanned. Any alteration of the surveys leads to skewed forms that have to be entered by hand, which is costly and cumbersome.

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APPENDIXES

**Appendix A:
Completed SEDCAR Standards Checklist**

AEL SEDCAR Standards Checklist

The *Standards for Educational Data Collection and Reporting* (1991) were used in the development of this (check one):

- Study group report
 Field test report
 Minigrant final report
 Implementation report

- Research report
 Impact study report
 Other _____

The SEDCAR Standards were consulted and used as indicated in the table below (check or mark as appropriate):

SEDCAR Standard Number and Descriptor	The Standard was deemed applicable; and, to the extent feasible, was taken into account.*	The Standard was deemed applicable; but could not be taken into account.	The Standard was not deemed applicable.	Exception was taken to the Standard.
1.1 Creating an Infrastructure to Manage Data Collection Activities	X			
1.2 Justifying Data Collection Activities	X			
1.3 Fostering Commitment of all Participants	X			
1.4 Creating an Appropriate Management Process	X			
2.1 Formulating and Refining Study Questions	X			
2.2 Choosing the Data Collection Methods	X			
2.3 Developing a Sampling Plan			X	
2.4 Assessing the Value of Obtainable Data	X			
2.5 Transforming Study Question Concepts into Measures	X			
2.6 Designing the Data Collection Instrument	X			
2.7 Minimizing Total Study Error (Sampling and Nonsampling)			X	
2.8 Reviewing and Pretesting Data Collection Instruments, Forms, and Procedures	X			
2.9 Preparing a Written Design	X			
3.1 Preparing for Data Collection	X			
3.2 Selecting and Training Data Collection Staff			X	
3.3 Ethical Treatment of Data Providers	X			
3.4 Minimizing Burden and Nonresponse	X			
3.5 Implementing Data Collection Quality Control Procedures	X			

SEDCAR Standard Number and Descriptor	The Standard was deemed applicable; and, to the extent feasible, was taken into account.*	The Standard was deemed applicable; but could not be taken into account.	The Standard was not deemed applicable.	Exception was taken to the Standard.
3.6 Documenting Data Collections	X			
4.1 Planning Systems Requirements	X			
4.2 Designing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.3 Developing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.4 Testing Data Processing Systems	X			
4.5 Planning for Data Preparation	X			
4.6 Preparing Data for Processing and Analysis	X			
4.7 Maintaining Programs and Data Files	X			
4.8 Documenting Data Processing Activities	X			
4.9 Evaluating Data Processing Systems	X			
5.1 Preparing an Analysis Plan	X			
5.2 Developing Analysis Variables	X			
5.3 Applying Appropriate Weights			X	
5.4 Estimating Sampling and Nonsampling Errors			X	
5.5 Determining Statistical Significance			X	
6.1 Presenting Findings	X			
6.2 Reviewing the Report	X			
6.3 Releasing Data	X			
6.4 Disseminating Data	X			
6.5 Preparing Documentation and Technical Reports	X			

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Appendix B: Regional Summaries by Survey

West Virginia
State GEAR UP Grant

2002-2003
7th Grade Student Survey

Please respond to all items by completely filling in the circle for each selected response.

Like this: Not like this:

Identification Code:

Student Social Security No.										Co.	Sch.
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

School and School Work

- Who usually helps you with your homework? (Select all that apply.)

87%	Parent or guardian	28%	Friend
14%	Grandparent	19%	Teacher
24%	Brother or sister	1%	GEAR UP staff (mentor, tutor)
14%	Other family member	5%	Some other person
- Compared with other students, how hard do you think you work in school?

2%	Not nearly as hard	23%	Harder
6%	Not as hard	5%	Much harder
63%	About the same		
- What type of student do you consider yourself to be?

1%	Poor	63%	Good
18%	Fair	19%	Excellent
- How important to you is what each of the following people think you should do about your education?

	Not Impt.	Some Impt.	Very Impt.
a. Parent or guardian	1%	7%	92%
b. Grandparent	5%	26%	70%
c. Brother or sister	22%	39%	38%
d. Other family member	10%	40%	51%
e. Friend	19%	48%	33%
f. Religious leader (minister, priest, rabbi)	24%	30%	45%
g. Teacher	5%	19%	76%
h. Guidance counselor	16%	32%	53%
i. Principal or assistant principal	12%	24%	64%
j. Coach	18%	32%	51%
k. GEAR UP staff (mentor, tutor)	16%	28%	56%
l. Some other person	38%	35%	27%

5. I am doing well (a grade of A or B) in each of these subjects:	Yes	No	Not Taking
a. English	83%	13%	3%
b. History	76%	16%	9%
c. Math	79%	20%	2%
d. Science	79%	17%	3%

6. If you are not doing well in a particular subject, why not? (Select all that apply for each subject.)	Eng.	His.	Math	Science
Have a C or D	13%	13%	20%	15%
Subject is too hard	7%	10%	17%	12%
Subject is boring	15%	17%	15%	15%
Don't do well on tests	10%	13%	17%	15%
Don't do all the assignments	7%	6%	9%	7%
Don't like the teacher	6%	9%	8%	7%
Don't understand the subject	7%	7%	12%	10%
Don't like the subject	12%	13%	16%	11%
Don't pay enough attention in class	7%	8%	8%	8%
Don't study hard enough	8%	11%	10%	11%
Other	4%	6%	6%	6%
Don't Know	8%	8%	10%	8%

7. Which subjects do you think you need help with? (Select all that apply.)	
16% English	23% Science
15% History	15% Social Studies
33% Math	18% Spelling
13% Reading	10% Other

8. What is your favorite subject in school?	
14% Art	4% Reading
8% Band	11% Science
4% English	5% Social Studies
3% History	5% Spelling
16% Math	14% Other
	16% Multiple Response

9. What makes that subject your favorite? (Select all that apply.)	
51% It's fun or cool	37% I like the activities
41% It's easy to understand	24% It's challenging
43% I like the teacher	41% I like the subject
52% I am good at it	12% Other

10. Which of the following courses do you plan on taking in high school? (Select all that apply.)	
49% Algebra	67% Foreign Language
18% Calculus	29% Physics
47% Chemistry	21% Trigonometry

11. For each of the following subjects, about how many hours each day do you spend on homework?

	0	½	1	1½	2	2½	3	Not Taking
a. English	18%	55%	17%	4%	2%	1%	1%	3%
b. Science	21%	52%	16%	5%	2%	1%	1%	3%
c. Math	13%	49%	23%	7%	5%	1%	1%	1%
d. History/Social Studies	19%	48%	19%	6%	4%	1%	1%	4%
e. All other subjects combined	16%	31%	20%	11%	9%	4%	7%	3%

	Yes	No
12. I think I have good study skills.	77%	23%
13. I would be interested in attending an after-school tutoring program.	23%	77%
14. I think I have the ability to go to college.	89%	12%
15. In school, I participate in sports.	63%	37%
16. In school, I participate in clubs.	34%	66%
17. In school, I participate in student government.	22%	78%
18. I use a computer for school projects.	75%	25%
19. I have taken a computer class at school.	67%	33%
20. I use a computer at home.	76%	24%
21. If you have a computer at home, do you have Internet access?	66%	35%
22. I plan to be living in West Virginia when I'm 30.	47%	53%
23. I plan to be working in West Virginia when I'm 30.	42%	58%
24. I would be interested in having a "college-type" mentor or buddy.	60%	40%

Knowledge about College

	Yes	No
25. Have you ever talked with your school counselor or someone else at your school about the entrance requirements for college (i.e., GPA, ACT scores, or other college requirements)?	20%	80%
26. Do you have an idea of what courses you should take in high school to prepare you for college?	55%	45%
27. Have you heard of the following types of schools?	Yes	No
a. Two-year or community college	63%	37%
b. Four-year college or university	81%	20%
c. Vocational, trade, or business school	64%	36%
28. Do you think a person with a college degree typically earns more money in one year than a person who does not have a college degree?	84%	16%

29. How much do you think it costs for one year of tuition at a four-year public college in your state? (This estimate should not include food, housing, or book expenses.)

8%	Up to \$1,000	13%	\$15,001 - \$20,000
21%	\$1,001 - \$5,000	8%	\$20,001 - \$25,000
21%	\$5,001 - \$10,000	5%	\$25,001 - \$30,000
18%	\$10,001 - \$15,000	8%	More than \$30,000

30. How important to your future is getting an education beyond high school?

8%	Don't know	11%	Some important
2%	Not important	78%	Very important

Plans for the Future

31. What do you want to be when you grow up?

1%	Actor/actress	7%	Doctor	1%	Pilot
1%	Architect	1%	Engineer	1%	Police officer
1%	Artist	4%	Lawyer	1%	Race-car driver
7%	Athlete (any sport)	2%	Mechanic	1%	Scientist
0%	Astronaut	3%	Military	2%	Singer/musician
1%	Beautician	1%	Model	3%	Teacher
0%	Chef	4%	Nurse	2%	Truck driver
2%	Computer/video	1%	Pharmacist	6%	Veterinarian
1%	Construction worker	1%	Photographer	9%	Other Career
1%	Designer/decorator	1%	Physical therapist	8%	Don't Know
27%	Multiple Response				

32. Do you think you will continue your education after high school (that is, go to college or attend a trade school, etc.)?

Yes	No
89%	11%

33. Before entering the seventh grade, had you ever heard of GEAR UP? 73% 27%

34. From whom do you get most of your information about your options for continuing your education after high school? (Select all that apply.)

81%	Parent or guardian	44%	Teacher
32%	Grandparent	10%	Guidance counselor
21%	Brother or sister	14%	Principal or assistant principal
27%	Other family member	8%	Coach
21%	Friend	13%	GEAR UP staff (mentor, tutor)
6%	Religious leader (minister, priest, rabbi)	14%	Some other person

35. How far in school do you think you will get?

2%	Less than high school graduation	14%	Two-year college degree (associate)
14%	High school graduation	35%	Four-year college degree (bachelor)
4%	Certificate program (less than 2-year college pgm.)	32%	Six-to-ten-year college degree (master, doctorate)

36. What is the main reason you would not continue your education after high school?

- | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|---------------------------------|
| 49% | No reason, I definitely will go | 6% | I want to join the military |
| 9% | It costs too much or I can't afford it | 1% | Don't want to be away from home |
| 1% | Don't need college for planned job | 2% | Just don't like school |
| 2% | My grades are not good enough | 2% | I want to start a family |
| 1% | I'm just not interested | 3% | Some other reason |
| 2% | I need or want to work | 12% | Don't know |
| 9% | Multiple Response | | |

37. Do you think you will be able to afford to attend a four-year college or university after high school?

- | | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|-----|--------------------------------------|
| 6% | Definitely can't afford it | 29% | Probably can afford it |
| 10% | I doubt if I can afford it | 17% | Definitely will be able to afford it |
| 38% | I'm not sure | | |

		Yes	No
38.	During the past year, have you discussed academic requirements for attending a four-year college with any adults in your household?	44%	56%

		Yes	No
39.	Have any of your family members attended college?		
a.	Mother or female guardian	46%	54%
b.	Father or male guardian	34%	67%
c.	Grandparent	35%	66%
d.	Brother or sister	26%	74%

40. How much education do you think your father or male guardian wants you to get?

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|--|
| 2% | Less than high school graduation | 12% | Two-year college degree (associate) |
| 11% | High school graduation | 33% | Four-year college degree (bachelor) |
| 4% | Certificate program (less than 2-year college pgm.) | 38% | Six-to-ten-year college degree (master, doctorate) |

41. How much education do you think your mother or female guardian wants you to get?

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|--|
| 1% | Less than high school graduation | 9% | Two-year college degree (associate) |
| 9% | High school graduation | 35% | Four-year college degree (bachelor) |
| 4% | Certificate program (less than 2-year college pgm.) | 41% | Six-to-ten-year college degree (master, doctorate) |

Background

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>			
42.	What is your gender?	48%	52%		
		11	12	13	14
43.	How old are you?	2%	70%	25%	3%
					1%

44. How do you describe yourself?

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|-----|--|
| 6% | American Indian or Alaska Native | 0% | Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander |
| 0% | Asian | 90% | White |
| 1% | Black or African American | 1% | Biracial |
| 0% | Hispanic or Latino | 1% | Multiracial |

45. How many brothers do you have?	0 31%	1 40%	2 18%	3 6%	4 2%	5 1%	6 0%	7 0%	8 0%	9 0%
46. How many sisters do you have?	0 34%	1 39%	2 17%	3 6%	4 2%	5 1%	6 0%	7 0%	8 0%	9 0%
47. Counting yourself, how many people live in your home?	0 0%	1 0%	2 4%	3 20%	4 42%	5 21%	6 8%	7 3%	8 1%	9 1%

Aspirations

Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement for each of the following items:

(Highest percentages are in blue print)

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 = Disagree (D) 3 = Don't Know (DK) 4 = Agree (A) 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

	SD	D	DK	A	SA
48. I need more education or training after high school to get a satisfying job.	5%	5%	18%	30%	42%
49. I want to make some money immediately after high school.	1%	5%	18%	40%	36%
50. I plan to continue my education after high school, no matter what my career.	4%	5%	19%	27%	45%
51. I can get a satisfying job without further education after high school.	25%	24%	26%	16%	10%
52. Continuing my education after high school might help me decide what to do.	2%	4%	18%	47%	29%
53. I am anxious to begin my career as soon as possible after high school.	6%	15%	25%	29%	25%
54. The opinions, plans of friends help me make decisions for after high school.	10%	19%	30%	29%	11%
55. Getting a job right after high school might help me decide what I want to do.	7%	17%	29%	35%	14%
56. I won't be able to afford to continue my education after high school.	21%	23%	37%	11%	8%
57. The opinions/plans of family help me make decisions for after high school.	3%	7%	22%	45%	24%
58. I can take control of situations.	3%	5%	24%	47%	21%
59. I know what I want and I go after it.	2%	5%	19%	41%	33%
60. I am a good leader.	4%	10%	31%	36%	19%
61. I can select the best way to solve a problem.	4%	10%	37%	35%	14%
62. I do what I say I will.	3%	8%	23%	47%	19%
63. I usually have fun in class.	6%	9%	18%	49%	18%
64. I am a positive role model to other students.	5%	7%	39%	33%	16%
65. Teachers care about my problems and feelings.	5%	6%	32%	36%	20%
66. Teachers respect my thoughts.	5%	7%	33%	38%	17%
67. I seek solutions to complex problems.	3%	7%	31%	42%	16%
68. I have a strong caring relationship with an adult.	3%	3%	17%	38%	40%
69. Teachers care about my success in class.	3%	3%	20%	43%	32%
70. I believe I can always improve.	2%	2%	8%	46%	43%
71. Teachers expect me to succeed.	2%	2%	16%	47%	33%
72. I am confident in my ability to do well.	1%	2%	12%	51%	34%

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1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 = Disagree (D) 3 = Don't Know (DK) 4 = Agree (A) 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

	SD	D	DK	A	SA
73. I take action on causes I believe in.	2%	3%	20%	47%	29%
74. Teachers value my opinions.	4%	6%	37%	37%	17%
75. I accept responsibility for my actions.	3%	3%	14%	52%	28%
76. I am proud of my school.	5%	6%	17%	44%	28%
77. Teachers help me to succeed.	3%	4%	16%	49%	28%
78. I put forth the necessary effort to reach a goal.	2%	3%	15%	51%	30%
79. Teachers support me when I try something new.	3%	6%	26%	45%	21%
80. My courses help me to understand what is happening in my everyday life.	3%	5%	28%	44%	21%
81. Teachers tell me I do a good job when i try my best.	3%	5%	14%	51%	28%
82. I am eager to learn new things.	2%	5%	15%	47%	31%
83. Teachers make learning exciting.	6%	13%	25%	38%	19%
84. I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.	6%	9%	24%	35%	27%
85. Teachers allow me to explore topics I find interesting.	5%	8%	26%	43%	18%
86. I am not usually bored in school.	12%	17%	19%	38%	15%
87. Teachers expect me to be a good decision maker.	3%	4%	24%	45%	25%
88. Anyone can succeed if they work hard enough.	2%	2%	9%	39%	48%
89. I have opportunities to decide for myself what I learn about in school.	4%	6%	19%	43%	28%
90. Teachers encourage me to ask questions.	4%	5%	16%	46%	29%

Items 63-90 are from the *Students Speak* survey developed by the National Center for Student Aspirations, College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine.

Aspiration Subscales

	Mean	Std. Dev.
1. Belongings: A relationship between two or more individuals characterized by a sense of connection, support, and community.	3.63	0.82
2. Heros: People whom children admire and imitate because of their personal talent.	3.85	0.68
3. Sense of Accomplishments: In addition to academic success, recognizes effort, perseverance, and citizenship as important signs of children's success.	4.05	0.69
4. Fun and Excitement: Involves being interested in something, being emotionally involved, or having an intense experience or desire of some kind.	3.45	0.93
5. Spirit of Adventure: Characterized as a child's ability to take on positive, healthy challenges.	3.81	0.68
6. Curiosity and Creativity: Characterized as inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a desire to satisfy the mind with new discoveries.	3.73	0.79
7. Leadership and Responsibility: Children's sense of control and responsibility for their actions and words.	3.80	0.65
8. Confidence to Take Action: The extent to which children believe in themselves and is related to self-regard, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-respect.	4.14	0.68

West Virginia State
GEAR UP Grant:

2002-2003
Parent Survey

Please respond to all items by
completely filling in the circle
for each selected response.

Like this:

Not this:

Identification Code:

Student Social Security No.										Co.		Sch.	
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

General Information

1. What is your relationship to the seventh-grade child who brought this survey home?

MALE RESPONDENTS:

- 36% Father or male guardian
- 3% Step or foster father
- 1% Grandfather
- 0% Friend of child's mother
- 0% Other male

FEMALE RESPONDENTS:

- 56% Mother or female guardian
- 2% Step or foster mother
- 2% Grandmother
- 0% Friend of child's father
- 0% Other female

Your Child

2. For each of the following subjects, about how many hours each day does your child spend on homework?

	0	1/2	1	1 1/2	2	2 1/2	3	Not Taking
a. English	12%	69%	14%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
b. Science	17%	65%	12%	2%	1%	0%	0%	2%
c. Math	9%	63%	22%	4%	2%	1%	1%	0%
d. History/Social Studies	16%	63%	14%	3%	1%	0%	0%	2%
e. All other subjects	18%	60%	14%	3%	2%	1%	1%	1%

3. For each of the following subjects, about how often each week do you help your child with homework?

	Never	Occa- sionally	Fre- quently	Every Day	Not Taking
a. English	16%	49%	20%	13%	1%
b. Science	16%	52%	19%	11%	2%
c. Math	12%	48%	25%	15%	0%
d. History/Social Studies	16%	50%	21%	12%	2%
e. All other subjects	16%	52%	19%	12%	1%

4. Compared with other students, how hard do you think your child works in school?

- 2% Not nearly as hard
- 7% Not as hard
- 55% About the same
- 30% Harder
- 6% Much harder

5. What type of student is your child? (Consider academic performance and study habits).

1% Poor	58% Good
17% Fair	24% Excellent

	Yes	No		
6. Have you talked with anyone at your child's school about the courses or grades needed to graduate from high school?	17%	83%		
7. Do you feel you have enough information about high school graduation requirements?	37%	63%		
	<i>Never</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>
8. How often do you attend activities or events at your child's school?	8%	16%	40%	36%
9. How often do you meet with your child's teachers to discuss the academic progress of your child?	19%	31%	41%	10%
10. How satisfied are you regarding your child's experiences this year with each of the following:	<i>Very Dissat.</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. His/her education	1%	5%	80%	14%
b. School's approach towards college preparation	2%	11%	76%	11%
c. The level of discipline maintained in the classroom by your child's teacher	1%	6%	81%	11%
d. The respect that teachers and students have for each other	2%	13%	73%	11%
e. The level of discipline maintained in the school by the principal or assistant principal	3%	8%	74%	15%
f. The school's encouragement of family involvement	2%	8%	73%	17%
11. How helpful are each of the following ways of learning about how your child is doing in school:	<i>Not Helpful at All</i>	<i>Not too Helpful</i>	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Very Helpful</i>
a. Parent/teacher conferences	2%	7%	64%	27%
b. Homework sign-off	4%	11%	65%	21%
c. Report cards	0%	2%	54%	44%
d. Talking to my child	1%	7%	56%	36%
e. Phone calls from teacher(s)	4%	8%	60%	28%
f. Notes from teacher(s)	4%	6%	58%	33%

Your Child's Future Plans

12. How far in school would you like to see your child go?

0% Less than high school graduation	12% Two-year college degree (associate)
8% High school graduation	42% Four-year college degree (bachelor)
3% Certificate program (less than 2-year college pgm.)	37% Six-to-ten-year college degree (master, doctorate)

13. Who provides your child with information about options for continuing education after high school? (Select all that apply.)

85%	Parent or guardian	51%	Teacher
32%	Grandparent	30%	Guidance counselor
21%	Brother or sister	18%	Principal or assistant principal
30%	Other family member	10%	Coach
16%	Friend	25%	GEAR UP staff (mentor, tutor)
9%	Religious leader (minister, priest, rabbi)	7%	Some other person

14. What would be the main reason for your child not continuing his/her education after high school?

35%	No reason, child definitely will go	2%	Child wants to join the military
29%	It costs too much or cannot afford it	0%	College is too far from home
0%	College not necessary for planned job	1%	Child doesn't like school
2%	Grades are not good enough	0%	Child wants to start a family
5%	Child is just not interested	2%	Some other reason
0%	Child wants or needs to work	13%	Don't know
10%	Multiple Response		

Knowledge about College

	Yes	No
15. Have you talked with anyone at your child's school about the courses and grades needed to get into college?	12%	88%
16. Are you familiar with the entrance requirements for the three basic types of postsecondary schools?		
a. Two-year or community college	37%	64%
b. Four-year college or university	37%	63%
c. Vocational, trade, or business school	35%	65%
17. Have you talked with your child about attending college?	90%	10%
18. Have you started saving any money for your child's college education?	37%	63%
19. How much do you think it costs for one year of tuition at a four-year public college in your state? (This estimate should <u>not</u> include food, housing, or book expenses.)		
1% Up to \$1,000	13%	\$15,001 - \$20,000
21% \$1,001 - \$5,000	7%	\$20,001 - \$25,000
29% \$5,001 - \$10,000	6%	\$25,001 - \$30,000
19% \$10,001 - \$15,000	5%	More than \$30,000
20. Do you think your child would be able to afford to attend a public four-year college or university?		
10% Definitely can't afford it	25%	Probably can afford it
11% Doubt if can afford it	9%	Definitely will be able to afford it
45% Not sure		

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21. Have you heard of the following sources of money for education beyond high school?
(Select all that apply.)

56%	Federal Pell grants	34%	Institutional scholarships
76%	Federal student loans	49%	Private or academic scholarships
31%	Federal work-study	68%	Athletic scholarships
60%	State scholarships		

Yes No

22. Do you think your child is likely to qualify for enough of the above sources of financial assistance to attend college?

71% 29%

Background

23. What is your gender?

Male Female
40% 60%

24. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

20%	Less than high school graduation	8%	Two-year college degree (associate)
46%	High school graduation	7%	Four-year college degree (bachelor)
16%	Certificate program (less than 2-year college pgm.)	3%	Six-to-ten-year college degree (master, doctorate)

Yes No

25. Are there any other adults in your household?

86% 14%

26. Is anyone in your household currently attending college?

12% 88%

27. Do you use a computer at home?

70% 31%

28. What is the total yearly income of all persons in your household? (Include salaries, interest, retirement, and public assistance for all household members.)

13%	\$10,000 or less	16%	\$30,001 to \$40,000
18%	\$10,001 to \$20,000	13%	\$40,001 to \$50,000
22%	\$20,001 to \$30,000	20%	More than \$50,000

29. How do you describe yourself?

1%	American Indian or Alaska Native	0%	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
0%	Asian	96%	White
1%	Black or African American	0%	Biracial
0%	Hispanic or Latino	0%	Multiracial

30. Which of the following free workshops would you attend if they were offered at a convenient time, with free transportation? (Select all that apply.)

42%	Understanding Computers/Internet	33%	Preparing for College - A Parent's Course
27%	Brush-Up Course for Parents in Math	32%	Understanding College Requirements
17%	Brush-Up Course for Parents in English	40%	Understanding Financial Aid/Scholarships
12%	Brush-Up Course for Parents in Spelling	10%	Preparing to Take the GED
12%	Brush-Up Course for Parents in Writing	32%	Understanding the Teenage Years
10%	Brush-Up Course for Parents in Speaking	35%	How to Know the Signs of a Troubled Teen

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West Virginia State
GEAR UP Grant

2002-2003
9th Grade Student Survey

Please respond to all items by completely filling in the circle for each selected response.

Like this: Not like this:

Regional: April 2003 (N= 1,301)

Identification Code:											
Student Social Security No.									Co.		Sch.
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

1. What is your gender? 51% Male 49% Female

2. What high school are you currently attending?

6% Big Creek High	17% Hampshire County High	0% Mount View High
8% Clay County High	2% Hannan High	7% Pocahontas County High
5% Duval High	4% Harts High	13% Point Pleasant High
5% Guyan Valley High	1% Iaeger High	12% Roane County High
4% Hamlin High	11% James Monroe High	5% Wahama High

3. Compared with other students, how hard do you think you work in school?

3% Not nearly as hard	26% Harder
6% Not as hard	4% Much harder
61% About the same	

4. What type of student do you consider yourself to be?

2% Poor	63% Good
23% Fair	12% Excellent

5. Have you ever talked with your school counselor or someone else at your school about the entrance requirements for college (i.e., GPA, ACT scores, or other college requirements)?

Yes	No
35%	65%

6. During the past year, have you discussed academic requirements for attending a four-year college with any adults at school (i.e., high school classes you need to take in preparation for college)?

49%	51%
-----	-----

7. Do you have an idea of what courses you should take in high school to prepare you for college?

68%	32%
-----	-----

8. Have you heard of the following types of schools?

a. Two-year or community college	87%	13%
b. Four-year college or university	92%	8%
c. Vocational, trade, or business school	83%	17%

9. What do you most want to be when you grow up?

2% Actor/actress	5% Doctor	1% Pilot
1% Architect	5% Engineer	2% Police officer
2% Artist	5% Lawyer	1% Race-car driver
6% Athlete (any sport)	4% Mechanic	2% Scientist
0% Astronaut	3% Military	2% Singer/musician
2% Beautician	1% Model	3% Teacher
1% Chef	7% Nurse	2% Truck driver
4% Computer/video technician	1% Pharmacist	6% Veterinarian
2% Construction worker	1% Photographer	18% Other career
1% Designer/decorator	2% Physical therapist	11% Don't know

10. How far in school do you think you will get?

2% Less than high school graduation	13% Two-year college degree (associate)
19% High school graduation	40% Four-year college degree (bachelor)
5% Certificate program (less than 2-year college pgm.)	21% Six-to-ten-year college degree (master, doctorate)

11. What is the main reason you would not continue your education after high school?

48% No reason, I definitely will go	6% I want to join the military
11% It costs too much or I can't afford it	1% Don't want to be away from home
3% Don't need college for planned job	5% Just don't like school
3% My grades are not good enough	1% I want to start a family
3% I'm just not interested	3% Some other reason
3% I need or want to work	13% Don't know

12. Do you think you will be able to afford to attend a four-year college or university after high school?

5% Definitely can't afford it	34% Probably can afford it
12% I doubt if I can afford it	13% Definitely will be able to afford it
36% I'm not sure	

13. Overall, how often would you say you participate in the GEAR UP program activities?

23% Never	34% Most of the time
14% Sometimes	18% Always
10% About half of the time	

14. Has being in the GEAR UP program changed your plans about going to college? Yes No

36% 64%

If you selected "Yes," what were the biggest factors? (select all that apply)

41% Information about financial aid and college costs	6% Mentoring
37% Information about benefits of attending college	48% Visits to college campus
13% Tutoring or help with school work	27% Other

15. Since you were in the seventh grade, how often have you attended any of the following activities provided by the GEAR UP program?

	<i>Not Offered</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>A few times</i>	<i>Occasionally</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Every day</i>
a. Tutoring in math	24%	56%	12%	4%	3%	2%
b. Tutoring in English	24%	63%	7%	3%	1%	1%
c. Tutoring in other academic subjects	23%	63%	9%	2%	2%	1%
d. Tutoring for SAT, ACT, or other entrance exams	26%	60%	8%	3%	2%	1%
e. Other type of tutoring	25%	62%	8%	3%	2%	1%
f. Computer-assisted lab, any type	24%	50%	12%	6%	5%	3%
g. Mentoring	27%	57%	9%	4%	2%	1%
h. Class at a college	31%	55%	9%	3%	1%	1%
i. Counseling/advising for college	25%	53%	14%	5%	2%	1%
j. Counseling, personal	25%	60%	10%	3%	1%	1%
k. Workshop on college preparation	26%	55%	13%	4%	2%	1%
l. Workshop on study skills	26%	54%	14%	5%	1%	1%
m. Workshop on careers	25%	49%	18%	5%	2%	1%
n. Other workshop	24%	54%	14%	5%	2%	1%
o. College visit	18%	35%	31%	9%	6%	2%
p. Job site visit	24%	48%	19%	5%	3%	1%
q. Cultural event	25%	48%	16%	6%	4%	1%
r. Some other type of visit	22%	45%	22%	7%	3%	2%
s. Job shadowing	26%	50%	16%	5%	2%	1%
t. College student shadowing	30%	57%	8%	3%	2%	1%
u. College professional shadowing	31%	60%	6%	2%	1%	1%
v. Other shadowing	30%	58%	7%	2%	2%	1%
w. GEAR UP family activity	18%	38%	20%	11%	11%	2%

16. Overall, how satisfied are you with the GEAR UP program?

6%	Very dissatisfied	64%	Satisfied
8%	Dissatisfied	21%	Very satisfied

17. How satisfied are you with each of the following types of services you received from the GEAR UP program?

	<i>Did not attend</i>	<i>Very Dissat.</i>	<i>Dissatisfied</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very Satisfied</i>
a. Tutoring	1%	3%	3%	20%	3%
b. Mentoring	73%	4%	4%	18%	2%
c. Class at a college	74%	3%	3%	16%	4%
d. Counseling	70%	3%	5%	19%	3%
e. Workshops	63%	3%	3%	25%	6%
f. College campus visit	42%	3%	3%	34%	18%
g. Job site visit	65%	3%	4%	22%	6%
h. Cultural event.	67%	3%	4%	20%	6%
i. College student shadowing	75%	3%	4%	14%	4%
j. College professional shadowing.	76%	3%	4%	14%	3%
k. Family activity	48%	3%	4%	34%	12%

Use the following scale to indicate your level of agreement for each of the following items:

1 = Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 = Disagree (D) 3 = Don't Know (DK) 4 = Agree (A) 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)

	SD	D	DK	A	SA
18. I can take control of situations.	5%	5%	20%	52%	18%
19. I know what I want and I go after it.	2%	5%	15%	49%	29%
20. I am a good leader.	5%	10%	38%	35%	12%
21. I can select the best way to solve a problem.	5%	12%	35%	39%	10%
22. I do what I say I will.	3%	7%	21%	52%	17%
23. I usually have fun in class.	9%	16%	17%	44%	13%
24. I am a positive role model to other students.	8%	10%	41%	31%	10%
25. Teachers care about my problems and feelings.	9%	12%	39%	29%	10%
26. Teachers respect my thoughts.	8%	10%	38%	36%	9%
27. I seek solutions to complex problems.	4%	7%	32%	44%	12%
28. I have a strong caring relationship with an adult.	5%	6%	22%	40%	27%
29. Teachers care about my success in class.	5%	6%	30%	42%	17%
30. I believe I can always improve.	2%	4%	15%	46%	32%
31. Teachers expect me to succeed.	3%	5%	27%	44%	20%
32. I am confident in my ability to do well.	3%	5%	18%	52%	21%
33. I take action on causes I believe in.	3%	6%	24%	47%	20%
34. Teachers value my opinions.	6%	8%	40%	36%	9%
35. I accept responsibility for my actions.	4%	5%	16%	54%	21%
36. I am proud of my school.	7%	8%	24%	42%	18%
37. Teachers help me to succeed.	5%	8%	26%	47%	14%
38. I put forth the necessary effort to reach a goal.	3%	5%	21%	52%	19%
39. Teachers support me when I try something new.	5%	10%	37%	38%	11%
40. My courses help me to understand what is happening in my everyday life.	4%	11%	33%	42%	10%
41. Teachers tell me I do a good job when I try my best.	6%	9%	22%	49%	14%
42. I am eager to learn new things.	4%	7%	22%	47%	19%
43. Teachers make learning exciting.	10%	21%	32%	29%	8%
44. I have a teacher who is a positive role model for me.	7%	11%	31%	36%	15%
45. Teachers allow me to explore topics I find interesting.	8%	12%	34%	37%	9%
46. I am not usually bored in school.	18%	19%	23%	31%	8%
47. Teachers expect me to be a good decision maker.	4%	5%	32%	46%	14%
48. Anyone can succeed if they work hard enough.	3%	5%	16%	40%	36%
49. I have opportunities to decide for myself what I learn about in school.	5%	6%	27%	46%	16%
50. Teachers encourage me to ask questions.	5%	8%	26%	45%	16%

Items 23-50 are from the *Students Speak* survey developed by the National Center for Student Aspirations, College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine.

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Aspiration Subscales

		Mean	Std. Dev.
1.	Belongings: A relationship between two or more individuals characterized by a sense of connection, support, and community.	3.35	0.86
2.	Heros: People whom children admire and imitate because of their personal talent.	3.55	0.76
3.	Sense of Accomplishments: In addition to academic success, recognizes effort, perseverance, and citizenship as important signs of children's success.	3.74	0.75
4.	Fun and Excitement: Involves being interested in something, being emotionally involved, or having an intense experience or desire of some kind.	3.12	0.97
5.	Spirit of Adventure: Characterized as a child's ability to take on positive, healthy challenges.	3.61	0.69
6.	Curiosity and Creativity: Characterized as inquisitiveness, eagerness, a strong desire to learn new or interesting things, and a desire to satisfy the mind with new discoveries.	3.44	0.75
7.	Leadership and Responsibility: Children's sense of control and responsibility for their actions and words.	3.65	0.68
8.	Confidence to Take Action: The extent to which children believe in themselves and is related to self-regard, self-esteem, self-worth, and self-respect.	3.87	0.77



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