

**GEAR UP Austin:
Impacting Lives Project
2002-2003**



**Austin Independent School District
Department of Program Evaluation
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GEAR UP Austin Impacting Lives Project Evaluation, 2002-03**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY****Overview**

Changes were plentiful for the *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* during the 2002-2003 school year. The student cohort left their middle schools and entered the world of *high school*. This event in and of itself created some challenges for students and staff alike. In this transition, many students were often concerned with getting “lost” in a large, unfamiliar school; dealing with increasing peer pressure; completing increasingly difficult school work; and, becoming progressively more independent.

In response to these concerns, the GEAR UP staff recreated support structures that were both familiar and helpful to these former middle school students and implemented new interventions on the high school campuses to provide both students and parents with additional support needed to navigate the 9th grade experience successfully. GEAR UP *Austin* provided students with intensive academic support in conjunction with personalized college and career exploration activities. GEAR UP parent involvement services emphasized the importance of customer service and supplied families with frequent and personalized information concerning high school transition issues, course enrollment, college entrance requirements, and college financial aid.

Summary of Findings

Performance evaluation results for *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* continue to be consistently positive. The analysis of data showed:

- The GEAR UP project provided enhanced academic support in the forms of tutoring and summer programs. The GEAR UP Tutoring Initiative served 2,175 students throughout the school year. Thirty-five percent of GEAR UP cohort students participated in GEAR UP or other AISD summer programs.
- The guidance and counseling component of the project offered increasingly more personalized college and career exploration opportunities for students during the third project year. Project records show that 1,524 students participated in personalized college visits; 1,219 students used College and

Career Centers to identify career interests and explore supporting post-secondary institutions; and, 55 students participated in either a Camp College or College Road Trip experience.

- Although GEAR UP enhanced project sponsored professional development offerings and supplied teachers with a total of \$108,888.92 to cover the costs of substitutes, registration fees, stipends, etc., there was a decrease in teacher professional development participation this year.
- GEAR UP provided increasingly personalized parent communication resulting in increased parent meeting attendance. GEAR UP parent support specialists made 1,425 home visits and logged 687 hours of phone calls. The percentage of parents that attended at least one parent meeting increased to 50.3% as opposed to 30% that attended the previous year.
- Higher education, business, and community partners continue to demonstrate their commitment to GEAR UP through their support of the project by participating in planning meetings in both advisory and partner roles, providing access to federal work study students for the GEAR UP tutoring initiative, hosting personalized college visits, and implementing intensive Camp College experiences for small groups of students.

Recommendations

1. ***Extend core project services to cohort students attending non-GEAR UP high school campuses.*** Originally, the GEAR UP middle and high schools were selected to house the GEAR UP project based on matching student demographic profiles and subsequent school feeder patterns. However, enrollment data show feeder patterns have changed since the program began and many cohort students are in attendance in other district high schools. It is recommended that *GEAR UP Austin* extend project services to cohort students enrolled at non-GEAR UP high schools to afford them the post-secondary preparation that they were offered at the outset and still need.
2. ***Provide an increased number of opportunities for students to become involved in a student support network.*** Overwhelmingly, project data show that the successes

that were experienced within this project have been based on the development of supportive relationships with students and their families. Therefore, it is recommended that the project continue to develop student support organizations that incorporate leadership, community service, and cultural experiences to build self-esteem and awareness of the world around them

3. ***Maximize the effectiveness of GEAR UP tutoring sessions.*** The effectiveness of GEAR UP tutoring services continued to be variable. It is recommended that GEAR UP staff clearly articulate training expectations to prospective tutors, require teachers to attend an orientation and training session that will articulate the role of the GEAR UP tutor, and work collaboratively to identify GEAR UP students who would most benefit from tutoring and serve those specific students consistently.
4. ***Provide students and parents with increasingly detailed information regarding college entrance requirements, applications, and financial aid.*** Students and their parents still identify the costs of college and student grades to be the major obstacles to their future enrollment, and fewer are planning to pursue post-secondary enrollment and obtain financial aid. It is recommended that GEAR UP increase opportunities for students and their parents to learn about college entrance requirements and financial aid opportunities. Within these learning opportunities, students and their parents should be provided with step-by-step instructions for completing the process of college enrollment and assistance in completing required forms.
5. ***Offer ongoing, campus-based, and content-related professional development opportunities.*** Evaluation data show that teachers lack the time to fully participate in professional development and often do not perceive it as directly relevant to their work. It is recommended that *GEAR UP Austin* collaborate with campus administrators and teachers to identify learning needs that are focused on course content and related to student achievement goals. Future professional development opportunities should promote active teacher learning that is characterized by meaningful discussion, coordinated planning, and implementation of improved instructional practice.

- 6. *Develop increasingly collaborative relationships with campus and district personnel in order to effectively prepare students for college and sustain effective college preparation practices after federal funding for GEAR UP ends.*** The GEAR UP staff worked diligently to initiate conversations and develop relationships with selected programs and community partners to create a variety of promising practices for improved student preparation for post-secondary enrollment. It is recommended that they continue their efforts to develop collaborative relationships with all levels of district personnel. Within this effort, it is recommended that campus and district personnel work together to identify best practices for post-secondary preparation across grant projects and departments and develop plans for institutionalizing those effective post-secondary preparation practices.

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INTRODUCTION

National GEAR UP Project Context

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a federally funded, five-year grant that begins serving students in their 7th grade year to promote rigorous academic coursework and provide detailed information to students and parents about college preparation. It is intended to increase the number of low-income, at-risk students who are prepared to enroll in postsecondary education institutions upon high school graduation, many of which will be first-generation college students. GEAR UP project structures emphasize the development of long lasting, committed partnerships within the district and the community in order to provide students with intensive support services that will continue long after the initial grant funding ends. GEAR UP should not supplant other initiatives or programs. Rather, it offers additional resources and assistance in the areas of student academic intervention, enhanced guidance and counseling, teacher professional development, and parent support services that are aligned with existing district goals. Refer to Appendix A for additional information regarding the national GEAR UP program.

GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project Description

Using a single-cohort model at the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year, *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* was developed and began serving students enrolled in the 7th grade at identified middle school campuses in the Austin Independent School District (AISD). By the end of the 2002-2003 school year, the GEAR UP student cohort had completed their 9th grade year at the high school level. This identified cohort of students was eligible for federally-funded GEAR UP project services divided into the following four components.

- ***Academic Intervention:*** GEAR UP focused on developing and implementing intensive academic support services designed to support student preparation for the TAKS tests and improve academic performance in the classroom. Project interventions consisted of mentoring/tutoring services and a variety of summer program experiences. GEAR UP also provided funds for classroom instructional materials and special learning opportunities.
- ***Enhanced Guidance and Counseling:*** Focused on developing awareness of college and career opportunities and the processes involved in taking advantage of

those, project services engaged students in an intensive series of academic and career planning activities that included college visits, career exploration activities, and individualized academic planning.

- **Professional Development:** Emphasizing improved student achievement in the classroom, project staff identify, develop, and implement professional development opportunities for teachers working with the GEAR UP cohort. Additionally, GEAR UP provides funds for substitutes, stipends, and/or registration fees to support professional development sessions focused on core curriculum and test preparation skills.
- **Parent Involvement:** Focused on increasing college preparation awareness, project services provide information, materials, and services to parents that will enable them to develop parenting skills, apply for college financial aid, and enroll their children in college.

GEAR UP Program Funding

GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project is funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Section 404 in the Higher Education Amendments of 1998. Funds are allocated within the project budget for staff salaries, employee benefits, contracted services, instructional supplies and materials, student incentives, and travel for students and staff. The following table provides a summary of expenditures for each budget category in the third fiscal year of operation.

Table 1: GEAR UP Budget Summary, 2002-2003

Budget Category	Expenditure
Salaries and Wages	\$1,259,023.34
Employee Benefits	\$224,809.39
Supplies and Materials	\$316,479.00
Travel	\$92,521.28
Equipment	\$59,703.44
Contracted Services	\$150,165.31
Other	\$18,330.14
TOTAL	\$2,121,031.60

Source: *GEAR UP Budget Records for Project Year, 2001-2002*

GEAR UP Partnership Contributions

GEAR UP Austin partnership agreements are designed to support existing district goals for preparing traditionally under-represented students to enter college while building

capacity within the district and the community to continue providing services well after the grant funding has ended. With this goal in mind, GEAR UP staff continued to cultivate and build working relationships with a variety of business, community, and district partners (Appendix B). GEAR UP project partners provided a variety of services and resources, such as professional expertise, equipment and supplies, travel funding, and facilities use (Table 2).

Table 2: Matching Funds Summary for GEAR UP Fiscal Year III, 2002-2003

	Matching Funds Budget	Actual Matching Expenditures	Anticipated Matching Expenditures
Direct Costs	9/15/02-9/14/03	9/15/02-3/15/03	3/16/03-9/14/03
Salaries And Wages	\$819,047	\$426,005	\$393,042
Employee Benefits	\$160,261	\$63,006	\$97,255
Travel /Registration	\$7,934	\$993	\$6941
Equipment Purchase	\$541,800	\$150,565	\$391,235
Materials/Supplies	\$19,429	\$11,631	\$7798
Consultants/Contracts	\$6,688	\$28,914	\$0
Other	\$1,012,493	\$350,088	\$662,405
Total Direct Costs	\$2,567,652	\$1,031,202	\$1,536,450
Total Indirect Costs	\$205,412	\$18,664.76	\$186,747
Scholarships	\$50,000	\$50,000	0
TOTAL COSTS	\$2,823,064	\$1,099,867	\$1,723,197

Source: GEAR UP Project Budget Records, 2002-2003. Note: Matching funds budget update in process at the time of report publication.

GEAR UP Austin Student Profile

In its third year of program implementation, *GEAR UP Austin* served 2,880 (78%) of the original student cohort now in the 9th grade attending eight AISD high schools and the Texas Empowerment Academy. Of these GEAR UP students, 2% were Asian, 23% were African American, 61% were Hispanic, and 14% were White. At least 50% of the cohort students are categorized as low-income and meet state at-risk criteria. The GEAR UP student cohort is considerably mobile with campus student mobility rates ranging between 16.3% and 52.8%. For campus-level demographic and mobility summaries, please see to Appendix C.

This year, GEAR UP served 22% fewer students at the high school level (n =2,880) than it did in the previous year (n = 3,670). A follow-up on cohort students that were not served during 2002-2003 revealed that these students were either attending schools within the district that did not offer GEAR UP project services or were not in attendance within

the district for a variety of reasons. The following table summarizes the changes in GEAR UP student participation between the 2001-2002 and 2002-2003 project years.

Table 3: Summary of GEAR UP Student Cohort Participants, 2002-2003

GEAR UP Cohort Participant Status	Number of Students	Percent of Cohort	Cumulative Percent of Cohort
8th Grade GEAR UP Cohort Participants (01-02)	3,670	100%	100%
Cohort Attending GEAR UP High Schools in 9th Grade (02-03)	2,880	78.5%	78.5%
Cohort Attending Non-GEAR UP High Schools in 9th Grade (02-03)	283	7.7%	86.2%
Cohort Retained in 8th Grade in District Middle Schools (02-03)	94	2.5%	88.7%
Cohort Students Not in AISD Attendance (02-03)	413	11.3%	100%

Source: Austin Independent School District Student Enrollment Records, 2002-2003.

To determine the reasons that GEAR UP students were leaving the district, an analysis of student records containing leaver codes was completed on March 4, 2003. At that time, leaver codes indicated that 72% of the students not enrolled in the district were in attendance in other Texas public schools or alternative education programs. Another 25% of the cohort students were home schooled, enrolled in schools out of state, or had returned to their home country. Leaver reasons for 3% of GEAR UP cohort students were “Not Known or Not in List” and may include students that have dropped out of school.

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this annual performance report is to provide project staff and partners with information regarding the implementation of program services and the extent to which performance objectives have been achieved. Further, this report will describe observed and perceived outcomes for participants.

Evaluation Questions

For each project component the following questions were asked:

- What project services were implemented at GEAR UP high schools?
- Did GEAR UP services meet performance expectations?
- What were the outcomes for GEAR UP project participants?

Scope and Method

A mixed-methods approach was used for the evaluation of this project. This approach provided a way to address the complexity of the project by using data collection strategies appropriate for a variety of events and minimizing the weaknesses associated with the use of a single method. It also allowed the evaluator to verify the consistency of data and clarify results, increasing the validity and reliability of the performance evaluation.

Specifically, this program evaluation used quantitative and qualitative data related to defined performance measures to determine the effectiveness of the project services and outcomes for its participants. Throughout the year, GEAR UP project staff were provided with formative and summative data to make project implementation decisions, assess the progress of cohort students, and to evaluate the degree to which promising practices are being adapted. A detailed description of data collection activities follows.

Student Enrollment and Achievement Data: Student enrollment and achievement data were used to assess the academic progress of the GEAR UP cohort. TAKS scores, course enrollment data, course credit, and course grade reports were analyzed.

GEAR UP Student and Parent Surveys: Cohort students and their parents completed a 3rd edition of the GEAR UP survey, adapted from the previous year's survey and a template provided by the Department of Education (Appendix I). It was designed to identify student academic support, career counseling, and family involvement needs as

they are related to GEAR UP project objectives. The survey was conducted throughout February and March 2003 with 1,970 (78%) students and 1,118 (44%) parents responding.

Tutor Surveys: May 2003, project tutors completed an e-mail survey to provide information concerning the implementation of tutoring services and perceived impacts on GEAR UP students. This survey contained multiple choice and open-ended questions (Appendix J). Of 140 tutors, 123 had viable email addresses. Thirty-five (28.4%) tutors representing all GEAR UP high schools responded.

Teacher Surveys: May 2003, all 9th grade GEAR UP teachers were asked to complete an e-mail survey to provide information concerning the implementation of GEAR UP project services and perceived impacts on GEAR UP students (Appendix K). This survey contained multiple choice and open-ended questions. Of these teachers, 22% (n= 66) of the teachers representing all GEAR UP high school campuses completed the survey.

Professional Development Evaluation Surveys: Sixty-seven teachers attending Learning Systems' PSAT Preparation Training in June 2003 completed course evaluations (Appendix H).

GEAR UP Camp Evaluation Surveys: GEAR UP implemented PSAT/SAT test preparation, college simulation and geometry readiness camps during the summer of 2003. Students who attended these camps completed camp evaluation surveys at the rate of 69% (n= 103), 96% (n= 26), and 62% (n=80), respectively.

Project Facilitator Interviews: During May and June 2003, all GEAR UP project facilitators and parent support specialists participated in an interview that gathered detailed information about the process of implementation and outcomes of the project.

Student Focus Groups: In June 2003, student focus groups were conducted at 6 of the GEAR UP high schools conducting PSAT Prep, Geometry, and Camp College programs. Forty-two student focus group *volunteers* (21 male, 21 female) participated. Of these, there were 3 White, 34 Hispanic, and 5 African-American students.

Meeting and Activity Documentation. Documentation describing GEAR UP meetings and activities was gathered. These data consist of quantitative and qualitative materials including observational field notes, meeting/activity agendas and descriptions,

attendance logs, and project service contact hours. This documentation was used as support information for other primary data sources.

EVALUATION RESULTS

Overall GEAR UP Project Participation

In its third year of operation, *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* transitioned from the middle schools into the high schools. In this transition, GEAR UP staff established new College and Career Centers on the high school campuses and began new relationships with high school faculties while providing a standard of services for students and their families. In this transition, the GEAR UP staff used increasingly consistent and reliable project documentation to step up the effectiveness of their project services. GEAR UP cohort students were “flagged” within a district database in order to address mobility issues and track academic progress more efficiently. A project specific database was designed and utilized to document all services more reliably and to keep up with student participation. Project staff developed more uniform service labels to appropriately describe the nature of services that they provide and reduce variability in service reporting.

Project records show that an average of 44.2 hours of services were provided per student during the 2002-2003 school year (Table 4). Overall, the average hours of service per student was consistent with previous years. However, the level of student participation differs at the campus level. The transition process may have impacted service implementation and subsequent student participation. At LBJ, students enrolled in the magnet program account for almost half of the GEAR UP cohort, however, these students generally do not take advantage of GEAR UP services explaining the lower average hours of service per student at this campus.

Table 4: Summary of GEAR UP Participation, 2002-2003

Campus	Number of Cohort Students Served at GEAR UP High Schools	Average Hours of GEAR UP Service Per Project Participant
Akins	421	20
Crockett	210	56.7
LBJ	457	9.5
Johnston	222	29.6
Lanier	538	23
McCallum	214	81.8
Reagan	383	86.5
Travis High School	434	45.6
Texas Empowerment Academy	27	45.1
TOTAL	2,880	44.2

Source: GEAR UP Project Services Database, 2002-2003. Note: Students may have been enrolled in more than one campus during the school year.

Academic Intervention Component

Research studies have found that many low-income and first-generation students are less likely than their peers to participate in academic programs that could assist them in preparing for college. Accordingly, these students also were less likely to enroll in post-secondary institutions upon high school graduation (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). In response, *GEAR UP Austin* developed intensive academic support services at both the project-wide and campus levels to meet the individual needs of GEAR UP cohort students. These services included tutoring related to core academic courses, test preparation workshops, summer enrichment and course credit-recovery courses, academically related field trips, cultural activities, student leadership seminars, and student recognition ceremonies (Objectives I A-F, Appendix D).

Tutoring Initiative Description

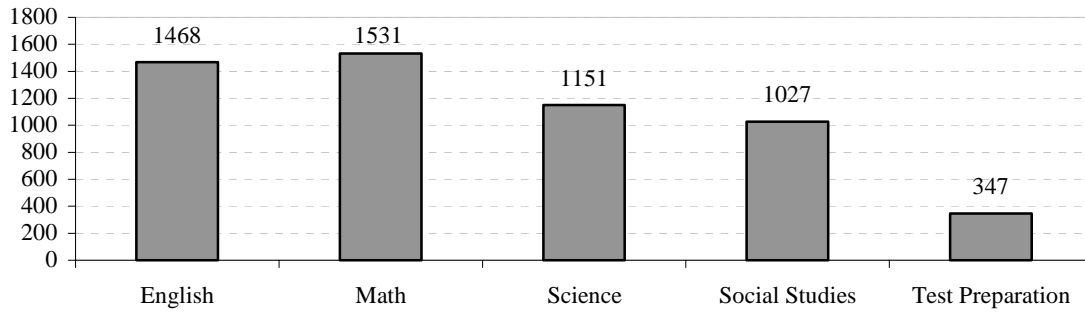
The *GEAR UP Austin* mentoring/tutoring initiative was designed to provide increased academic support to GEAR UP students with failing grades at the high school level (Objective IA, Appendix D) and to support students enrolled in Honors or Pre-AP courses (Objective IC, Appendix D). Tutoring services were variable, taking place within and outside of the classroom, in the form of small group or one-on-one instruction, and during or outside of the official school day. *GEAR UP Austin* worked collaboratively with higher education partners and district personnel to establish structures and procedures that

enabled the project to employ 210 tutors, many of whom, were federal work-study students attending higher education partner campuses.

Once hired, GEAR UP tutors were required to attend ongoing tutor training sessions conducted by district approved educational consultants. The trainings were aligned with district curriculum and state standards focusing on mentoring, language arts and math content areas. Emphasis during the trainings was placed on utilizing effective instructional strategies, preparing for the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), and using technology to support instruction. Special attention was given during the training to the new requirements of TAKS as compared to the previous years' expectations of TAAS. Tutors learned to assist students to demonstrate abstract reasoning, compare and contrast concepts, and form conclusions based on information they read. Attendance records showed that 77% of the tutors attended at least one of the training sessions offered by GEAR UP. Thirty-five percent of the tutors attended the mentor training session, 73% attended at least one content-related training session, and 40% attended both the mentor training and at least one content-related training session.

When surveyed about factors influencing their participation in training sessions, tutors offered a variety of responses. Tutors reported that they made their attendance decision based on their perceptions of the trainings' relevance. Individual expertise, teacher instructional practices, and the student skills were variables that influenced the tutors' decisions to attend training sessions beyond the initial offering. They reported that the tools and strategies provided during the content-related training sessions were seldom used as they were limited by time constraints and students perceived the strategies elementary in nature and inappropriate at the high school level. Some tutors did not attend the trainings at all or missed sessions because of other commitments or transportation issues. Only one-third of the tutors attended all of the training sessions because it was a mandatory requirement of the job.

This year, GEAR UP students were "flagged" within a district student information system (SASI) providing project staff with the most current student enrollment, attendance, and course grade information. This allowed the staff to identify students needing tutoring services and determine their specific learning needs. As a result, approximately 2,175 students were able to work with GEAR UP tutors throughout the year (Figure 1). Some of these students may have utilized a tutor only once or twice as needed, while others were able to work with tutors consistently throughout the year.

Figure 1: Summary of GEAR UP Students Tutored, 2002-2003

Source: GEAR UP Project Services Database, 2002-2003. Note: Many students received tutoring in more than one subject area (n= 2,175).

On the GEAR UP surveys, both tutors and teachers reported that tutors working within the classroom provided consistent assistance for the same set of students throughout the semester or year. Tutors generally worked with students in small groups or individually, depending on the teacher's instructional plans. While tutors estimated that more than half of their time in the classroom was spent working with specific GEAR UP cohort students identified by GEAR UP teachers or staff, they also reported that they were more likely to offer more consistent help throughout the year to students with whom they had developed a relationship. When tutoring took place in the GEAR UP College and Career Center, tutors offered assistance to GEAR UP students that came voluntarily for tutoring.

Teachers admitted that they did not always adhere to guidelines set forth in the GEAR UP tutoring initiative. They reported using tutors liberally in their classrooms and instructed them to work with *any* student in their classroom that needed help. These teachers rationalized their decisions to use the tutors provided by GEAR UP for *all* of their students rather than just GEAR UP cohort students by saying that they were in great need of assistance in the classroom and that it was difficult to deny other needy students the help that they needed.

Tutoring Initiative Outcomes

When asked about the outcomes for students accessing GEAR UP tutoring services, GEAR UP tutors identified four benefits for students who participated in tutoring services consistently throughout the semester or school year. First, GEAR UP students were provided with a flexible and individualized format to address their learning needs on

an as-needed basis. Second, when students worked with a tutor consistently, tutors reported that a positive and productive relationship was built between the student and tutor. This relationship enabled the tutor to use instructional strategies more effectively as they spent less time addressing student discipline problems. Third, tutors reported positive changes in student attitude, motivation, and/or responsibility when they were able to work with the same students consistently. Finally, they stated that the GEAR UP students used tutoring sessions as an opportunity to discuss “college life” and long-term goals that included post-secondary enrollment.

As they identified tutoring benefits for students, tutors identified challenges in assisting GEAR UP students to achieve academic success. Tutors reported that they were not always used effectively in the classroom or tutoring lab. Tutors often sat idle in the classroom waiting for the teachers to complete their lectures or were used to monitor student behavior and keep them on task. Because of pervasive student need, much of the tutors’ time was spent with students that were not in the GEAR UP cohort, which limited their contact time with those students originally identified to receive assistance. Tutors also reported that student attitude was a major factor determining the effectiveness of tutoring. Tutors described their frustrations in attempting to work with unruly or unmotivated students without teacher or GEAR UP staff support. They felt that their time could have been better spent with students who were cooperative and interested in learning. Finally, tutors found that they often did not have the time to use instructional strategies emphasized during their training and often resorted to “quick fixes” enabling the student to complete their assignment.

Most teachers who completed and returned their surveys indicated that they were highly satisfied with the tutoring services provided by GEAR UP. Ninety-four percent of the teachers recommended that other teachers utilize GEAR UP tutors in their classrooms. Teachers stated that tutor assistance with individuals and overall “crowd control” enabled them to provide



“Tutoring doubled my effectiveness during the practice portion of my math classes. There are simply more students and questions than I can address myself.”

“Tutors provided extra assistance, particularly in classes where many people needed help at once. They were encouraging to students and provided that extra smile.”

“The tutors were very supportive of the students, helping them to make the right decisions, like coming to class and completing their work.”

Source: GEAR UP Teacher Survey, 2003

more effective instruction in the classroom. When asked if students benefited from their participation in GEAR UP tutoring, 88% of the teachers completing the survey agreed or strongly agreed. They reported that the tutors helped students to complete and turn in class assignments thereby improving the students' overall course grade average. Many teachers mentioned that benefits for students often could not be quantified by class grades or test scores, but were noticeable nonetheless. Specifically, they reported that the tutoring experience enabled students to begin taking responsibility for their own learning, because students working consistently with the tutors showed an increased motivation to learn.

In instances where teachers were not satisfied with GEAR UP tutoring services, teachers provided suggestions for improvement. These teachers requested that the expectations for tutors be articulated more clearly and be more consistent between the GEAR UP staff and the teacher in the classroom. Reporting that some tutors lacked the training and skills necessary to provide effective instructional help, teachers requested that the tutors engage in more professional development focused on the development of instructional strategies. Additionally, teachers proposed that the training for tutors include more information that would enable them to interact with students more professionally and keep students on task.

During focus group sessions, students also discussed tutoring services provided by GEAR UP. All of these students were aware of tutoring services and expressed appreciation for the availability of tutoring. Students liked having access at a variety of times when they felt like they needed help. They generally used tutoring assistance only if they were failing a course. The students preferred that the assistance take place within the classroom, because they believed that they would not "get behind in class" if they were present at all times.



"A lot of us are scared to ask (for help). We get behind and behind and behind. You know what I mean? We have to understand every detail as we go along, and if we miss something, it puts us more behind. Then, it is too late. Who wants to say that?"

Source: GEAR UP Student Focus Group, Summer 2003

Students admitted that they did not consistently take advantage of tutoring. Several stated that they were often afraid of asking for help within the classroom. They did not want their teachers or peers to know how far behind they were in understanding concepts or completing assignments. However, these same students did not want to leave the classroom for tutoring for fear of missing important information. A few students

seemed fatalistic with regard to their current level of academic achievement and were not sure what efforts would help them to improve. Most reported that tutoring before and after school was difficult to access because of limited time availability, transportation, or other school or home commitments.

Nonetheless, GEAR UP students valued the interactions with the college-aged tutors conducting the tutoring sessions. Not only did the high school students view college tutors as “very smart” and capable of assisting them with their work, but the college-aged tutors were found to be “interesting”. The students liked interacting with college-aged tutors, because they believed that they understood a high school student’s academic and social needs. Students valued the stories tutors shared about prior high school experiences and college during tutoring sessions.

Further, school administrators considered the GEAR UP tutoring initiative worthy of being sustained and further developed across the district. Four middle school principals made the decision to sustain GEAR UP tutoring services in their schools for following classes of students after the federal funding moved along with the original cohort to the high school level. These principals participated in the tutor job fair hosted by GEAR UP and hired federal work-study students to tutor 6th, 7th, and 8th graders attending their schools. All GEAR UP middle school campuses continued to use the GEAR UP College and Career Centers for college exploration and academic support. Also, new collaborative relationships between the district and community leaders have been established to develop the Algebra I Tutoring Initiative. This new initiative will use hiring structures and program implementation procedures previously developed by *GEAR UP Austin*. Volunteers and federal-work study students from the University of Texas and St. Edward’s University will be hired during the annual GEAR UP Tutor Job Fair in 2003-2004 to provide tutoring services for subsequent groups of Algebra I students at Lanier, Akins, Travis, Crockett, and Reagan high schools.



“The college students are really cool. They can teach you in a way that our teachers cannot. It is easier to talk to them because they remember how it is in high school.”

“I like talking to the college students. I ask them all kinds of questions about college and what it is like to live in the dorms.”

Source: GEAR UP Student Focus Group, Summer 2003

Summer Academic Intervention Programs

GEAR UP Austin project staff worked to make sure that GEAR UP students continued to be engaged in learning opportunities throughout the summer. During the

Spring 2003 semester, the staff began reviewing student academic records and communicating with the students and their parents about the many summer learning opportunities that were available to them. This service enabled 35% of GEAR UP cohort students to participate in a variety of academic summer programs, some for the purpose of remediation and others for the purpose of enrichment and acceleration.

Specifically, project staff identified GEAR UP students who needed course credit recovery assistance (Objective IA, Appendix D). The GEAR UP staff made phone calls, scheduled conferences, and visited homes to provide GEAR UP students and their families with information regarding course credit recovery opportunities and assisted them in enrolling in AISD summer school courses or the *Bridges to Success* program, a half-day or all-day program focusing on English, Science, Mathematics, or Social Studies. To accommodate the increased numbers of students enrolling in summer school, GEAR UP project staff also assisted summer school staff with summer enrollment processes, covered the costs of the additional teachers needed to serve the GEAR UP students, and provided 94 students with scholarships for AISD summer school that totaled \$11,710.00. As a result, 237 GEAR UP students enrolled in AISD summer courses with 198 (83.5%) earning credits for the courses they completed. An additional 422 GEAR UP students enrolled in the *Bridges to Success* program, 388 (91.9%) of whom earned credits for the courses that they completed.

Students with significant challenges in reading were encouraged to enroll in the *Reading Acceleration Program (RAP)*. This reading program's curriculum provided direct instruction in reading, writing, vocabulary, and fluency. It was designed to improve a student's reading level by several grade levels while allowing students to earn an elective credit. GEAR UP funded salaries for two teachers of 15 GEAR UP students who were enrolled in RAP and purchased reading materials and software to be used with these students. Teachers were provided with professional development and in-class support as they taught the summer program. All GEAR UP students showed gains in reading fluency, and 6 students showed gains in reading efficiency. The reading instructional resources will continue to be available for GEAR UP teacher use the following school year.

Helping students complete math programs that could greatly increase their chances of enrolling in college (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), *GEAR UP Austin* hosted Geometry Readiness Camp, a two-week, hands-on experiential introduction to geometry for 129 students at Akins, Johnston, Lanier, Reagan, and Travis high schools. Teachers

conducting this camp had completed a series of trainings designed to prepare them for the Geometry Readiness camp during Spring 2003 (Please see page 33 for more details on this professional development offering). GEAR UP also purchased all of the supplies and equipment needed for the camp with the expectation that they would continue to be used in classrooms throughout the 2003-2004 school year.

Eighty students completed a course evaluation at the end of this camp. Almost all students responded favorably to the experience, rating the format of the camp, expertise of the teachers, and importance and applicability of the information very highly. (Appendix E) On open-ended survey questions, students overwhelmingly reported that the hands-on activities using manipulative materials (cubes and geo-boards) or requiring some creative/artistic input (posters and computer programs) were their favorite and most meaningful activities. Students repeatedly expressed appreciation for the extra time that the teachers took to answer individual questions and provide detailed explanations and illustrations using manipulative materials. In focus groups, students reported that they were not initially interested in participating in the Geometry camps but attended because they either liked the GEAR UP staff or their parent(s) “made” them attend. These students described their surprise when they found the experience to be “good use of their time.”

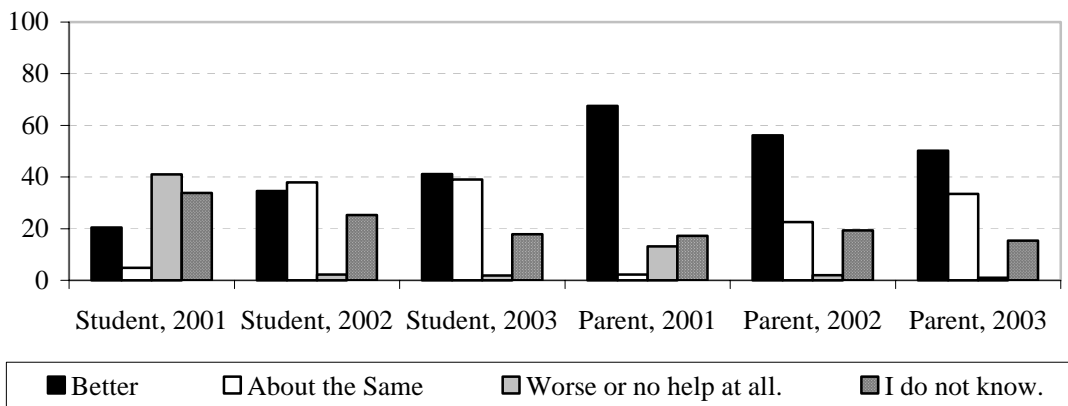
Students often stated that they felt confident when working with the manipulative materials, but they found moving to the more abstract representations of their work (equations) to be much more difficult. This view was corroborated by results from daily student assessments. The results of these assessments generally indicated that a low percentage of students had actually “mastered” each day’s objective. While the outcomes on these assessments were disappointing, teachers were able to use the information to identify the gaps in student comprehension and address concerns in subsequent lessons.

Overall Academic Outcomes

On the annual GEAR UP project surveys (Appendix I), students and parents were asked about the impact of GEAR UP academic support services, primarily offered in the form of tutoring. The percentage of students reporting that their grades had improved significantly as a result of their participation in GEAR UP increasing from 34.6% to 41.1% this year. Additionally, there was a significant change in the number of students who were unsure about the status of their academic performance, the percentage decreased from 25.3% the previous year to 17.9% this year. However, the percentage of parents reporting

that GEAR UP helped students to improve their grades decreased significantly in comparison to previous years. There was also a significant decrease in the percentage of parents who did not know how their child's academic performance may have been impacted by their participation in GEAR UP. GEAR UP project staff believed that this decrease may indicate that parents are more aware of their child's performance in school. Overall, 80.1% of students and 83.6% of parents believed that the students' academic performance was about the same or better than in years past (Figure 2).

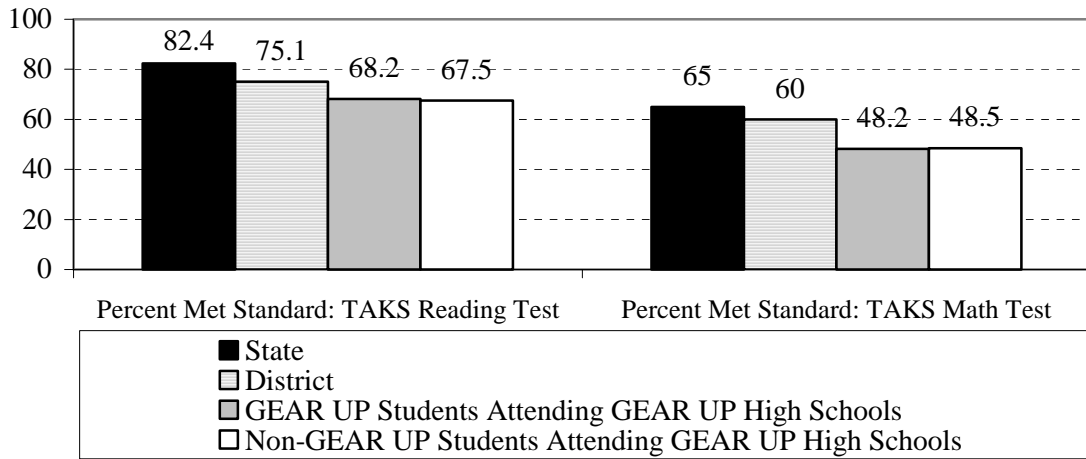
Figure 2: Student and Parent Perceptions of Academic Performance, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, 2002-2003

GEAR UP tutoring services were implemented to improve the academic performance of GEAR UP students in the classroom and on state assessments (Objective IA, Appendix D). In this benchmark year, the overall percentage of GEAR UP students meeting minimum standard on the reading and mathematics TAKS tests was lower than the state and district percentages of 9th grade students meeting minimum standards. However, GEAR UP cohort students performed as well as their non-GEAR UP peers attending the same high schools.

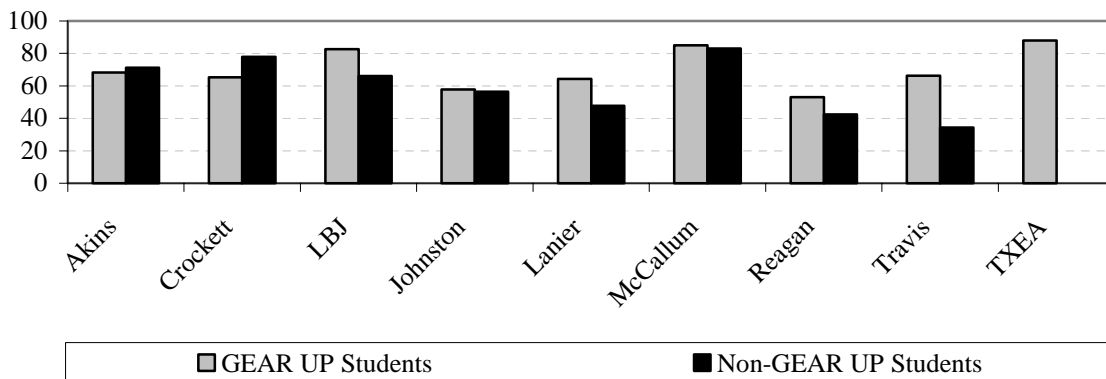
Figure 3: Overall Percent of 9th Grade Students Meeting Standard on TAKS Reading and Mathematics Tests, Spring 2003



Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System, Texas Education Agency, 2002-2003

On average, a review of TAKS scores showed that GEAR UP students performed as well or better than their 9th grade peers attending the same high school. When TAKS reading test data were disaggregated at the campus level, results were mixed (Figure 4). In 3 cases, GEAR UP student performance was significantly better (Lanier, LBJ, and Travis). At Crockett, GEAR UP students performed significantly worse. In the remaining cases, there was no significant difference was found between GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP student performance.

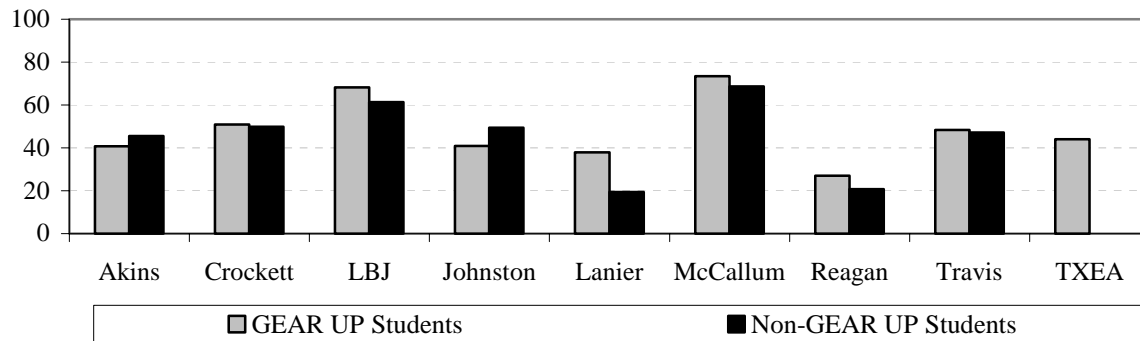
Figure 4: Percent of GEAR UP And Non-GEARUP Students Attending GEAR UP High Schools Meeting Minimum Standard on the TAKS Reading Test, Spring 2003



Source: District TAKS Data provided by the Texas Education Agency, 2002-2003. Note: Students participating in the magnet program at LBJ are included in the overall total of GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students. The disaggregation of magnet versus non-magnet program student scores within GEAR UP participation had not been completed at the time of this report publication.

On the TAKS math test, the percentages of GEAR UP cohort students that met the minimum standard was higher or about the same, with the exceptions of Akins and Johnston high schools (Figure 5). Lanier was the only high school where the difference between the percent of GEAR UP and Non-GEAR UP students meeting minimum standard was significant, with the significance favoring GEAR UP participants.

Figure 5: Percent of GEAR UP And Non-GEAR UP Students Attending GEAR UP High Schools Meeting Minimum Standard on the TAKS Math Test, Spring 2003



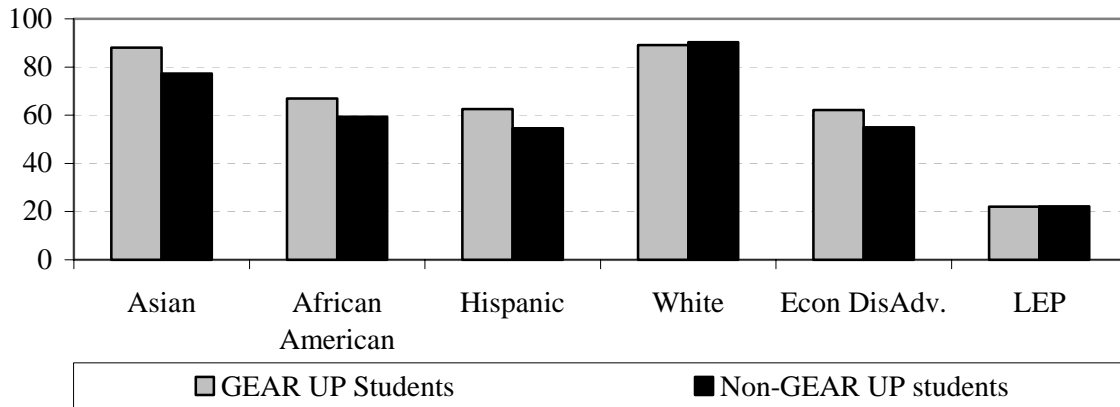
Source: District TAKS Data provided by the Texas Education Agency, 2002-2003. Note: Students participating in the magnet program at LBJ are included in the overall total of GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students. The disaggregation of magnet versus non-magnet program student scores had not been completed at the time of this report publication.

Coincidentally, Travis and Lanier high schools maintained the largest tutoring programs as measured by the number of tutors employed and the number of hours spent on tutoring throughout the year. The GEAR UP cohort students at Reagan had the highest average of overall project participation than any other high school with an average of 86.5 hours per student.

Because research has shown that minority and low socio-economic students are often under-represented in institutions of higher education (U.S. Department of Education, 1997), the GEAR UP project staff are concerned about the academic achievement of all student groups. An analysis of TAKS scores for student groups showed that GEAR UP cohort students generally performed as well or better than their non-GEAR UP peers attending the same high school (Figures 6 & 7). However, White and Asian students continue to perform better than all of the other student groups with the greatest disparities occurring on the TAKS math test. The following figures provide a campus-level

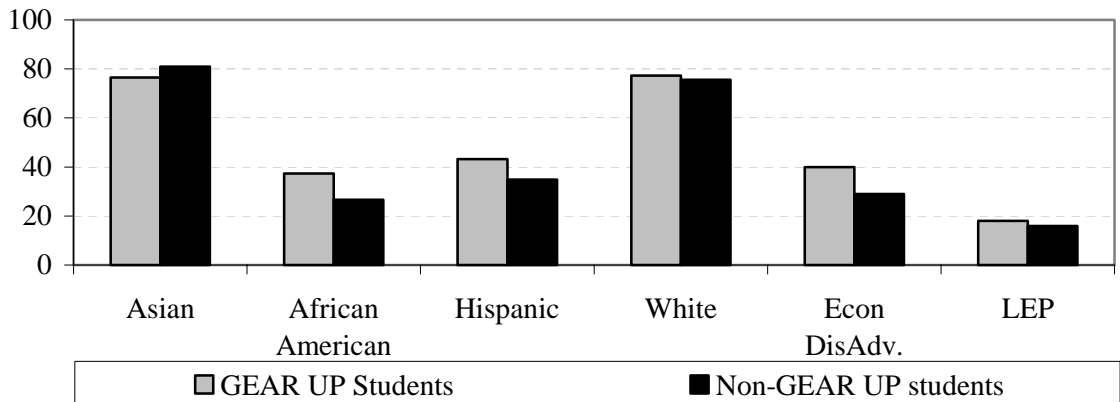
performance summary for GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP student groups on Reading and Math TAKS tests.

Figure 6: Percent Of GEAR UP And Non-GEARUP 9th Grade Student Groups Meeting Minimum Standard on the TAKS Reading Test, Spring 2003



Source: District TAKS Data provided by the Texas Education Agency, 2002-2003.

Figure 7: Percent of GEAR UP And Non-GEAR UP 9th Grade Student Groups Meeting Minimum Standard on the TAKS Math Test, Spring 2003

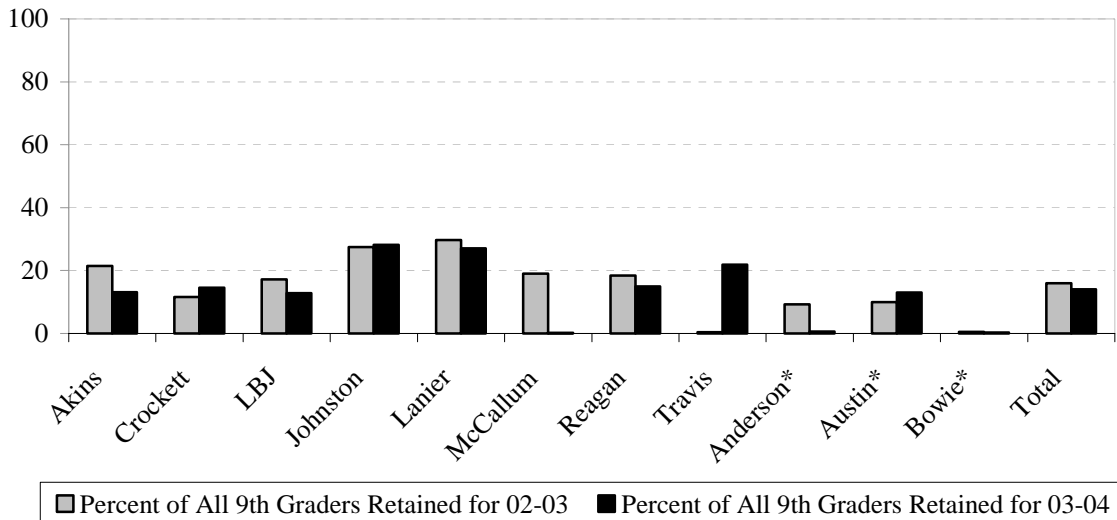


Source: District TAKS Data provided by the Texas Education Agency, 2002-2003.

In interviews and on surveys, GEAR UP staff, tutors, and teachers repeatedly reported that the GEAR UP support services such as tutoring, summer programs, and academic counseling enabled more 9th grade students to complete the requirements necessary to be promoted to the 10th grade than in previous years. Corroborating this perception, an analysis of 9th grade student enrollment at GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP high schools revealed that the overall percentage of 9th grade students who were retained in 9th grade at the end of the 2002-2003 school year decreased significantly from the previous

school year. A campus-level analysis showed a significant decrease in the percentages of 9th grade students who were retained at Akins, LBJ, and McCallum high schools. Travis High School experienced a significant increase in the percentage of 9th grade students who were retained in 9th grade at the end of the 2002-2003 school year. The following figure compares the percentages of 9th grade students that were retained for the 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 school years. A corresponding data table is provided in Appendix F.

Figure 8: Summary of Students Retained in 9th Grade, 2002-2003 & 2003-2004



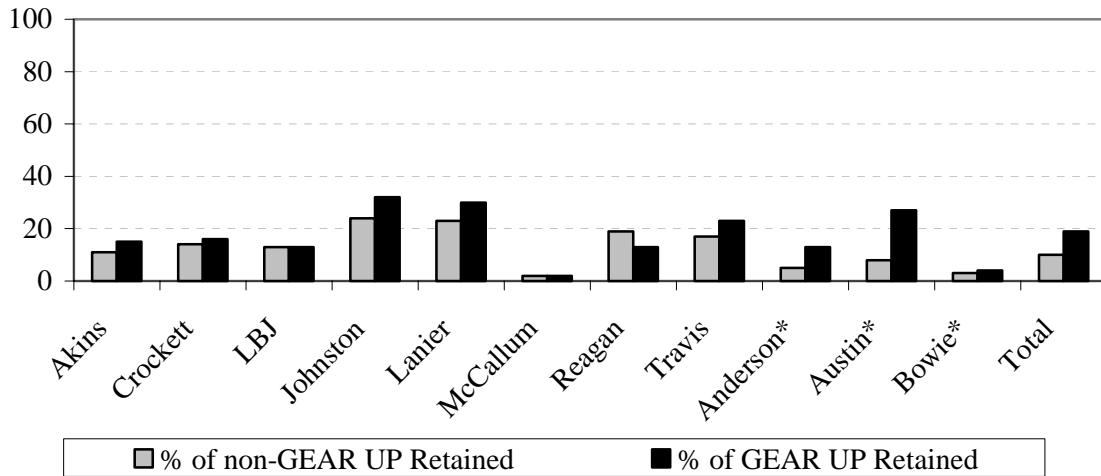
Source: Austin Independent School District Student Enrollment Records, October 3, 2003.

*Indicates Non-GEAR UP high school.

A closer look into the 9th grade student retention for the 2003-2004 school year revealed that the overall percentage of GEAR UP students retained was still significantly greater than the percentage of non-GEAR UP students who were retained across all high schools. At the campus level, the difference in the retention rates of GEAR UP and Non-GEAR UP students were significant at Lanier and Reagan. Lanier had a significantly greater percentage of GEAR UP students retained while Reagan had significantly smaller percentage of GEAR UP students retained.

An analysis of student enrollment data revealed that 36.6% of the 9th grade students at Austin High School were GEAR UP cohort students who had previously participated in the project at the middle school level and would have been eligible for GEAR UP services if they had attended a project high school. This non-GEAR UP campus also had a significantly higher percentage of former GEAR UP students who were retained.

Figure 9: Percent of GEAR UP and Non-GEAR UP Students Retained in 9th Grade, 2002-2003



Source: Austin Independent School District Student Enrollment Records, October 3, 2003.

*Indicates Non-GEAR UP high school.

Enhanced Guidance and Counseling Component

GEAR UP Austin provided a variety of enhanced guidance and counseling services for students at designated high schools. Project services were developed at both the project-wide and campus levels to meet the individual needs of GEAR UP cohort students. Counseling services included college and career exploration activities, college visits, college-financial aid seminars, mentoring opportunities, motivation seminars, community service events, and student recognition ceremonies. The following portion of this report describes the major enhanced guidance and counseling initiatives implemented across the project (Objectives II A-D, Appendix D).

College and Career Centers

Following cohort students from the middle schools and into the high schools, College and Career Centers were established at each GEAR UP high school. The primary purpose for the College and Career Centers is to provide a place for students to explore the most up-to-date college and career information. These centers feature state of the art technology including computers, LCD projectors, instructional software, and other print resources related to the college and career exploration process. The cost of setting up the centers included peripheral equipment such as tables, chairs, and special wiring (Table 5).

Table 5: Summary of College and Career Center Resources, 2002-2003

Campus	Computers	Peripheral Equipment	Software	Total
Akins	\$25,920.20	\$910.64	\$1,448.76	\$28,279.60
Crockett	\$34,177.80	\$1,038.80	\$1,644.44	\$36,861.04
Johnston	\$32,507.00	\$1,763.38	\$16,257.33	\$50,527.71
Lanier	\$32,352.00	\$1,964.62	\$4,947.57	\$39,264.19
LBJ	\$34,190.90	\$1,864.00	\$945.76	\$37,000.66
McCallum	\$32,321.50	\$1,286.70	\$1,421.76	\$35,029.96
Reagan	\$32,327.70	\$1,562.14	\$1,448.76	\$35,338.60
Travis	\$37,790.20	\$1,964.62	\$1,705.59	\$41,460.41
Total	\$261,587.30	\$12,354.90	\$29,819.97	\$303,762.17

Source: GEAR UP Budget Records, 2002-2003.

To support individualized student college and career exploration needs, *GEAR UP* purchased eDISCOVER, a new web-based college and career awareness product developed by ACT. eDISCOVER enables students to complete interest and aptitude inventories and engage in college and career research related to their interests. Because it can be used in conjunction with AISD's *Individualized Academic Career Planning (IACP)* curriculum materials, *GEAR UP Austin* provided training to use the product for counselors and interested teachers and encouraged them to schedule time with students in the College and Career Centers. Project records showed that 1,219 GEAR UP students completed an aptitude or interest inventory and online college/career exploration using eDISCOVER during the Spring 2003 semester.

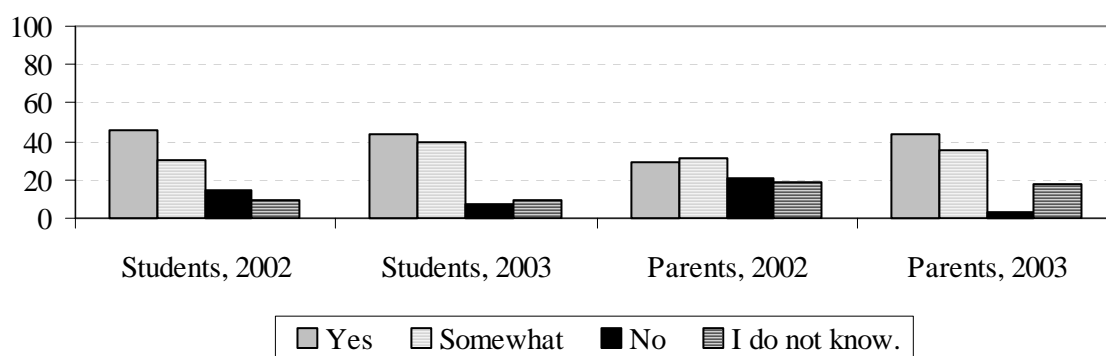
The College and Career Centers also served as teaching labs focused on providing intensive academic instructional support and helping students explore future college and career options. During the Spring 2003 semester, 81 GEAR UP teachers spent a total of 969 hours using these centers for classroom instruction. Students also used the centers before and after school to complete classroom assignments requiring the use of Internet resources or technical preparation. When students were asked about their use of the College and Career Centers during focus-group sessions, they reported that the computer labs were an important resource as they do not have computers at home and many of their assignments require the use of word processing or Internet research. Students also stated that finding time to use the labs for their own academic and college exploration purposes was difficult, because their time before and after school was limited.

College Visits

The project staff continued to provide all 9th grade GEAR UP students with the opportunity to visit at least one college during the school year. In order to provide students with a more intimate experience tailored to meet their interests, most of these college visits were conducted for small student groups. Throughout the school year, 1,524 GEAR UP students visited at least one of the following colleges: Austin Community College, Huston-Tillotson College, St. Edward's University, the University of Texas at Austin, Texas State University, Southwestern University, Concordia University, Texas A&M University, Texas A&M at Corpus Christi, Rice University, University of Houston, University of Texas at San Antonio, Texas Southern University, and Prairie View A&M University. Many students didn't participate in college visits because they took place on the weekends when students had other extra-curricular and family commitments.

Students had mixed feelings about the college visits. On GEAR UP project surveys, both students and parents reported that the college visits were helpful or somewhat helpful. Parent perceptions of the college visit improved the most from last year.

Figure 10: GEAR UP Student and Parent Perceptions Regarding Whether College Visits Helped to Learn More About College, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

In focus groups, the students elaborated on the visits. They reported that college tours were “fun”. The students enjoyed the social interactions and “getting out of class for the day”. Students reported that they were able to obtain basic college entrance and financial aid information during college visits. However, these same students also expressed some dissatisfaction with the format of some of the visits. They stated that some college visits were not helpful to them because they didn't offer any new or substantive

information. They wanted to progress from being presented with general information to engaging in specialized tours tailored to their college major and career interests. Similar to the college visit, students reported that the Centex College Fair was interesting. This exposition was an event that the students would like to attend again as it offered more information about a greater variety of colleges and financial aid resources within one setting.

Camp College

Building on the college visit experience, two GEAR UP higher education partners, Huston-Tillotson College and St. Edward's University, invited students to their campuses for a week-long camp. Camp College was designed to offer students rigorous academic enrichment along with a college residential experience. Fourteen students participated at Huston-Tillotson College, and 14 students at St. Edward's University. Upon camp arrival, students were assigned roommates and taken to settle into their residence halls while their parents participated in an orientation that included discussions of the value of higher education, financial aid, and their child's upcoming college experience. The Camp College daily schedule included college seminars in web design, chemistry, the Civil Rights Movement in America, Texas Leaders of Tomorrow, and PSAT preparation. Students also participated in community service projects (puppet making for children at the Children's Hospital and Norman Elementary School), dramatic interpretation classes (oral poetry readings from the Civil Rights era), trips to the IMAX Theatre at the Bullock museum, and outdoor sports. Spread throughout all of the daily activities, the Camp College curriculum provided information to students about the college selection process, college majors, and financial aid.

Students participating in Camp College at St. Edward's University completed camp evaluation at the end of this summer program (Appendix L). Slightly more than half of the students (56%) reported that the free time they had to play games and socialize with their new friends was their favorite part of the camp. Most students qualified their choice by explaining that socializing was an integral part of college life. Students reported next most frequently that their participation in the history class taught by Dr. Davis was their favorite part of the camp. These students were impressed by her passion and enthusiasm for the subject. Third most often, students reported that the community service was their favorite

part of the camp. They received personal satisfaction through the help that they were providing to others.

When discussing their impressions of teachers and camp staff, students listed several attributes that they valued. First, students reported that teacher and staff enthusiasm was most important to them. Students appreciated the time that the adults took to thoroughly explain the information that was presented. Second, students liked receiving personal attention from the camp staff and being treated as adult college students. Finally, the students reported that the teachers and staff worked hard to present new information that was both interesting and applicable to their future.

Students identified activities that they disliked and ways that teachers were not helpful. Within these responses, students identified the PSAT class as their least favorite camp activity. Most of these students had previously participated in GEAR UP PSAT preparation camps and found them “boring” in comparison to the other camp activities. Second, students reported that “getting up early” was difficult; these students also admitted to staying up late at night. Finally, students reported that the academic classes were overly long, and that they had trouble managing their attention.

Overall, students were tremendously positive about their Camp College experience on the open-ended portions of their camp evaluations. They had fun and believed that the camp was an effective way to begin understanding what college life is like. Repeatedly, students reported that they enjoyed meeting new friends and “really learned” because the teachers and staff provided an exciting learning environment. Student comments often contrasted the fun to be had with the realities of time management and the personal discipline required to learn new and often difficult material. Finally, students consistently referenced the personal attention that they received from the GEAR UP staff during the Camp College experience. Students believed that the staff were concerned about their well-being and were working to help them meet future goals for college.

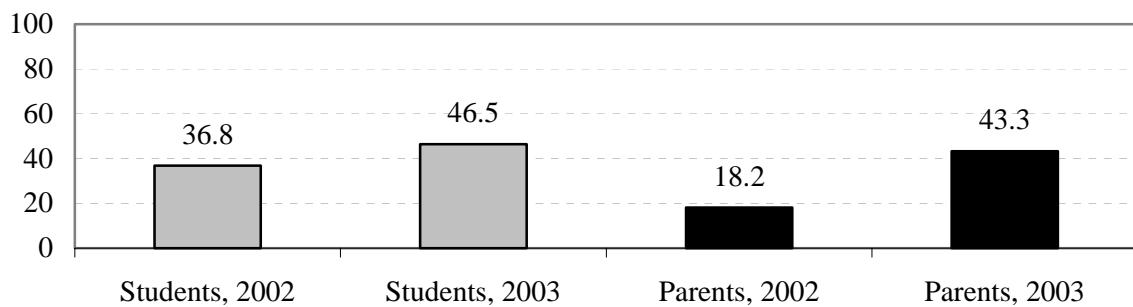
An additional 27 GEAR UP students, all in the top 15% of their graduating class, were able to participate in a 4-day road trip. Students and staff visited the Criminal Justice Center at Sam Houston State University, the College of Hotel Management at The University of Houston, and The University of Texas Medical School in Galveston. Students engaged in other culturally and academically enriching experiences that included swimming in the Olympic-sized swimming pool at the new wellness center at the

University of Houston, seeing an Astros' baseball game at Minute Maid Park, and visiting the aquarium at Moody Gardens.

PSAT Preparation

On the 2003 GEAR UP student and parent surveys, significantly more students and parents indicated that students were intending to take the PSAT and/or the SAT tests than the previous year.

Figure11: Number of Students Planning to Take the PSAT and/or the SAT Tests, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

To support these plans, all GEAR UP high schools continued to host PSAT preparation camps designed to prepare students to score competitively on college admissions tests and to link students with significant scholarship opportunities such as the National Merit Scholarship competition. One hundred and forty-nine GEAR UP students participated in PSAT Camp Levels I, II, and III. One hundred and three students completed a course evaluation.

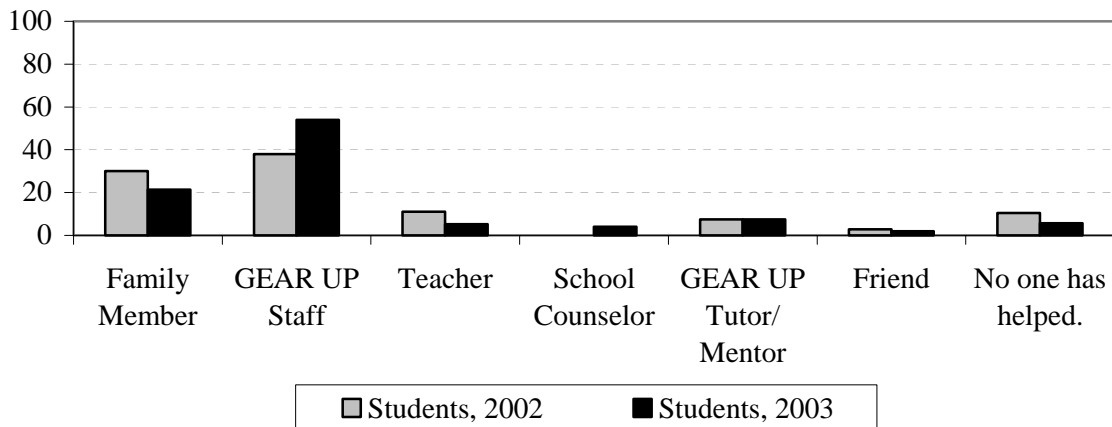
Again, students were overwhelmingly positive about their PSAT Preparation Camp experience rating the format of the camp, the expertise of the teachers, and the applicability of the information very highly (Appendix G). On the survey and in focus groups, students reported that it was a valuable use of their time and an effective way to prepare for the PSAT and SAT tests. Notably, the students used increasingly formal terminology related to the tests and the college preparation experience on open-ended survey questions than they had in previous years. Also, there was a noticeable change in what students valued in their camp experience. Last year, most students reported that they liked the camp experience because their teachers were “fun” and “cool”. This year, most

students reported that the actual knowledge and skills that they were acquiring were the most important part of the camp experience.

Enhanced Guidance and Counseling Outcomes

Student surveys and focus-group discussions provided information regarding GEAR UP enhanced guidance and counseling services. Both students and parents indicated that the GEAR UP staff persons were their primary source of information regarding preparation for college (Figure 12). This was understandable as many low-income and first-generation college students and their parents have had no prior experience with these processes (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). When asked more about the assistance that the GEAR UP project provides, students expressed positive feelings about the program and the staff. Students reported that the program staff provided them with detailed information about individual colleges and the requirements to enter according to individual interests. They described how the staff often introduced college options that had not previously been considered by the students and provided them with additional information about obtaining financial aid.

Figure 12: Summary of Survey Responses Regarding Help to Learn About College Entrance Requirements, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

Most importantly, students stressed the value of the emotional support they received from the GEAR UP staff. Students talked about being able to build a relationship with the GEAR UP staff members that continued across school years. They appreciated having a consistent contact at the school, one they felt comfortable with. Students believed that the staff genuinely cared about their success.

When students were asked about the impacts of their participation in GEAR UP, most often they discussed their aspirations. Students talked about changing their minds and aspiring to attend college when they originally had not had college plans. They said that their decisions were primarily a result of learning about the variety of college and career choices that they have. Most students believed that college was accessible because GEAR UP could provide them with financial aid directly and assist them in accessing other financial aid sources.

Interestingly, students' plans for post-secondary enrollment changed this year. Student surveys indicated that significantly fewer students were planning to enroll in post-secondary education institutions to complete a certificate program or complete a Bachelor's degree. However, there was a significant increase in the percent of students planning to attain a graduate level degree increasing from 28.9% of students in 2001 to 36.1% of students in 2003. Twenty-eight percent of students still were undecided about their plans after high school.



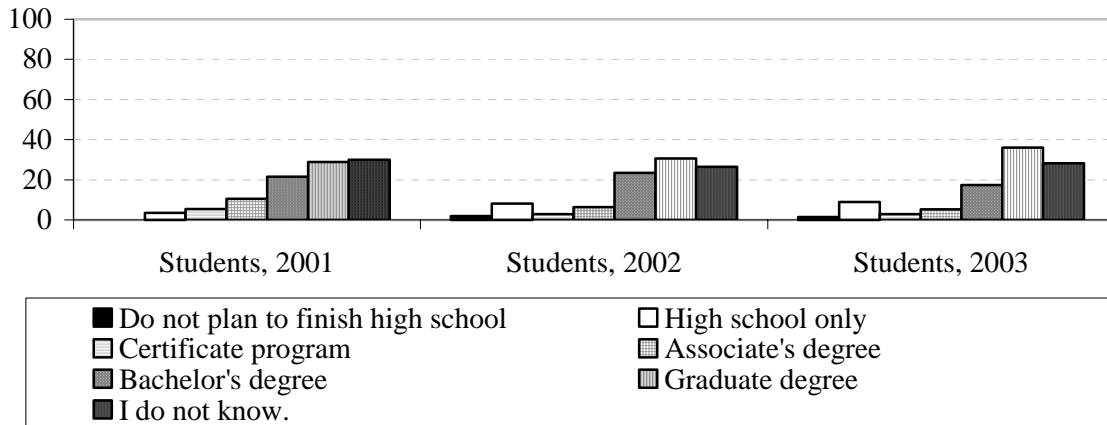
“GEAR UP is awesome. It helps you learn about college. They are so awesome because it's not like someone just goes...hey! we are teaching you about college. But they enjoy their job, and you don't have to talk to them just about college, but you can talk to them about anything, any problem you are having. They are willing to help you. They have always been there. They are very positive and they explain to you about college. They are like, over here and over there, everywhere.”

“GEAR UP teachers actually know you. They seem like they really do care about you and how you are doing in school. They are interested in you.”

“Now with GEAR UP, yeah, I am going to go to college. I can do this. You know, I am not stupid. I can get the help that I need. They offer that help, and they care.”

Source: GEAR UP Student Focus Groups, Summer 2003

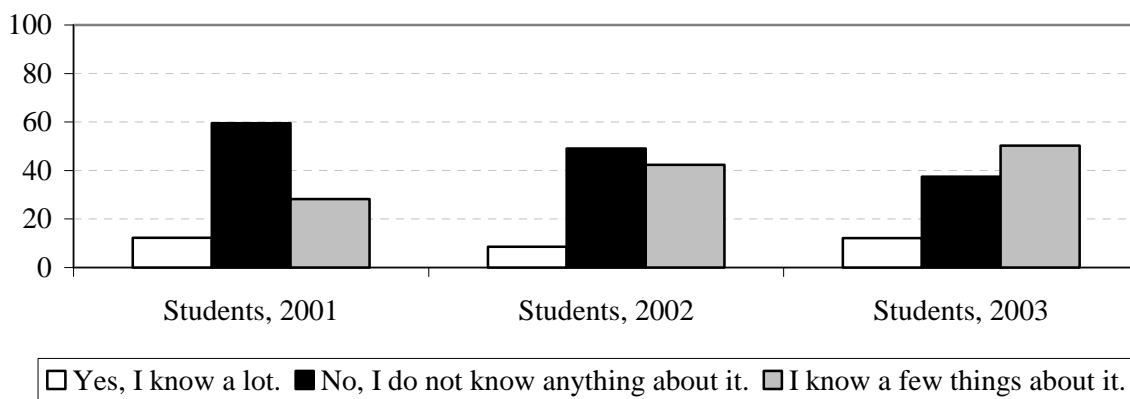
Figure 13: Percent of Students Planning to Enroll in Post-Secondary Education Institutions, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

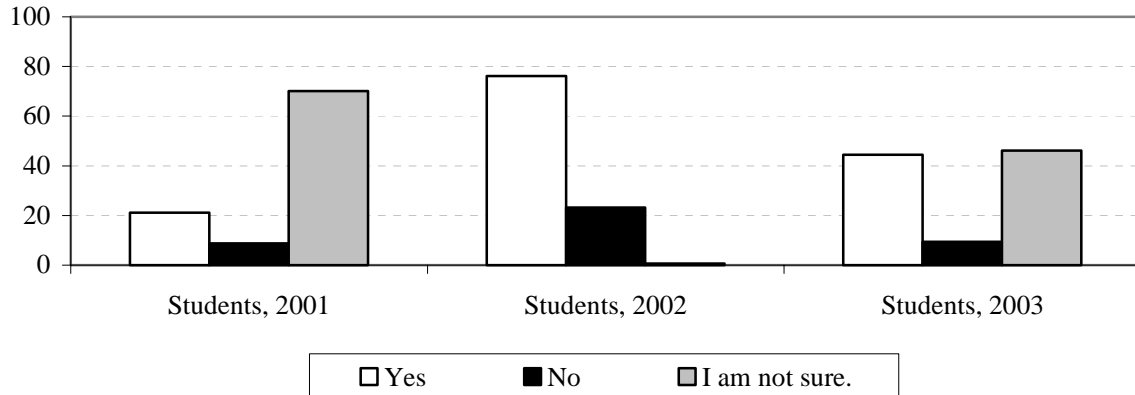
Students identified college costs and course grades as the major factors that may prevent them from enrolling in post-secondary education. Even with fewer over-estimating the average cost of tuition and fees (44.6% as opposed to 57.7% last year), the students completing the survey reported that the college costs were more than they could afford. The student survey also showed that significantly more students reported, “Yes, I know a lot” or “I know a few things about” obtaining financial aid for college than in previous years (Figure 15). In spite of this, significantly fewer students were planning to obtain or were undecided on obtaining financial aid for college at this time.

Figure 14: Percent of Students That Know How to Obtain Financial Aid for College, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

Figure 15: Percent of GEAR UP Students Planning to Obtain Financial Aid for College, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

In focus groups, students attempted to explain what they knew about financial aid and whether they were going to take advantage of financial resources available to them. All students who were interviewed were aware that financial aid opportunities are available, but they expressed anxiety about completing the financial aid processes and worried about being able to actually qualify for that assistance. They were not sure that they would meet the multiple and often ambiguous financial aid requirements. Students often admitted that they did not have grades high enough to obtain scholarships or to enter the college of their choice.

Students requested several types of information that would better assist them to pursue post-secondary enrollment. Students wanted more information concerning specific college majors and related college entrance requirements. They asked for future college visits to include college student shadowing or college class simulation experiences rather than college site tours. Students requested more assistance in finding actual funding sources for scholarships and loans. They hoped that the program would offer work sessions that would help them to complete the required paperwork for scholarships and loans.

Recognizing the impact on students, school administrators sustained and further developed GEAR UP enhanced guidance and counseling services across the district. GEAR UP middle schools continued to work with parents on early college preparation awareness. They hosted "Early College Start" Parent Nights that used varying formats, including panel discussions and skits to make the meetings informative and fun for all

ages. Additionally, the AISD Guidance and Counseling Department began to incorporate a required college campus visit as a standard of service at the 8th grade for all AISD middle schools.

Professional Development Component

During the third project year, GEAR UP project staff began working with a new set of teachers at the high school level. Their major task was to communicate the types of professional development support offered to the teachers by GEAR UP (Objectives III A-D, Appendix D). These opportunities included a variety of professional development opportunities outside of the Professional Development Academy offerings and included three major GEAR UP- sponsored professional development trainings: Learning System's PSAT preparation, Tex-Teams Geometry content training, and eDISCOVER.

Professional Development for GEAR UP Staff

In order to serve students, parents, and teachers effectively, all GEAR UP staff continued to participate in a series of professional development opportunities that supported program implementation. Many of the sessions were conducted in 1-2 hour segments during regularly scheduled staff meetings. Topics included:

- *GEAR UP Strategic Planning*: Project staff met for a two-day workshop before the school year began. Project goals and objectives were re-examined and priorities for implementation were identified.
- *The College Selection Process*: The purpose of this training was to enable project staff to guide students and their families through the steps of selecting a college. Emphasis was placed on determining student needs and choosing a college suited to meet those needs.
- *SASI Query Training*: GEAR UP staff learned to create database queries in order to obtain GEAR UP student information relating to home addresses or phone numbers, class schedules, grades, and attendance.
- *College Fair for Counselors*: GEAR UP staff attended a college fair conducted by the College Board. Sessions included topics on financial aid, culturally sensitive college counseling, residency issues, and conducting parent programs.
- *State GEAR UP Conference*: Sponsored by the State GEAR UP association, this conference provided an opportunity for project staff to learn more about the

GEAR UP initiative and best practices for at-risk student populations while networking with their peers located across the state.

- *PSAT/SAT Test Interpretation Training:* All staff engaged in a hands-on workshop using student PSAT score reports. Scores were interpreted and staff discussed possible recommendations for students and college preparation strategies.

Learning Systems

For the third consecutive year, Learning Systems consultants, a GEAR UP partner, conducted a three-day PSAT/SAT preparation course for high school teachers. The training focused on PSAT/SAT format and scoring, strategies for analyzing test items, and creative ways for implementing the curriculum. Last year, 29 teachers were trained to conduct the PSAT Preparation Camps. This year, the training was open to all GEAR UP campus teachers regardless of summer camp employment. Forty-seven teachers completed Level I training and 18 teachers completed Level II training sessions.

At the end of both training sessions, all participants completed a course evaluation. Because the training sessions followed a similar structure and were taught by the same instructors, participant response patterns were almost identical. Thus, the results for both training sessions have been merged.

Overall, teachers rated highly the SAT/ACT camp training that they attended (Appendix H). In the area of the content and instruction, teachers felt that the course communicated clear learning objectives, was aligned with the course objectives, and was taught in an environment conducive to learning. They reported that the trainers were organized, knowledgeable, and used effective training techniques. Most teachers seemed to understand the application of their learning and desired more training in this area. Because it was an initial training for most teachers and the camps had not begun, most teachers felt that the implementation portion of this evaluation was not applicable. For those who did answer questions related to the implementation of their knowledge and skills, most reported that the training had improved their teaching skills and would have a positive effect in their classrooms.

Tex-Teams Math Training

Forty-six high school Algebra and Geometry teachers participated in an ongoing professional development series, TEX-TEAMS, which addressed Algebra and Geometry course content. The purpose of these sessions was to provide comprehensive and quality professional development and classroom instructional materials. The materials provided within this institute were designed to assist teachers in understanding and implementing the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and TEKS-based assessments, such as TAKS. Using selected manipulative materials and instructional resources materials, effective teaching strategies were modeled to assist teachers to think deeply about the "big ideas" found in the mathematics curriculum and increase their instructional proficiency.

GEAR UP Austin supported the TEX-TEAMS professional development initiative in a variety of ways. The project covered the costs associated with the consultant's fees to train teachers and oversee the Summer Geometry Readiness Camps, teacher materials used in the training (duplication, etc.), substitutes, and instructional materials that included calculators and software used in the Summer Geometry Camps.

eDISCOVER Training

GEAR UP worked collaboratively with project partner, ACT, to train GEAR UP staff and 29 counselors and teachers to use eDISCOVER, a new web-based college and career awareness product developed by ACT. This training enabled a variety of campus staff to incorporate college and career exploration into the students' curriculum. Specifically, the training taught participants how to assist students as they navigate the college selection processes, career selection processes, financial aid processes, and preparation of student resumes. eDISCOVER was implemented on all 8 GEAR UP campuses and 1,219 students used the program in its first semester of availability.

Professional Development Outcomes

In keeping with the district's philosophy, *GEAR UP Austin* seeks to develop the knowledge and instructional skills of teachers in order to improve student learning (Objective IIA, Appendix D). GEAR UP staff encouraged teachers to enroll in content-related courses, attend professional conferences, and engage in curriculum development. GEAR UP funds covered the cost of consultants conducting workshops, substitutes, stipends, registration fees, and travel costs. As a result, GEAR UP spent \$108,888.92 supporting teacher professional development that took place outside of the district's

Professional Development Academy, an increase from the previous year's \$68,935.89. A summary of campus professional development expenditures follows.

Table 6: Summary of GEAR UP Professional Development Expenditures, 2002-2003

Campus Name	2002-2003
Akins	\$20,136.44
Crockett	\$7,898.82
LBJ	\$9,694.79
Johnston	\$21,137.87
Lanier	\$13,525.51
McCallum	\$6,239.22
Reagan	\$8,328.44
Travis	\$21,927.83
Texas Empowerment Academy	0
TOTAL	\$108,888.92

Source: GEAR UP Budget Records, 2002-2003.

Additionally, GEAR UP staff continued to identify and recommend existing courses from AISD's Professional Development Academy (PDA) for GEAR UP teachers. Fifty percent of the GEAR UP high school teachers completed courses at PDA during the project year, August 15th, 2002 through August 15th, 2003 (Table 9).

Table7: GEAR UP Teachers Completing Professional Development Courses from AISD Professional Development Academy (PDA), 2002-2003

School Name	Number GEAR UP Teachers	Overall N/ % Participating in GEAR UP Sponsored PD	N/ % Participating in AISD PDA Courses	AVG Hours of PD Completed	N/ % Completing More than 20 Hours of PD
Akins	63	40 (63.5%)	27 (42.9%)	7.3	10 (15.8%)
Crockett	35	13 (37.1%)	13 (37.1%)	13.2	5 (14.3%)
LBJ	69	31 (44.9%)	31(44.9%)	6.3	8 (11.6%)
Johnston	24	10 (41.7%)	9 (37.5%)	7.3	3 (12.5%)
Lanier	33	22 (66.6%)	15 (45.5%)	5.7	3 (9%)
McCallum	34	22 (64.7%)	22 (64.7%)	6.8	9 (26.5%)
Reagan	36	28 (77.8%)	27 (75%)	8.7	16 (44.4%)
Travis	48	38 (79.2%)	30 (62.5%)	6.5	11 (22.9%)
TxEA	6	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	348 (100%)	204 (58.6%)	174 (50%)	5.8	65 (18.7%)

Source: Teacher CPE hours reported by AISD Professional Development Academy, August 2003

The project's goal is to have all teachers of GEAR UP students complete 20 hours of professional development annually above what was required by the district and campus (Objective IIA, Appendix D). The analysis of professional development records provided

by AISD's Professional Development Academy and the GEAR UP project service and budget records showed a significant decrease in the number of hours that the high school teachers participated in professional development as compared to the previous years' middle school teachers. Specifically, there was a decrease from 30.8% of the middle school GEAR UP teachers down to 18.7% of GEAR UP high school teachers completing 20 or more professional development hours above what was required by the district and campus (Table 10).

Table 8: Comparison of GEAR UP Teachers Completing Courses, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003

School Year	Number of GEAR UP Teachers	Number of GEAR UP Teachers Participating in Professional Development	Average Number of Hours
2000-2001	245 (100%)	127 (52%)	23.4
2001-2002	251 (100%)	192 (76%)	30.8
2002-2003	348 (100%)	204 (58.6%)	5.8

Source: Teacher CPE hours reported by AISD Professional Development Academy, August 2003.

On teacher surveys, the high school teachers listed factors that influenced their participation in professional development opportunities. The first limiting factor was time. Teachers were committed to their classes and other school activities leaving little time for their professional development. Campus policies complicated the time issue. Teachers reported that they were allowed to be out of the classroom for a limited amount of time and generally only for extenuating circumstances. Those things aside, teachers made their decisions to participate based on perceived relevance of the professional development and preferred content-related training that would enable them to be more effective in their own classrooms. Finally, a few teachers were not aware that GEAR UP provided funding for professional development and stated that they would have participated had they known of the opportunity.

Parent Involvement Component

The GEAR UP parent support specialists served as a consistent school contact for parents as the GEAR UP cohort transitioned to the high schools. Their top priority was to create an environment that encouraged parents to become involved in their child's school experience (Objectives IV A-E, Appendix D). They communicated with parents via newsletters, multi-media announcements, phone calls, home visits, and school meetings.

The GEAR UP parent support specialists facilitated small and large parent meetings that addressed topics such as high school course requirements, homework assistance, college entrance requirements, and college financial aid.

Communication With Parents

Encouraging parents to become involved in their child's education and preparation for college, the GEAR UP parent support specialists contacted GEAR UP students' families personally. GEAR UP parent support specialists completed 1,425 home visits this year and spent approximately 687 hours making personalized phone calls to parents to provide personal information concerning their child's school progress and details concerning school events and preparation for college. More than half of the GEAR UP staff are bilingual and often conducted conversations with parents in Spanish. At parent meetings, project staff often used translators and translation headsets purchased by the GEAR UP project or carried out meetings in Spanish-only.

The GEAR UP staff's communication with parents did not go unnoticed by the students and teachers. During student focus groups, students shared stories about the efforts that the GEAR UP staff had made to contact their parents. They were surprised by the number of phone calls that they had received and by the visits to their home. Several students said that their parents "made" them attend GEAR UP summer programs based on the information that was provided by the GEAR UP staff after the students had already made a conscious decision not to provide the same information to their parent. Other students reported that their parents were beginning to come to the school for a variety of purposes when they had not been so inclined in the past. Even though some students were initially disturbed by this communication with parents, they expressed appreciation for the consistency of communication between home and school.

Teachers reported that GEAR UP parent support specialists were valuable campus assets. Thirty percent of the teachers responding to the teacher survey reported that they worked with the GEAR UP parent support specialist "frequently", and another 30% worked with the parent support specialist "occasionally". These teachers expressed appreciation for the assistance in contacting parents, scheduling parent conferences, making home visits, and providing language translation during parent-teacher conferences. Teachers also reported that the concerted efforts made by GEAR UP staff to communicate with parents resulted in better relationships with students and their families and increased

participation in special programs. Thirty-five percent of the teachers that responded to the survey reported that they did not use the services offered by the GEAR UP parent support specialist. Some of these teachers preferred contacting parents themselves, while others were not aware of their services.

Many parents of the GEAR UP students have had no direct experience in completing college applications or financial aid processes. This experience is important, as parent involvement is strongly associated with students taking the recommended college prerequisite courses (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Further, students who are involved in family decision-making are more likely to seek out more information about college requirements and financial aid (U.S. Department of Education, 2003)

To assist parents in preparing their children for college, *GEAR UP Austin* held a variety of parent meetings throughout the school year that were focused on high school course requirements, college entrance applications, and financial aid processes. Project records show that there were more parents attending GEAR UP parent programs than in years past. This year, 1,448 or 50.3% of parents or guardians attended at least one or more GEAR UP parent meetings, as opposed to 942 or 30% of parents who attended GEAR UP parent meetings last year. Within this count, there may have been multiple parents or guardians in attendance representing the same household. Many of these parents attended more than one GEAR UP parent meeting during the school year. The following table summarizes the parent meeting attendance records for each GEAR UP high school.



“Our GEAR UP parent support specialist is AWESOME. I am impressed by his level of commitment to these students. He personally called every 9th grader that was eligible for course grade recovery, and the turn out was amazing.”

“She (the parent support specialist) did an EXCELLENT job. I don't know what I ever did without her! She helped me get in touch with Hispanic parents, with whom I could not communicate. And made home visits to those who had no telephone. A GREAT assistance to me She was the most valuable aspect of the program!”

Source: Teacher Survey, 2003

Table 9: Summary of GEAR UP Parents Attending at Least One GEAR UP Parent Meeting, 2002-2003

School	Number of GEAR UP Students Served on Campus	Number of GEAR UP Parents Attending at Least One GEARUP Sponsored Meeting
Akins	421	251
Crockett	210	58
LBJ	457	110
Johnston	222	27
Lanier	538	175
McCallum	214	101
Reagan	383	389
Travis High School	434	302
Texas Empowerment Academy	27	35

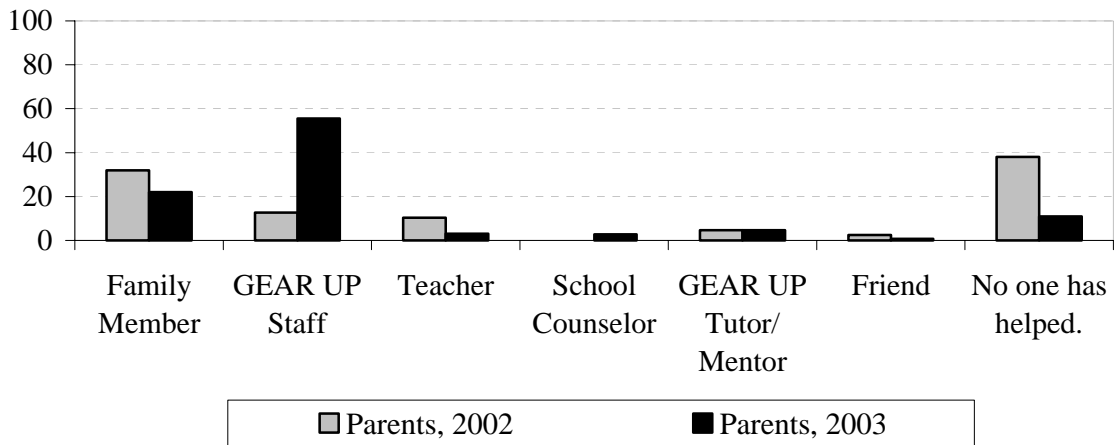
Source: GEAR UP Project Database Records, 2002-2003

Outcomes for Parents

The GEAR UP parent meetings, phone calls, and home visits focused on topics such as high school course requirements, homework assistance, college entrance requirements, and financial aid for college. To provide ongoing information regarding parents' understanding of college preparation, the staff distributed the third edition of the GEAR UP project survey to all GEAR UP parents by mail and during meetings and home visits. As a result, 44% of all GEAR UP parents completed and returned their survey. The results of the survey showed several changes in their understanding from previous years' surveys.

First, more parents (53% as opposed to 37.7 % last year) reported that they have received help to prepare their child for college. Of these parents, almost 56% of the parents reported that the GEAR UP staff provided the most college preparation assistance. Fewer parents reported not receiving any help to learn about preparing for college.

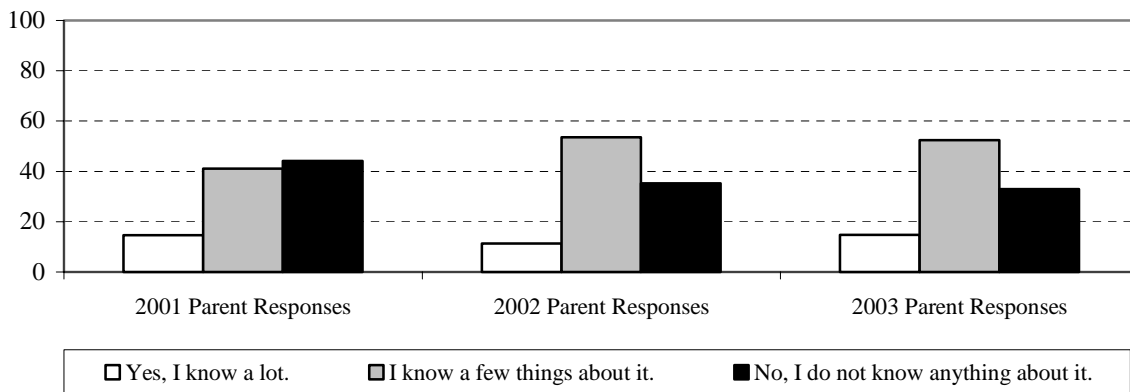
Figure 16: Percent of Parents Reporting Sources of Information for College Entrance Requirements, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

Parents agreed with their children and identified cost as the number one reason why their child may not enroll in college. Many parents also continued to over-estimate the cost of tuition and fees at public 4-year colleges in Texas. However, the percentage of parents overestimating the cost of college declined significantly this year to 58% from 66.9% last year. There was also a significant increase in the percentage of parents who reported that they knew a lot about obtaining financial aid and a significant decrease in the percentage of parents reporting that they did not know anything about obtaining financial aid (Figure 17).

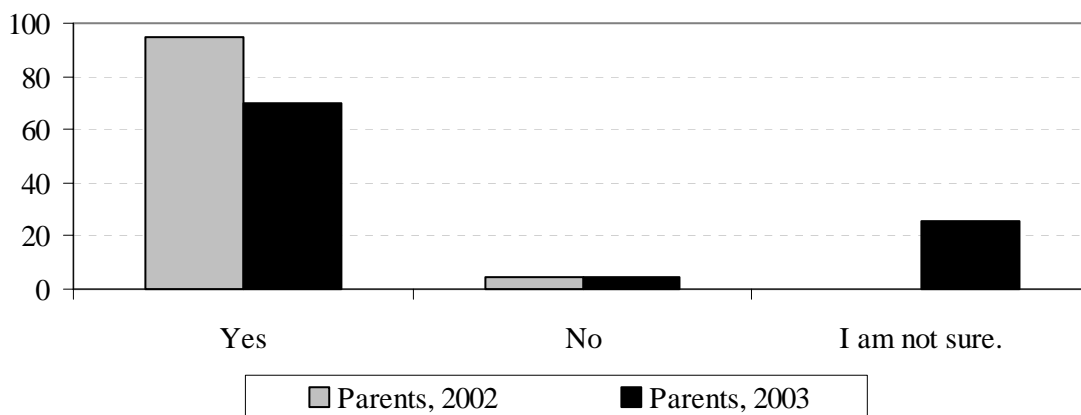
Figure 17: Percent of Parents That Know How to Obtain Financial Aid for College, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

It seems intuitive that the increased knowledge of processes involved in applying for college financial aid would impact the plans that parents have for obtaining financial assistance. In interviews, project staff often discussed the complexity of preparing students and parents to obtain financial aid. They talked about maintaining a delicate balance between communicating the availability of college financial aid with the realities of the proceeding through the application processes. GEAR UP staff concerns focused on the difficulty in articulating the application processes without overwhelming students and parents. In order to address feelings of doubt and anxiety that could discourage students and their parents from applying for financial aid, the project staff identified the need for continuing education in this area and articulated plans for financial aid workshops. Related to the concerns of the project staff in this area, parent survey results showed that there was a significant decrease in the percentage of parents planning to obtain financial aid for college and a significant increase in the percentage of parents that were undecided about their plans (Figure 18). Contrary to the beliefs of the project staff, the survey analysis revealed that there was not a significant relationship between the parents' knowledge of obtaining financial aid and their plans for obtaining financial aid for college. However, there may be other undetermined variables that account for the decrease in parents' plans for obtaining financial aid.

Figure18: Percent of GEAR UP Parents That Plan to Obtain Financial Aid for College, Spring 2003



Source: GEAR UP Project Surveys, Spring 2003.

DISCUSSION

The third year of project implementation provided some unique challenges. *GEAR UP Austin* had established project structures and best practices at the middle school level. This year, the project was faced with not only re-creating those structures and practices at the high school level but also modifying them in such a way that would meet the evolving needs of GEAR UP students, parents, and the faculties that serve them. The following portion of this report summarizes project successes and challenges that should be noted in this transition year.

Project Successes

The purpose of GEAR UP is to increase the number of low-income and first-generation college students who are prepared to enter college upon high school graduation. This college preparation process begins with setting the high expectation that all students can attain this goal. Communicating high expectations for students can occur in many ways. However, one of the most unmistakable and compelling is through the personal relationships built between school staff and students. *GEAR UP Austin* took that assignment to heart and adopted a mantra to set the tone across the project: “This work is important; I know you can do it; I won't give up on you (Howard, 1990).”

Importantly in this transition year, building high expectations through personal relationships was the most pervasive theme emerging across the project regardless of the particular task at hand. This transition for GEAR UP students presented the traditional challenges documented across the country as these 9th graders struggled with attending class regularly, making good grades, managing their time, and dealing with their peers (Mizelle & Irvin, 2001). Remarkably, most GEAR UP participants reported that this difficult process took place within a very supportive environment. Time and time again, project staff, teachers, tutors, and most importantly, the students themselves identified the relationships that have been built between the GEAR UP students and various project staff as the sustaining force in the students' continued decision to stay in school and participate in activities that will prepare them for college. Students often described how their relationships with the GEAR UP staff on their campus and the project activities gave them a sense of belonging and a direction to follow. They considered the GEAR UP staff's nurturing, and at times “tough love,” approach to college preparation reflecting a genuine concern for their welfare.

In response to the students' continuing need for academic support, the GEAR UP project staff continued to improve the academic interventions provided under the GEAR UP umbrella. The GEAR UP tutoring initiative offered mentoring opportunities with more college-aged tutors and served more students with the intent of increasing the number of students who were experiencing academic success. Additionally, the collaboration between the school district and the local colleges and universities to utilize federal work-study and other college students looking for part-time work provides a sustainable source of qualified employees. Finally, the various tutoring formats that are offered within the program consider an assortment of instructional contexts and individualized student needs.

At a time when students generally begin seeking summer employment or choosing alternative summer activities, the end of the school year was not the end of academic pursuits for many GEAR UP students. Project staff collaborated with project partners and other district program staff to enroll GEAR UP students in summer programs oriented towards their individual learning needs. This process required GEAR UP staff to spend hours reviewing individual student records, identifying summer programs that would meet the various learning needs of the students, and recommending specific programs for student participation. Some of these summer programs were directly offered by GEAR UP while others were not. Regardless, the GEAR UP staff assisted students with their summer enrollment. In the end, 35% of cohort students engaged in an array of course credit recovery and highly rated GEAR UP enrichment programs over the summer.

Academic preparation does not necessarily lead to college enrollment, especially for low-income and first-generation college students (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). In fact, the mentorship of other key individuals such as teachers, counselors, relatives, and community role models plays a major role in assisting these very students to enroll in some form of post-secondary education. Thus, GEAR UP provided many enhanced guidance and counseling services aimed to prepare all GEAR UP students for college.

Notably, GEAR UP students and their parents reported that the GEAR UP staff were their primary sources for information about post-secondary enrollment and future careers. Their services were increasingly more detailed and tailored towards specific student interests and aptitudes and engaged students in meaningful experiences both on and off the high school campuses. Outstandingly, *GEAR UP Austin* became more than

just a source for college and career information as the staff provided meaningful and consistent mentorship for many students at a pivotal time in their school careers.

The purpose of GEAR UP teacher professional development support was to build the skills of teachers who will continue to improve the quality of instruction for GEAR UP cohort students and the classes that follow. GEAR UP and project partner, Learning Systems, expanded training offerings to include all teachers teaching in GEAR UP high schools thereby doubling the number of teachers trained over the previous summer. As a result, all GEAR UP high schools began campus-level planning to use PSAT preparation strategies within the classroom and to offer PSAT/SAT preparation workshops the following school year. Also, GEAR UP began aligning professional development with student instructional programs. The knowledge and skills from TEX-TEAMS Geometry training and Learning Systems are directly applicable to classroom instruction. Teachers who participated in TEX-TEAMS Geometry training and Learning Systems had an opportunity to practice their knowledge and instructional skills under expert supervision as they taught GEAR UP summer programs and will be able to utilize the instructional materials provided during their training throughout the school year.

This year, the efforts of the GEAR UP parent support specialists to increase communication with parents and encourage them to be actively involved in their child's school experience began to yield fruit. Record numbers of parents were recorded at parent meetings at the high schools when meeting attendance traditionally has declined at the high school level. Students consistently reported that they attended GEAR UP summer programs based on the information parents were given by the parent support specialists. Teachers reported that the specialists' assistance in contacting and communicating with parents was a valuable asset.

Finally, *GEAR UP Austin* continued to increase their level of collaboration with project partners to meet the federal expectation of creating effective and sustainable post-secondary preparation practices. Because of the level of detail and labor intensiveness of project planning, partnership and advisory meetings were conducted with individual partners or in small groups focused on particular project objectives. This individualized format allowed all project partners to actively participate throughout the year. In these small planning sessions, project partners were able to share more of their expertise and determine how their resources could be effectively utilized. GEAR UP's work with one project partner, ACT, resulted in the provision of eDISCOVER training for high school

teachers, counselors, and GEAR UP staff. GEAR UP's continuing work with the Learning Systems initiative resulted in record numbers of teachers being trained and the development of high school campus plans for supporting students taking the PSAT.

Project Challenges

In response to the federal program expectation for building the capacity to sustain program services after federal funding ends, GEAR UP staff immediately began orienting the high school faculties to the GEAR UP "culture" of maintaining high expectations for all students and developing collaborative relationships between programs working towards common goals. They worked with counselors to increase the number of students enrolled in rigorous courses, with teachers to provide support for those students who were taking honors and Pre-AP coursework for the first time, and with other campus and district programs to coordinate college preparation efforts. This process required substantive orientation to the goals and objectives of GEAR UP and the establishment of role definition among GEAR UP staff, counselors, AVID teachers, ADVANCE personnel, and high school teachers, as all worked hard to fulfill their job responsibilities while not intruding on the professional space of others.

However, collaborative campus and district relationships focused on creating sustainable college preparation support have been slow to develop and are currently limited in scope. Interview and field observation data revealed that the duplication of college preparation efforts at the high school campus level and across the district continues to exist. The duplication of services is often due to a lack of communication between departments and the tendency for individuals to operate according to traditional role definitions. This orientation to work often seemed to impede the development of collaborative, district partnerships, leaving *GEAR UP Austin* to provide a unique set of college preparation services shown to be important to students and their parents. Given the limited nature of district collaboration, many of these important GEAR UP support services may not be sustained after federal funding ends.

The transition to high school was also a challenge for many students. During focus groups, students discussed their challenges associated with the transition. In most cases, they were most concerned about their increasing responsibility at the high school level, particularly regarding academic performance expectations and proficiency. Students reported the work to be much more difficult than they had encountered at the middle school level and attributed the difficulty to higher teacher expectations. Students were

surprised at the level of effort they were expected to put forth to learn, as they were required to study more on their own - making time management a very important skill. They reported having an increased workload and multiple, large assignments to complete at the same time, which was complicated not only by the lack of student organization and experience, but also by the lack of computer resources at home. Students suggested that teachers should communicate more to minimize having multiple projects due on the same date, and that completion dates be communicated well ahead of time.

While *GEAR UP Austin* worked to provide academic support for students, data indicate that tutors were not always effective in their service implementation. They often lacked clear communication on the training expectations for their position. This resulted in some tutors taking their training seriously and attending all sessions while others participated in the training sessions at their own discretion. The inconsistency in training resulted in some tutors lacking skills to effectively mentor and instruct the students with whom they worked. Additionally, teachers were not always clear on the role of the GEAR UP tutor. Some teachers had difficulty using tutors effectively in the classroom. Tutors often complained about spending their time in the classroom listening to lectures or that teachers relied on them to assist with crowd control. Finally, tutors often did not have the opportunity to use the instructional strategies emphasized in their training. Rather, they were used as taskmasters focused on making sure that students completed course assignments when their efforts could have centered on assisting students to develop higher-level thinking and reasoning skills applicable across subject areas and as required by state assessments.

Moreover, *GEAR UP Austin's* effort to provide a high quantity of tutoring services yielded variable results for the student cohort. The random nature of service or over-commitment of the tutor resulted in many GEAR UP students not receiving academic assistance as consistently as they needed. Teachers recognized that many students, GEAR UP or not, needed extra instructional help and relied on the tutors to serve all students within their classroom. Again, this practice took project resources away from GEAR UP students and tended to spread the tutoring assistance too thinly. Tutoring services were provided for many students who were not willing to put forth the effort to participate actively, or who needed more intensive counseling or learning interventions than GEAR UP tutors could provide.

As the students entered high school, the GEAR UP staff not only worked hard to encourage students to stay focused on their academic responsibilities but to develop a vision of their future. The relationship building and the advisement work with students were labor intensive and involved changing perceptions and building self-confidence. The staff reported that the vision of who sees themselves as prospective college students and who does not seemed to take center stage in high school and that students appeared overwhelmed by the rigor and challenge of their schoolwork. The stretch to see themselves as "college students" took on a more realistic perspective.

The increasing level of detail regarding college entrance requirements and financial aid seems to have had a sobering effect on many students. Student survey results indicated that the percentage of students planning to enroll in a post-secondary schools had decreased. The cost of college and course grades continued to be their major concerns. While students reported knowing more about obtaining financial aid, it also appeared that this knowledge still was confusing to them and might affect their decision to apply. Students often discussed their anxiety pertaining to college entrance and financial aid applications and hoped that GEAR UP had plans to walk them step-by-step through the process.

In spite of the increased amount of funds spent to provide teachers with professional development support, teacher participation in professional development decreased from the previous year and was well below the project goal of 20 hours above professional development mandated by the campus and district. This lack of teacher participation in professional development is cause for concern, as teachers are the ones primarily responsible for maintaining high standards in the classroom and ensuring that students meet those standards of learning. This means all teachers must have the basic knowledge related to the subject areas that they teach and be well equipped to help students develop advanced thinking and problem-solving skills (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996).

The need for professional development and lack of teacher participation is not a new issue for *GEAR UP Austin*, nor is it unique to this project. Finding the time for professional development continues to be identified as the primary reason for lack of teacher participation across the nation. Moreover, teachers are less likely to set aside the time to participate if they do not believe that the experience is relevant to their work or will have lasting effects on their practice. This explains why workshops are not generally well

attended, as they rarely provide the content or on-going support necessary to improve instructional practice (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, and Yoon, 2001).

Recommendations

The results of this evaluation show that the GEAR UP project staff completed a vast amount of work during this transition to the high school level. Using formative data, the GEAR UP staff made project modifications throughout the year based on the changing needs of their students, parents, and teachers. In review of these predominantly positive results, the following recommendations have been identified for further consideration as the project enters into its last two years of federal funding:

- 1. *Extend core project services to cohort students attending non-GEAR UP high school campuses.*** The GEAR UP student cohort was initially identified based on criteria that put them at-risk for not finishing high school or obtaining the prerequisites necessary for post-secondary enrollment. Accordingly, middle and high schools were selected to house the GEAR UP project based on matching student demographic profiles and subsequent school feeder patterns. Since then, school feeder patterns have changes and enrollment data show that 169 GEAR UP cohort students are in attendance at Austin High School, currently classified as a non-GEAR UP campus. As a result, these students are not receiving the GEAR UP services that were deemed likely to assist them in succeeding in high school and preparing for college. The size of this student group is comparable to the student groups that were served at Crockett, Johnston, and McCallum high schools last year. Therefore, it is recommended that *GEAR UP Austin* extend project services to cohort students enrolled at Austin High School to afford them the post-secondary preparation that they were offered at the outset and still need.
- 2. *Provide an increased number of opportunities for students to become involved in a student support network.*** Overwhelmingly, data show that many of the successes that were experienced within this project have been based on the development of relationships. Repeatedly, students articulated their appreciation for having a “place to belong” and “someone who cares about them”, confirming the positive impact of providing academic challenge and guidance within a supportive environment. Additionally, successful students previously at-risk for dropping out of school reported that feelings of personal respect and recognition were pivotal in their transformation (Mehan, Hubbard, & Villanueva, 1994). Therefore, it is recommended

that the project continue to develop support structures that will not only encourage students to stay in school and achieve academically but to develop the leadership skills that many post-secondary institutions consider in the applications process. *GEAR UP Austin* should consider expanding student support organizations or “clubs” that incorporate leadership, community service, and cultural experiences to build self-esteem and awareness of the world around them.

3. ***Maximize the effectiveness of GEAR UP tutoring sessions.*** *GEAR UP Austin* has established a sustainable tutoring model using federal-work study students to provide tutoring for thousands of students. However, the effectiveness of these tutoring services continued to be variable. To improve the quality of tutoring and enable students to perform well in their academic pursuits, it is recommended that GEAR UP staff clearly articulate training expectations to prospective tutors and provide consequences for those who fail to participate. Additionally, teachers wishing to use GEAR UP tutors in their classrooms should attend an orientation and training session that will articulate the role of the GEAR UP tutor and provide teachers with strategies to use those tutors effectively in their classrooms. GEAR UP staff and teachers should increase their efforts to work collaboratively to identify GEAR UP students who would benefit from tutoring and serve those specific students consistently. Finally, GEAR UP tutors should consistently use instructional strategies that focus on the development of higher level cognitive skills that can be used across subject areas thereby enabling students to improve their performance in a variety of courses and on the TAKS test.

4. ***Provide students and parents with increasingly detailed information regarding college entrance requirements, applications, and financial aid.*** Students and their parents reported that they understand more about their post-secondary enrollment options, the requirements to enter, and the financial aid that is available. However, students and parents still identify the costs of college and student grades to be the major obstacles to their future enrollment, and fewer are planning to pursue post-secondary enrollment and obtain financial aid. In this case, it appears that the old adage, “A little knowledge can be dangerous,” may apply. The basic level understanding of this complex and often labor-intensive process could be deterring students and their families from pursuing post-secondary enrollment. Therefore, it is

recommended that GEAR UP offer increased opportunities for students and their parents to learn about college entrance requirements and financial aid opportunities. Within these learning opportunities, students and their parents should be provided with step-by-step instructions for completing the process of college enrollment and assistance in completing required forms.

- 5. Offer ongoing, campus-based, and content-related professional development opportunities.** If students are to meet the academic expectations to become successfully enrolled in college, the teachers who teach them will have to possess the knowledge and skills to assist in this endeavor. *GEAR UP Austin* not only seeks to support teachers by providing them with information regarding professional development opportunities that are available to them, but also provides the financial support to enable teachers to participate. However, teacher time and campus constraints keep many from taking advantage of professional development opportunities. Many teachers still desire professional development that is directly related to their classroom instruction. In support, research shows that professional development that focuses on subject matter, provides hands-on learning opportunities for teachers, and is integrated into the daily workings of the school is more likely to produce improved instructional practice. Therefore, it is recommended that *GEAR UP Austin* begin to collaborate with campus administrators and the teachers themselves to identify teacher-learning needs that are focused on content and related to student achievement goals. Further, it is suggested that the project staff explore ways to promote or facilitate active teacher learning that is characterized by meaningful discussion, coordinated planning, and the implementation of improved instructional practice.
- 6. Develop increasingly collaborative relationships with campus and district personnel to effectively prepare students for college and sustain effective college preparation practices after federal funding for GEAR UP ends.** The premise of GEAR UP is to increase the number of low-income, at-risk students who are prepared to enroll in postsecondary education. This charge is not a simple task. It requires commitment from a variety of stakeholders and involves a high level of communication and collaboration to make it work. Knowing that it takes time to implement effective partnerships, the U.S. Department of Education funded the program across five years,

giving schools time to develop best practices and the capacity to sustain those practices after federal funding ends.

The GEAR UP staff have worked diligently to initiate conversations and develop relationships with selected programs and community partners to create a variety of promising practices for improved student preparation for post-secondary enrollment. It is recommended that GEAR UP staff continue their efforts to develop collaborative relationships with all levels of district personnel to improve program offerings, reduce duplication of services, and efficiently use resources provided by current federal funding and partnership matches. Within this effort, campus and district personnel should be aware that GEAR UP funds were awarded to support existing district post-secondary preparation goals. Importantly, the district's acceptance of these federal funds requires individuals across all levels of the district to commit to creating systems to effectively sustain identified best practices that significantly improve the students' preparation for college. This commitment not only requires increased communication and coordination of efforts, but it may require changes in the ways that all district and campus staff think about the nature of college preparation and their individual roles in that process. Therefore, it is recommended that district identify best practices for post-secondary preparation across grant projects and departments and develop plans for institutionalizing those effective post-secondary preparation practices.

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR GAINING EARLY AWARENESS AND READINESS FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

The purpose of GEAR UP is to create college opportunities for at-risk youth. In 1998, GEAR UP began to fund partnerships of high-poverty middle schools, colleges and universities, community organizations, and business to work with identified cohorts of students beginning in the 7th grade through high school graduation. In its first year, GEAR UP served about 450,000 students nationwide. In its second academic year, GEAR UP served over 750,000 students nationwide. A list of national GEAR UP objectives is provided below.

GOAL: To ensure that disadvantaged middle school and secondary school students are prepared for, pursue, and succeed in post secondary education.

Objective 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of participating students.

Indicator 1.1, Completion of academically challenging curricula: Program participants will successfully complete college preparatory course such as algebra, geometry, chemistry, and physics at increasing rates.

Objective 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education of participating students.

Indicator 2.1, Attendance, high school completion, and post secondary enrollment: Program participants will have high rates of attendance in school, be promoted to the next grade level on time, and successfully complete high school and enroll in postsecondary education programs at increasing rates.

Objective 3: Increase educational expectations for participating students and student and family knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation, and financing.

Indicator 3.1, Student, family, and teacher expectations: participating students, their families, and their teachers will have high educational expectations, which are sustained throughout the life of the program.

GEAR UP Coordinates with Other Federal Activities by

- Supplementing HUD efforts to provide educational support for children living in public housing
- Encouraging a relationship between the U.S. Department of Education and Health and Human Services (HHS)
- Linking partnership and state grantees to regional programmatic initiatives in order to obtain assistance in areas of assessment and accountability, curriculum, instruction, technology, and urban education
- Enhancing efforts of state programs and initiatives

For more information refer to the GEAR UP homepage:

<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/gearup/index.html>

APPENDIX B: GEAR UP PARTNERS, 2002-2003

ACT

Applied Materials, Inc.

Austin Coca Cola

Austin Community College

Austin Energy

Avance

Capital Area Training Foundation

Career Resources Development

Communities in Schools—Central Texas

DAAMARS International

Educational Resources Consulting

The Faulkner Group

Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce

HEB

Huston Tillotson College

Jr. Achievement of Central Texas

Learning Systems

Locke Lidell and Sapp

LULAC

St. Edward's University

Selectron-Texas

Texas Gas Service

Texas State University

The College Board

3 M

URS Radian

UT Austin

APPENDIX C: GEAR UP DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY, 2002-2003

Table 10: Demographic Summary for All Students Attending GEAR UP High Schools, 2001- 2002

	African American	Hispanic	White	Native American	Asian/ Pac. Islander	Econ DisAdv.	LEP
Austin Independent School District	15%	49.5%	32.6%	2.7%	.2%	50.1%	19.9%
Akins	13%	56.2%	28.7%	.3%	1.7%	36.5%	10.2%
Crockett	9.1%	52.2%	37.5%	0%	1.2%	26.3%	7.3%
LBJ	39.1%	27.5%	28%	0%	5.4%	34%	7.6%
Johnston	15.8%	68.1%	15.4%	.1%	.6%	47.4%	16.6%
Lanier	21.3%	58.3%	15.3%	.3%	4.8%	56.5%	23%
McCallum	16.4%	24.2%	58.2%	.2%	1%	20.1%	5.4%
Reagan	43%	52.9%	3.5%	.2%	.4%	60%	21.9%
Travis	9.8%	78.7%	10.5%	.1%	.8%	63.4%	21.9%
Texas Empowerment Academy	82.9%	12.4%	4.8%	0%	0%	58.1%	0%

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), Texas Education Agency, 2001-2002

Table 11: Percent of Economically Disadvantaged GEAR UP Students, 2002-2003

	Percent Qualifying for Free or Reduced Priced Lunches
Akins High School	57%
Crockett High School	62%
LBJ High School	52%
Johnston High School	84%
Lanier High School	74%
McCallum High School	40%
Reagan High School	74%
Travis High School	77%
Texas Empowerment Academy	58%

Source: Student Enrollment Records, Austin Independent School District, 2002-2003

Table 12: Student Mobility Rates for GEAR UP High Schools, 2000-2001

	Mobility Rate
Austin Independent School District	22.2%
Akins High School	26%
Crockett High School	24.6%
LBJ High School	17.7%
Johnston High School	28.4%
Lanier High School	30.3%
McCallum High School	16.3%
Reagan High School	33.2%
Travis High School	33.2%
Texas Empowerment Academy	52.8%

Source: Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS), Texas Education Agency, 2001-2001

APPENDIX D: PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

PROJECT GOAL: To increase post secondary education enrollment of low-income underrepresented youth through early intervention in college preparation and awareness and through academic intervention, college and career counseling outreach, and family support services.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

I. Academic Intervention Component

- A. 80% of cohort students will meet minimum standard for all TAKS tests (English/Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies).
- B. 100% of cohort students with course averages between 50-69 will participate weekly in mentoring/tutoring activities.
- C. 18% of cohort students are enrolled in advanced courses.
- D. 63% of cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT tests.
- E. 27% of cohort students score at or above criterion on SAT/ACT tests.
- F. 50% of cohort students enroll in postsecondary institutions.

II. Enhanced Guidance and Counseling Service Component

- A. 100% of students will complete the Individual Academic Career Plan (IACP); complete an e-Discover interest inventory; create a portfolio; attend Centex College Fair; and Participate in a Career Exploration experience
- B. 100% of cohort students will receive an e-mail address; visit a college internet site; and have a one-on-one e-mail mentor.
- C. 100% of cohort students will visit a College and Career Center at least twice per year; complete the PSAT/PLAN; complete the SAT/ACT; and identify two postsecondary institutions for enrollment.
- D. 90% of cohort students will complete financial aid applications.

III. Professional Development Component

- A. 100% of project staff and cohort teachers will complete 20 hours of staff development per year.
- B. 100% of project partners will engage in at least one project planning session each year.
- C. 95% of school principals and project partners will meet annually to evaluate project 's collaborative and intervention strategies.
- D. 100% of project support staff and core team of teachers at each campus will complete IMPACT/GAIT team training.

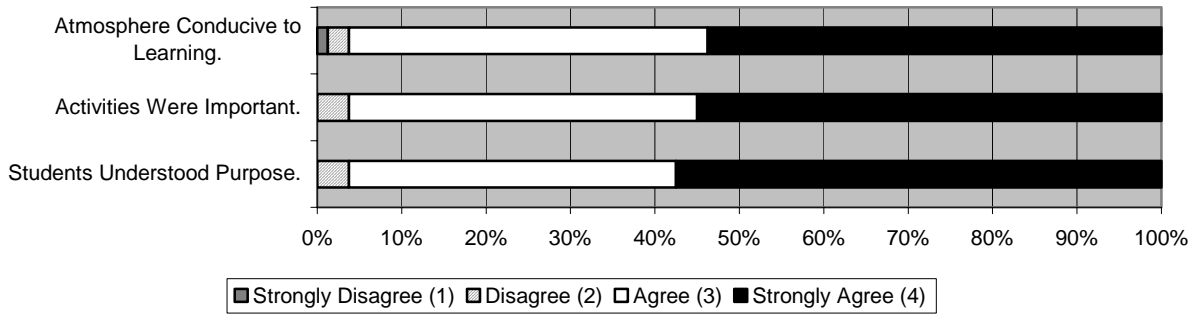
IV. Parental Involvement Component

- A. 100% of cohort parents will receive a GEAR UP brochure and attend a parent orientation.
- B. 100% of cohort parents will sign a GEAR UP participation contract.
- C. 50% of cohort parents will participate in Parent University classes annually.
- D. 10 parents from each GEAR UP campus will serve in an advisory capacity to GEAR UP staff and to the school on parent issues.
- E. 100% of students with more than 5 absences in one or more courses or failing more than one core course will receive a home visit.

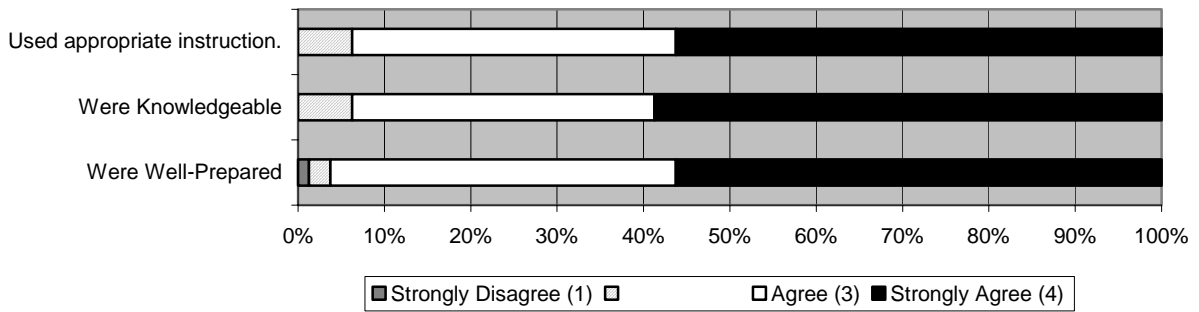
APPENDIX E: GEOMETRY READINESS CAMP EVALUATION, JUNE 2003

GEAR UP students participating in Geometry Readiness Camp, a two-week, hands-on experiential introduction to geometry, were asked to complete a course evaluation. 80 students completed a course evaluation survey. An overall analysis is provided below.

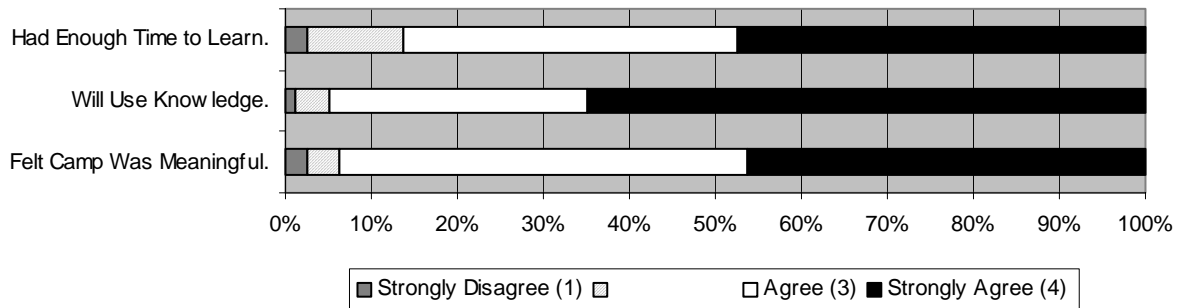
Geometry Readiness Camp, Summer 2003



Geometry Camp Teachers, Summer 2003



The Geometry Camp Student, Summer 2003



APPENDIX F: SUMMARY OF 9TH GRADE RETENTION, 2002-2003

Table 13: Summary of Students Retained in 9th Grade, 2002-2003 & 2003-2004

Campus	Number in 9th Grade 01_02	Number Retained in 9th Grade for 02-03	Percent Retained for 02-03	Number in 9th Grade 02_03	Number Retained in 9th Grade for 03_04	Percent Retained for 03-04	Significant Change in Retention
Akins	669	144	21.5	727	95	13.1	*
Crockett	603	70	11.6	619	90	14.5	
LBJ	507	87	17.2	572	73	12.8	*
Johnston	459	126	27.5	373	105	28.2	
Lanier	677	201	29.7	700	190	27.1	
McCallum	490	93	19	512	8	0.2	*
Reagan	451	83	18.4	444	66	15	
Travis	526	22	0.4	493	108	21.9	*
Anderson*	484	45	9.3	575	33	0.6	*
Austin*	620	62	10	630	82	13	
Bowie*	594	30	0.5	623	19	0.3	
Total	6080	963	16	6268	869	14	*

Source: Austin Independent School District Student Enrollment Records, October 3, 2003.

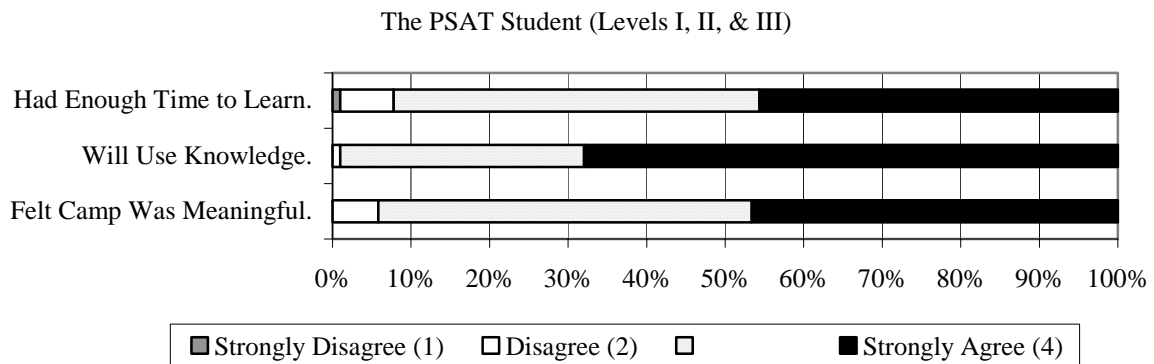
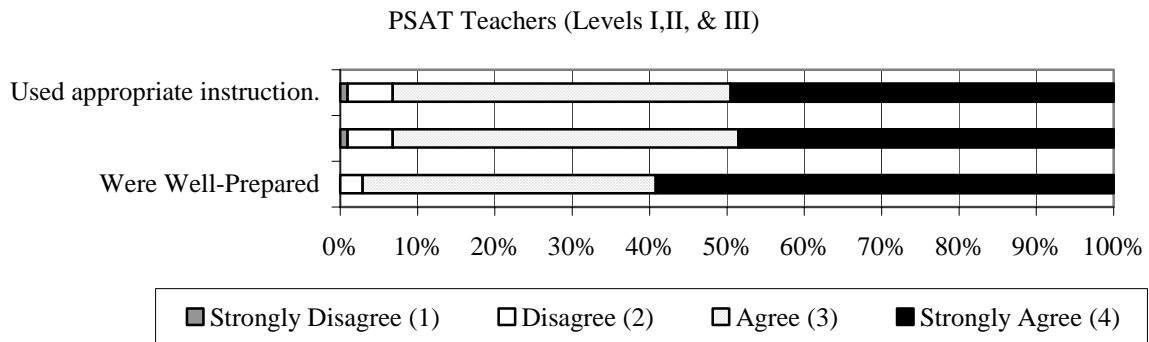
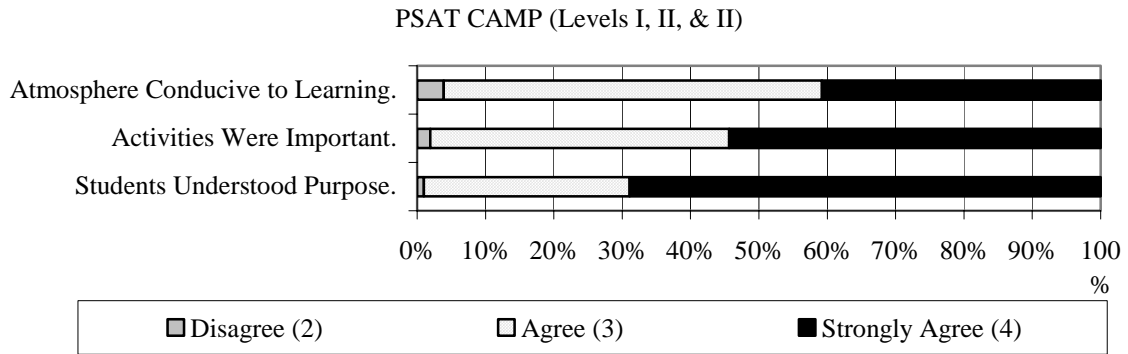
Table 14: Comparison of GEAR UP and Non-GEAR UP Students Retained in 9th Grade for 2003-2004

	Number of Non-GEAR UP Students	Number of Non-GEAR UP Students Retained	Percent of Non-GEAR UP Students Retained	Number of GEAR UP Students	Number of GEAR UP Students Retained	Percent of GEAR UP Students Retained	Significant Difference
Akins	356	40	11	371	55	15	
Crockett	448	63	14	171	27	16	
LBJ	172	22	13	400	51	13	
Johnston	182	44	24	191	61	32	
Lanier	258	59	23	442	131	30	*
McCallum	325	5	2	187	3	2	*
Reagan	149	29	19	295	37	13	
Travis	115	20	17	378	88	23	
Anderson	487	22	5	88	11	13	*
Austin	461	37	8	169	45	27	*
Bowie	599	18	3	24	1	4	
Total	3552	359	10	2716	510	19	*

Source: Austin Independent School District Student Enrollment Records, October 3, 2003.

APPENDIX G: STUDENT PSAT CAMP EVALUATION, SUMMER 2003

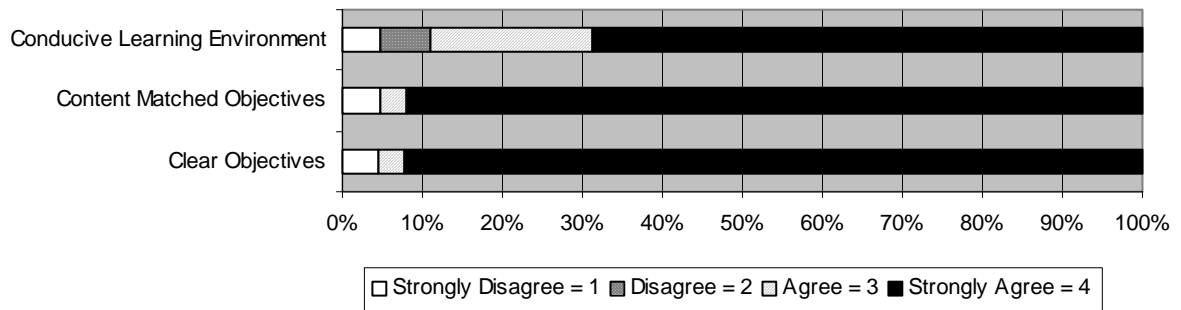
GEAR UP students participating in PSAT Camp, Levels I, II, and III, were asked to complete a course evaluation. 103 students completed a course evaluation survey. Unfortunately, the course evaluations were not always labeled with PSAT camp level and/or campus. An overall analysis is provided below.



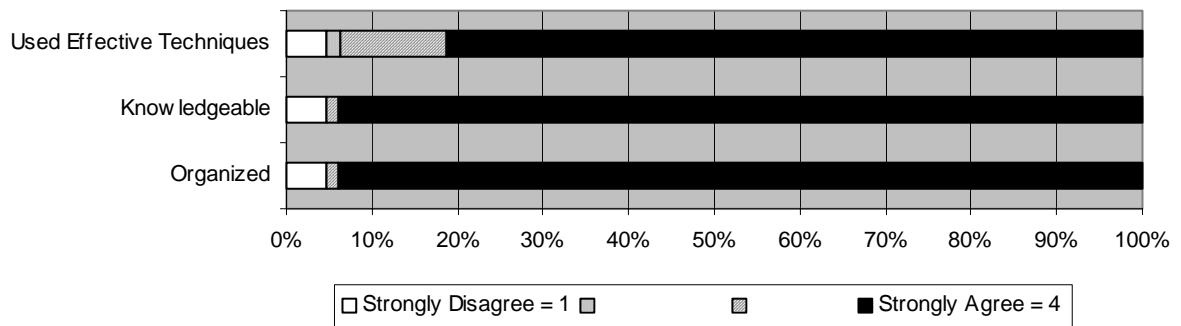
APPENDIX H: LEARNING SYSTEMS TRAINING EVALUATION, SUMMER 2003

Learning Systems consultants, a GEAR UP partner, conducted a three-day training course for teachers teaching two levels of PSAT/SAT preparation camps for GEAR UP students. Forty-seven teachers completed the Level I training evaluation and eighteen teachers completed the Level II evaluation training session. Because the training sessions followed a similar structure and were taught by the same instructors, participant response patterns were almost identical. Thus, the results for both training sessions have been merged and are provided below.

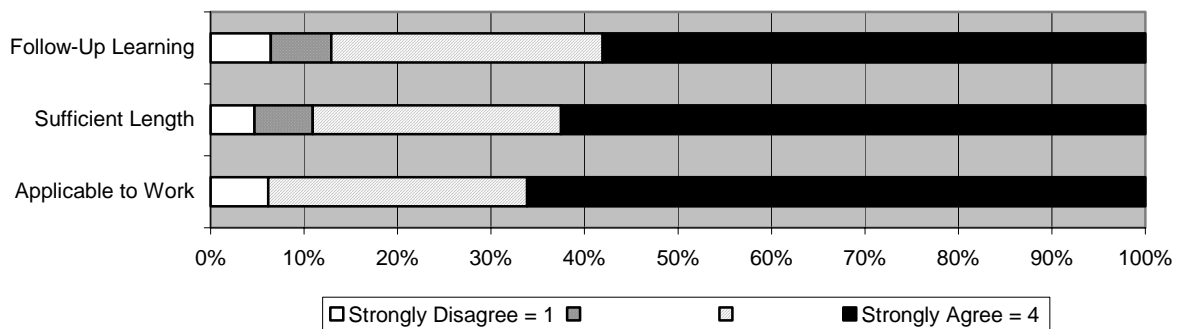
2003 PSAT Training Content & Instruction



2003 PSAT Training: The Instructors



2003 PSAT Training: Teacher Application



APPENDIX I: MULTI-YEAR SUMMARY OF STUDENT AND PARENT SURVEYS

	Spring 2001	Spring 2002	Spring 2003
Student Responses	2,488 (74%)	2,573 (80%)	1,970 (78%)
Parent Responses	1,098 (33%)	1,188 (38%)	1,118 (44%)

Student likes school

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Always	16.5	13.2	14.3	41.5	30	32.6
Most of the Time	32.8	43.5	38.2	40.3	51.2	39.9
Sometimes	39.5	38.8	42.2	16.7	17.5	26
Never	11.2	4.5	5.3	1.4	1.2	1.4

Is a Good Student

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Always	23.9	21.3	24.2	39.7	31.4	32.8
Most of the Time	44.2	54.3	42.7	45.7	51.2	41.9
Sometimes	29.4	23	31.5	14.1	17.2	24.4
Never	2.5	1.4	1.5	0.5	0.3	0.9
	2.5	1.4	1.5	0.5	0.3	0.9

Student works hard on assignments

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Always	28.9	23.2	22	34.6	28.3	29.1
Most of the Time	43.4	49	42.1	42.2	45.9	37.3
Sometimes	25.9	25.9	33.7	22.8	24.1	31.5
Never	1.8	1.9	2.2	0.4	1.6	2

Has anyone helped student/parent learn about college entrance requirements?

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	72.2	75.9	5.1	37.7	53.8
No	14.1	13.5	59.5	40.6	32
I do not know.	13.7	10.5	35.4	21.7	14.1

Who has helped the most to prepare student/parent for college?

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Family member	30.1	21.4	31.9	22
GEAR UP project staff	38	54	12.7	55.6
Classroom teacher	11.1	5.3	10.3	3
School counselor		4.1		2.8
GEAR UP mentor	7.5	4.2	4.7	2.8
GEAR UP Tutor		3.2		1.8
Classmate/friend	2.8	2	2.5	0.7
No one has helped.	10.5	5.7	38	11

Student/parent knows what courses to take to prepare for college.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	40.6	44	43.5	42.6	40.3
No	25.1	28.5	36.2	32.6	34.5
I do not know.	34.3	27.5	20.3	24.8	25.2

Student has chosen to complete the following graduation plan:

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Recommended High School Plan	60.9	52.7	57.1	47.4
Distinguished Achievement Plan		21.6		15.4
Minimum High School Plan		2.7		8.5
I do not know.		22.9		28.7

Student plans to take the following:

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
PSAT		38.9		34.8
PSAT/SAT	36.8	46.5	18.2	43.3
ACT	18.5	21.8	37.8	21.5
ASVAB		7.1		5.3
Other admissions tests		17.8		16.4
AP Classes		25.8		16.4
Honors		30.4		27.8
None	4	3.4	15.8	4.5
I do not know.	40.6	37	25	37.1

Due to GEAR UP, student's academic performance is

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Better	20.4	34.6	41.1	67.5	56.1	50.2
About the same	4.8	37.9	39	2.2	22.6	33.4
Worse or no help at all.	41	2.2	1.8	13.1	2	1
I do not know.	33.8	25.3	17.9	17.2	19.3	15.4

What level of school does student plan to complete?

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Do not plan to finish high school	Not Asked	1.9	1.4	0	2.1	2
High school only	3.5	8.2	8.9	7.3	7.3	10.3
Certificate program	5.4	2.9	2.8	8.4	4.3	2.6
Associate's degree	10.6	6.3	5.2	12.5	8.9	7.2
Bachelor's degree	21.5	23.4	17.4	40.9	35	23.7
Graduate degree	28.9	30.6	36.1	31	28.8	29.5
I do not know.	30	26.5	28.2	0	13.6	24.6

Main reason for not continuing education after high school:

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Cost	35.8	19.4	22	41.5	30.7	29.9
Need to work	13	6	7.8	6.5	4.4	4.8
Low Grades	20.7	7.4	12	4.7	4.2	8.8
Military Service	8	5.9	3.4	0	1.7	3.2
Family needs	7	2.4	2.2	1.4	1	0.6
Job training provided	9	2.8	2.5	3.9	1	3.4
Not Interested	6.6	4.1	3.1	3	2.6	5
I am going to college.		52.1	47	39.1	54.5	44.1

Parent has talked to child about college attendance.

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Frequently	33.5	31.4	55.1	47.3	48.4
Occasionally	52.5	53.3	40.6	43.5	45.2
Never	14	15.2	4.4	9.3	6.4

Someone in family has college degree.

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	51.2	49.6	53.3	49.4
No	27.4	30.8	39.2	37.1
I do not know.	21.4	19.6	7.4	13.5

Student uses College and Career Center to learn about college.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Frequently	10.9	18.8	16.6	10.3	17.8
Occasionally	43.2	69.5	43.5	41.6	38.1
Never	45.9	11.8	39.8	26	12.6
I do not know.					31.4

Student has visited a college.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Frequently	13.7	18.8	21.3	14.2	17.2
Occasionally	48.4	69.5	47.4	67.7	47.5
Once			25.2		
Never	37.9	11.8	6	12.9	25.5
I do not know.					9.8

GEAR UP College visit has helped student to learn more about college.

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	46.3	43.7	28.9	43.8
No	14.2	7	20.9	3.4
Somewhat	30.2	39.5	31.3	35.1
I do not know.	9.3	9.8	18.9	17.7

Average cost of tuition & fees at a 4-year public college in Texas:

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
\$500 or less	9.3	5.9	6.7	5.9	3.4	3.7
\$1,000	14.4	7.5	7.6	4.8	4.6	4.4
\$1,500	10.7	8.2	11.2	6.6	9.6	7.1
\$2,000	10.6	8.5	13.3	5.7	5.9	10
\$2,500	11.1	12.2	16.5	5.9	9.6	16.6
\$3,000	12	14.5	13.3	21.7	19.8	16.1
\$5,000 or more	31.8	43.2	31.3	49.5	47.1	42

Student will be able to afford to attend a 4-year public college.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	23.3	53.6	23.3	42	40.3	23.4
No	12.3	45.3	21.2	10.4	59.3	24.3
I am not sure.	64.4	1.1	55.5	47.6	0.3	52.3

Student/parent has talked with someone about obtaining college financial assistance.

	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Frequently	8.4	9.6	6	5.3	7.2
Occasionally	34.2	38.6	43.7	35.7	24.5
Once					19.3
Never	57.4	51.8	50.3	59	48.9

Student/parent knows how to obtain financial aid for college.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes, I know a lot.	12.3	8.6	12.2	14.6	11.3	14.7
No, I do not know anything about it.	59.5	49.1	37.5	44.2	35.3	32.9
I know a few things about it.	28.2	42.3	50.3	41.1	53.5	52.4

Student/parent knows a lot about the following types of financial aid:

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Pell grants	5.1	3.3	10.8	13.8	12.6	27.2
The Texas Grant			38.5			29.1
Federal work-study	6.8	6.7	10.1	8.6	10.3	18.1
Loans			40.9			33.4
Scholarships			60.3			43.3
Texas Tomorrow Fund			9.9			12.2
Other savings/investment options.			21.1			16

Student/parent wants to learn more about the following types of financial aid:

	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Pell grants	38.8	56.8
The Texas Grant	41.3	51.9
Federal work-study	41.4	49.4
Loans	30.2	32.5
Scholarships	45.4	56
Texas Tomorrow Fund	36.5	40.8
Other savings/investment options.	39.7	36.8

Student/parent plans to obtain financial aid.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	21.1	76.2	44.5	95	70
No	8.7	23.2	9.4	4.8	4.8
I am not sure.	70.1	0.6	46.1	0.2	25.2

21st Century Certificate influenced student's plans for college.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	24	19.9	22.3	37.5	66.3	20
No	17.9	44.2	20.8	18	33.7	19.8
I am not sure.	58.1	55.8	56.9	44.4	0	60.2

Participation in GEAR UP has influenced student's plans for college.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Yes	31.4	34.5	40	41.2	42.3
No	33.2	33.1	31.7	27.9	24.3
I am not sure.	35.4	32.4	28.3	30.9	33.4

Parent has participated in GEAR UP activities with their child.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
Frequently	7.6	7.5	9.5	8.9	8.9	10
Occasionally	27.5	30.3	34.4	22.6	45	48.2
Never	64.9	62.1	56	68.5	46	41.8

Main reason parent might not attend school events.

	<i>Students, 2001</i>	<i>Students, 2002</i>	<i>Students, 2003</i>	<i>Parents, 2001</i>	<i>Parents, 2002</i>	<i>Parents, 2003</i>
They do not know when events are held	9.8	11	10	16.2	21.1	17.8
They have to work.	56.3	48.7	41.9	56.3	51.3	46.9
They have to care for younger siblings.	13	11.4	9.5	12.6	12.7	10.8
Need language translation			4.5			6.5
Need transportation			1.4			3.6
They are not interested.	5	5.3	2.9	0.8	3	1.9
Do not know.	16	23.6	15.4	14.1	11.9	12.4

APPENDIX J: TUTOR SURVEY, MAY 2003

1. I understand the purpose of the GEAR UP program.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree

2. I primarily tutor students in the following areas:
 - a. English
 - b. Math
 - c. Social Studies
 - d. Science
 - e. Social Studies
 - f. Other: _____

3. Most of the time, I tutor students
 - a. One-on-one in the classroom
 - b. One-on-one outside of the classroom
 - c. Small groups of students in the classroom
 - d. Small groups of students outside of the classroom
 - e. Any student that needs help within the classroom
 - f. Any student needing help that "drops-in" to the GEAR UP lab
 - g. Other (Type in your response.):

4. Most of the time, I work with
 - a. GEAR UP students that are identified by the classroom teacher.
 - b. GEAR UP students that are identified by the GEAR UP staff.
 - c. GEAR UP students that are identified by a teacher and a few others needing help.
 - d. Any students needing help, GEAR UP or not.

5. I work with the same students consistently throughout the semester: YES or NO. *Please explain the factors that influenced the consistency of your support to specific students.

6. I attended the tutor training sessions: YES or NO. *Please explain the factors that influenced your level of participation.

7. I attended the following training sessions:
 - a. Math Training with Linda George
 - b. Language Arts Training with Kay Price-Hawkins

8. Was the content of the training sessions appropriate for your use? Why or why not?

9. Was the instructor effective in her instruction? Why or why not?

10. Were you able to use the information to support your tutoring efforts? Why or why not?

11. I believe that the students benefited from their participation in the GEAR UP Tutoring Program.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree

12. In your opinion, what are the strengths of the GEAR UP tutoring program?

13. In your opinion, what are the weaknesses of the GEAR UP tutoring program?

APPENDIX K: TEACHER SURVEY, MAY 2003

1. I understand the purpose of the GEAR UP program.
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree

2. GEAR UP staff members respond to my questions/requests in a timely manner.
 - a. Frequently
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. Never

*Please explain the factors that influenced the level of support that you received.

3. I had a GEAR UP tutor(s): YES or NO. Please explain.

4. Most of the time, my tutor(s) provided
 - a. One-on-one instruction within my classroom.
 - b. One-on-one instruction outside of my classroom.
 - c. Small group instruction within my classroom.
 - d. Small group instruction outside of my classroom
 - e. Random assistance to any student within my classroom
 - f. Other (Type in your response.):

5. Most of the time, my tutor worked with
 - a. Only GEAR UP students that are identified by me.
 - b. Only GEAR UP students that are identified by GEAR UP project staff.
 - c. Primarily identified GEAR UP students and a few others needing help.
 - d. Any students needing help, GEAR UP or not.

6. I believe that the students benefited from their participation in the GEAR UP Tutoring Program. **Why or why not?
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree

7. I would recommend having a GEAR UP tutor to a fellow teacher. **Why or why not?
 - a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly Disagree

8. I am able to use the GEAR UP College and Career Center to support my classroom instruction.
 - a. Frequently
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. Never

*Please explain the factors that influenced your level of participation.

9. In order to be prepared for college, I believe that my students still need the following types of help:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Academic tutoring b. Additional college visits c. Information on college financial assistance d. Advanced level courses e. Mentoring 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> f. Career exploration activities g. Personal guidance counseling h. Test preparation j. College Information k. Other (Type in your response)
---	--

10. I obtained professional development information from the GEAR UP project staff.
 - a. Frequently
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. Never

11. I was able to take advantage of more professional development opportunities this year because of the availability of GEAR UP funds. *Please explain the factors that influenced your level of participation.
 - a. Frequently
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. Never

12. In the area of professional development, it would help if GEAR UP could provide:
 - a. Detailed information regarding the various ways GEAR UP can support my professional development.
 - b. Information about upcoming professional development opportunities.
 - c. Training related to my content-area.
 - d. Training related to effective instructional strategies.
 - e. Training related to test preparation (TAKS or PSAT/SAT)
 - f. Opportunities to engage in ongoing curriculum development.
 - g. Other (Type in your response.):

13. A GEAR UP Parent Support Specialist provided assistance for me this year. *Please explain the factors that influenced the level of support that you received.
 - a. Frequently
 - b. Occasionally
 - c. Never

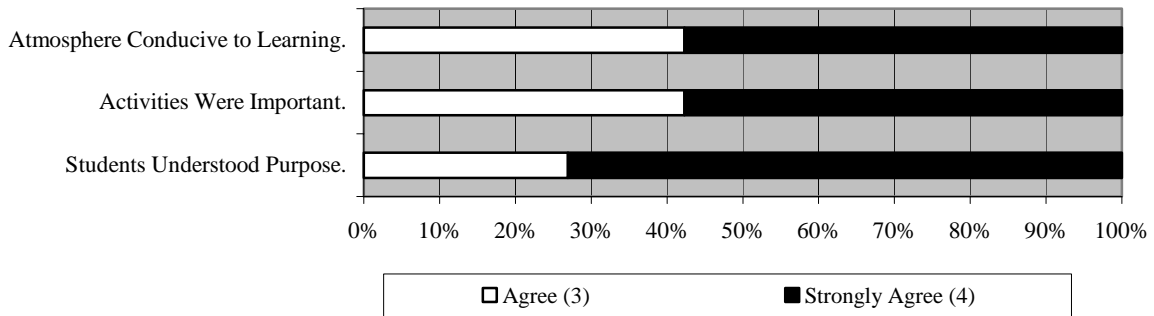
14. GEAR UP's Parent Support Specialist helped me in the following ways:
 - a. Making phone calls to parents.
 - b. Making home visits to parents.
 - c. Scheduling parent/teacher meetings.
 - d. Participating in parent/teacher meetings.
 - e. Arranging for transportation to the school for parents.
 - f. No help received.
 - g. Other (type in your response.):

15. I would like the GEAR UP Parent Support Specialist to help me in the following ways:
 - a. Making phone calls to parents.
 - b. Making home visits to parents.
 - c. Scheduling parent/teacher meetings.
 - d. Arranging for transportation to the school for parents.
 - e. Participating in parent/teacher meetings.
 - f. No help received.
 - g. Other (type in your response.):

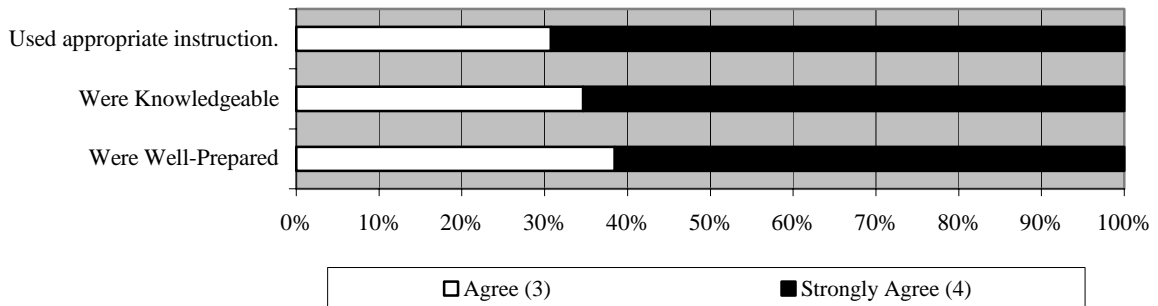
APPENDIX L: CAMP COLLEGE EVALUATION, JUNE 2003

Camp College at St. Edward’s University was a week-long camp designed to offer students rigorous academic enrichment, such as a PSAT preparation class and a history class focused on the civil rights movement in the United States along with a college residential experience. Twenty-six students completed a camp evaluation at the end of this summer program. A summary of their responses for discrete items is provided below. Summary of responses to open-ended questions can be found on page 23 of this report.

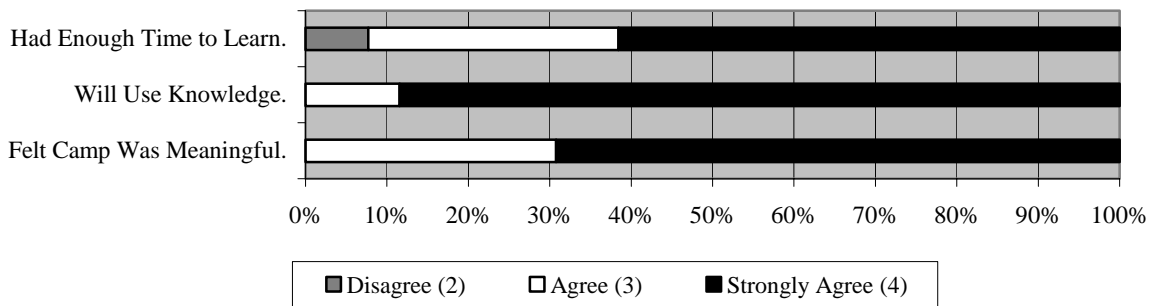
Camp College: St Edward's University, Summer 2003



The Teachers at Camp College: St. Edwards University



Camp College Student: St Edward's University



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