

# Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) Austin

Annual Evaluation Report 2018–2019





## Executive Summary

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Austin is a federally funded grant program encouraging economically disadvantaged students and their families to have high educational expectations, graduate high school academically ready to enroll in college, and understand how to pay for postsecondary education. In 2018–2019, the program’s second federally funded year, GEAR UP Austin served a cohort of 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students ( $n = 2,536$ ) across 11 middle schools.

Nearly all GEAR UP students received support services relevant to college preparation. Evaluation findings suggest that students, teachers, and parents had a positive perspective on the role of the program services in college preparation.

### *GEAR UP implementation outcomes for students included:*

- Ninety-eight percent of GEAR UP students participated in one or more services.
- The majority of GEAR UP students reported college visits (66%), tutoring (61%), and classroom visits from GEAR UP facilitators (58%) as helpful for college preparation.
- Seventy-two percent of GEAR UP students reported their facilitators were helpful in preparing them for college and career.
- The percentage of GEAR UP students who passed advanced courses was similar to that of non-GEAR UP students.
- Greater percentages of GEAR UP students who participated in college visits than of GEAR UP students who did not participate in college visits enrolled in advanced courses and passed State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) reading and math.

### *GEAR UP implementation outcomes for teachers included:*

- Ninety-three percent of teachers at GEAR UP campuses were confident in their knowledge of how to help students meet their college and career goals.
- Teachers at GEAR UP campuses were perceived by the majority of students as supportive in preparing them for college and career.

### *GEAR UP implementation outcomes for parents included:*

- Seventy-five percent of GEAR UP students thought their parents helped them prepare for college and career.
- The majority of GEAR UP parents regarded college visits (75%) and individual meetings with facilitators/counselors (64%) as the most helpful activities supporting them to prepare their child for college.

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## Overview

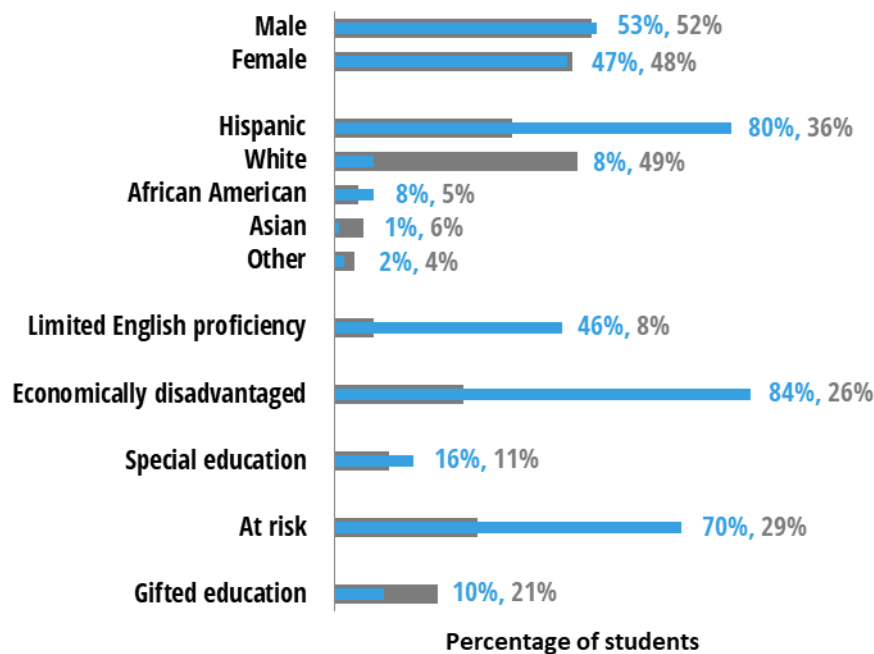
### Background of GEAR UP Austin

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) Austin is a federally funded grant program encouraging low-income at-risk students and their families to have high educational expectations, complete the required courses to enter college, and understand how to pay for their postsecondary education. GEAR UP Austin started serving a cohort of 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students ( $n = 2,514$ ) across 11 middle schools in the Spring 2018 semester, and will follow them into high school through the summer after graduation. In year 2 of the program, Austin Independent School District (AISD) was awarded \$1,878,015 to continue implementing GEAR UP Austin. In 2018–2019, GEAR UP Austin served a cohort of 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students ( $n = 2,536$ ) across 11 middle schools.

Overall, GEAR UP students differed from non-GEAR UP students ( $n = 2,886$ ) in several ways. Eighty-four percent of GEAR UP Austin students qualified for free or reduced-price lunch (FRPL), and 80% attended majority-Hispanic schools. Compared with non-GEAR UP students, GEAR UP students were more likely to be English learners and be at-risk (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

The majority of 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students at GEAR UP campuses were more likely than non-GEAR UP students to be Hispanic, English language learners, and economically disadvantaged.



Source. 2018–2019 AISD student demographics records

Note. Other includes American Indian or Alaska native and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander.

In 2018–2019, the program’s second year of federal funding, GEAR UP continued to provide intensive support services relevant to college preparation for the 7<sup>th</sup>-grade cohort. GEAR UP Austin sought to ensure all students graduate from high school and are prepared for and succeed in postsecondary education by providing:

**Academic intervention:** personalized, rigorous academic preparation to reduce the need for remediation at the postsecondary level

**Enhanced counseling and advising:** personalized college and career advising to improve awareness of postsecondary opportunities and increase rates of enrollment

**Professional development activities:** ongoing professional development activities to help district staff support students’ learning

**Family engagement:** engagement of family and community members as partners supporting academic growth and college preparation

## Implementation Services

In alignment with the program goals, GEAR UP campuses focused service implementation on the four abovementioned components (Table 1).

Table 1. In 2018–2019, GEAR UP implemented services in all four program areas.

Program component	Service
Academic intervention	Tutoring Summer program
Enhanced counseling and advising	Comprehensive mentoring Counseling /advising Financial aid counseling/advising College visit Job site visit/job shadowing Educational field trip Student workshop
Professional development activities	Teacher training/workshop
Family engagement	Counseling/advising College visit Workshop Family event

## Academic Intervention

GEAR UP Austin supported the expansion of advanced academics and academic support services to students and offered educators targeted professional development activities designed to personalize learning and tailor instruction to meet the needs of individual students. In year 2, GEAR UP Austin continued to build upon the infrastructure of Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and support online platforms to enhance literacy efforts (e.g., MyOn) and instruction (e.g., BLEND). For example, GEAR UP staff participated in AVID site team meetings and summer professional development activities to help enhance a college-going culture on campus. MyOn provided access for all students to read e-books in and outside school time. Teachers and GEAR UP staff used BLEND (the district's learning management system, also known as Canvas) to integrate more technology and personalized instruction into the classroom. GEAR UP supported teachers to use these digital resources in attempts to improve students' achievement.

To improve academic preparation for college, GEAR UP partnered with Austin Partners In Education (APIE) to provide tutoring to its students in all 11 GEAR UP middle schools. APIE tutors, who were college students or recent college graduates bringing diverse backgrounds and educational experiences, provided whole-group or small-group tutoring support. Tutoring focused on English language arts and mathematics (math). Tutoring took place in and outside the classroom. APIE tutors were supervised by APIE staff, who met regularly with the GEAR UP project director to review implementation activities and to identify needs for improvement.

GEAR UP also partnered with AVID to enhance instructional practices, student engagement, and a college-going culture on AVID/GEAR UP campuses. Teachers at GEAR UP campuses received opportunities for learning AVID strategies to support student learning.

Additional academic interventions were provided through summer programs. Summer programs focused on enhancing students' capacity in various areas, including science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); college and career exploration; community service; social-emotional learning (SEL) skills; and project-based learning. Organizations that provided summer programs included:

**Afterschool Center on Education (ACE) summer camp:** ACE was a summer academic enrichment program through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century grant for afterschool programs. This 6-week summer program included academic components as well as college and career exploration. The focus of each camp varied by campus.

**AVID Summer Bridge:** AVID Summer Bridge was a 10-day math program to support students' readiness for Algebra in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Students participated in a 60-hour AVID summer program to enhance math skills and be ready for success.

## Purpose of the Evaluation

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to assess the effectiveness of GEAR UP Austin in achieving its program goals. This report presents a description of outcomes for the 2018–2019 school year, the second year of GEAR UP Austin implementation in AISD. Specifically, the report describes program implementation, students' participation in GEAR UP Austin, and baseline student academic and college preparation outcomes.

The program evaluation focused on two research questions:

For each program component, what program services were developed and implemented in the second year of the GEAR UP Austin project?

What were the outcomes for GEAR UP participants?

To address these evaluation questions, a variety of measurements were used, including surveys, focus groups, documentation, and archival student records (e.g., course enrollment, students' attendance, and STAAR testing).

**Breakthrough:** Breakthrough provided a 6-week program for Breakthrough students to learn about college and career. The program also provided academic interventions to ensure students are academically successful in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and beyond.

**Communities In Schools (CIS) summer camp:** This academic enrichment program was offered to students to support academic and personal growth. The focus of each camp varied by campus.

**DELL medical camp:** Students explored the world of health sciences and participated in a week-long interactive experience along with pre-medical, medical and health profession students at Dell Medical School, The University of Texas (UT) at Austin, and Seton Clinical Education. Students heard from Dell Med faculty, physicians, and UT Austin professors.

**GEAR UP summer camp:** A 2-week summer camp at Webb Middle School that consisted of engaging activities such as a trip to Texas State University along with a visit to the Meadows Center Bottom Boat tour to learn about the wetlands and wildlife. Students also visited The Austin Public Library for fun reading opportunities and ended the second week getting crafty as they dove deep into various art projects that stimulated creativity, incorporated math and honed in on problem solving skills.

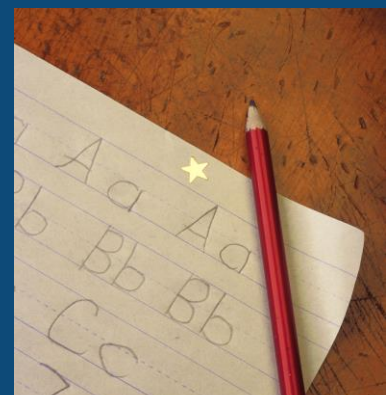
**GEAR UP environmental science camp:** This new 2-week camp was organized by the GEAR UP staff to provide environmental science enrichment to students. Students participated in job site visits, educational field research and field trips, as well as college tours in order to create a final product about an environmental issue facing central Texas. Students from all GEAR UP campuses were invited to attend at two locations- Bedichek (South) and Sadler Means (north).

**UT Health & Science camp:** UT Health & Science was a week long summer camp awarded to two GEAR UP students interested in the health profession. Students learned basic clinical skills such as administering IVs, blood draw, intubation skills and learned how to take vital signs. Students also engaged in a range of laboratory science and earned First Aid and CPR/AED certification.

**UTeach summer camp (also known as UT PREP):** UT PREP as a 5-week summer academic enrichment program that focused on science, engineering and math. During their camp time, campers took field trips, ate lunch in common areas alongside UT students, explored different places on campus, swam in the UT pool, and played sports in the campus gym. Students who completed the camp received one high school CTE credit, as approved by the Texas Education Agency.

## Enhanced Counseling and Advising

GEAR UP students were offered opportunities to develop self-confidence and broaden their educational and career aspirations through the advisory curriculum, relationships



with mentors, and college and career awareness and exploration activities. The advisory curriculum included topics such as goal setting, career exploration, and the importance of higher education.

In 2018–2019, GEAR UP students continued to receive mentoring opportunities. Mentors from the Seedling Foundation and other community-based organizations worked one-on-one with AISD students during the school day. They helped students to improve their social and study skills, to strengthen their communication skills, and to build self-confidence. This focused mentoring encouraged students to develop new interests, explore career possibilities, and achieve their personal and academic goals over the long run.

In 2018–2019, GEAR UP staff provided college visits in two different formats. Students may have participated in online virtual college tours or visits to a campus. Students enrolled in Burnet, Covington, Martin, and Paredes Middle Schools took virtual college tours. Students may have taken a virtual college tour of University of Colorado Boulder, Columbia University, University of Utah, and Yale University. All GEAR UP campuses organized at least one college visit. Students visited at least one of the following universities:

- Angelo State University
- Baylor University
- Concordia University
- Huston-Tillotson University
- Our Lady of the Lake University at San Antonio
- Rice University
- Southwestern University
- St. Edwards University
- St. Mary's University
- Texas A & M University
- Texas State University
- UT San Antonio
- UT Austin
- University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
- University of Houston

The GEAR UP program focused its student workshops on a variety of activities, including:

- College and career exploration
- Academic planning
- Hands-on academic lessons from external partners
- Teachers' sharing of their thoughts about college
- Professionals' sharing about their college and career path

The GEAR UP program staff regularly tracked students' attendance to provide support services to improve attendance. For example, the GEAR UP facilitators communicated with

parents about the significance of regular attendance. They contacted parents through home visits, phone calls, and meetings to reduce chronic absenteeism.

## Professional Development Activities

All GEAR UP teachers ( $n = 241$ ) received prescribed training throughout the 2018–2019 school year. The prescribed training included campus- and district-based professional learning that supported individualized instruction, increased rigor and student engagement, and integrated technology and blended learning. Professional learning sessions included alignment of courses, professional development activities, distance learning, and data-informed differentiated instruction. The professional learning sessions included those selected by teachers or required by the district or campus leadership team. Examples of the professional learning sessions in which GEAR UP teachers participated were:

- AISD academic conference
- AISD literary plan
- AISD national board certification program
- AVID college readiness
- All things IEP for campus teams
- AISD mentor training
- Blended learning summit
- Blended and personalized professional learning
- Behavior in special education
- Campus-based staff development
- Creative learning initiative
- District-wide professional learning
- Innovation campus-based staff development
- Dyslexia designee training
- Equity in the classroom
- Human sexuality and responsibility education: best practices on instruction
- Leadership pathway for literacy
- Math curriculum training
- Middle school new teacher support
- Mindfulness in school
- New bilingual teacher institute
- Purposeful inclusion
- Sheltered instruction in the classroom
- Science outdoor learning
- Social studies strategy series
- Teacher induction program
- Texas dyslexia summit
- Transition planning for middle school/high school students



GEAR UP teachers also engaged in professional development activities provided by the Institute for Public School Initiative (IPSI) at UT Austin and other providers selected by the campus leadership team, AVID site-based team, and child-study team. Trainings provided by IPSI covered cooperative learning, cultural proficiency, and integrating literacy across contents.

In partnership with IPSI, GEAR UP facilitators also participated in monthly GEAR UP meetings and professional development activities focused on program planning and implementation. The monthly meetings provided a forum for facilitators to exchange ideas and best practices with other staff from districts who were awarded a GEAR UP grant.

Facilitators attended at least one conference that highlighted best practices in college and career readiness. Conferences facilitators attended this year included the Texas GEAR UP state conference, the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) capacity building workshop, and the NCCEP annual GEAR UP conference. The state and national conferences offered networking opportunities, keynote speakers, and a variety of breakout sessions about programming and best practices for participants. The capacity building workshop was focused on professional development activities for GEAR UP staff, and included specific sessions about best practices.

## **Family Engagement**

In partnership with IPSI, GEAR UP Austin staff implemented a family engagement program. Family engagement activities were provided for any adult (e.g., parent, guardian, family member) who played a key role in the child's life. Training for GEAR UP facilitators was provided on how to engage families in culturally relevant and effective ways, including college visits, campus family nights, coffee with the principal, and individual counseling/advising sessions. Information related to high school endorsements, academic planning, financial literacy, campus expectations, and benefits of higher education were covered during parent nights, in a newsletter, and on the program's website.



## Evaluation Question 1: For each program component, what program services were developed and implemented in the second year of the GEAR UP Austin project, 2018–2019?

The first evaluation question aimed to assess the implementation of the GEAR UP program. To measure program implementation, data were analyzed from program documentation, service tracking records, the GEAR UP Student Survey, and GEAR UP focus groups with students and campus staff. The percentage of GEAR UP students participating in program services, the average number of hours per participating GEAR UP student, and students' perceptions of GEAR UP services are described in this section of the report.

### **Implementation Finding 1: Workshops, tutoring, and college visits were provided to more students than were other services.**

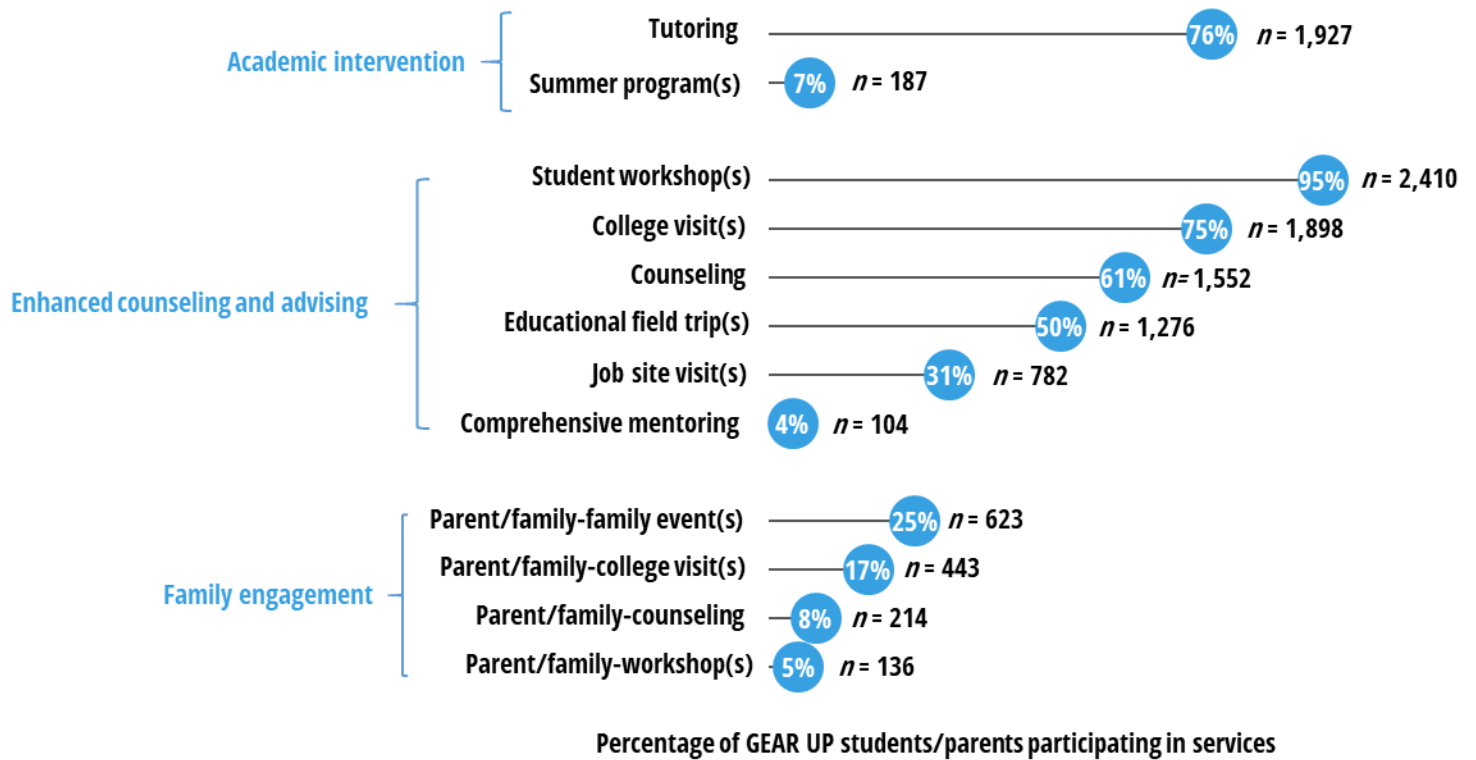
The GEAR UP program staff recorded services provided to students throughout the 2018–2019 school year. Almost all (98%) GEAR UP students participated in one or more service. Student workshops, tutoring, and college visits were the top three activities that involved most of the students. Overall, 77% of GEAR UP students participated in academic intervention activities, 97% of GEAR UP students participated in enhanced counseling and advising activities, and 42% of GEAR UP students' parents/families participated in family engagement opportunities. The program objective (i.e., 75%) was met, as 86% of GEAR UP students were involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, or tutoring program.

More specifically, the majority of GEAR UP students participated in workshops, tutoring, college visits, and counseling (Figure 2). The GEAR UP program staff monitored students with failing grades based on report card records. By the end of the 2018–2019 school year, 80% of GEAR UP students with failing grades had received tutoring services, although the GEAR UP program expects 100% of failed students to receive tutoring services.



Figure 2.

The majority of GEAR UP students participated in student workshops, tutoring, college visits, and counseling, and half participated in educational field trips.

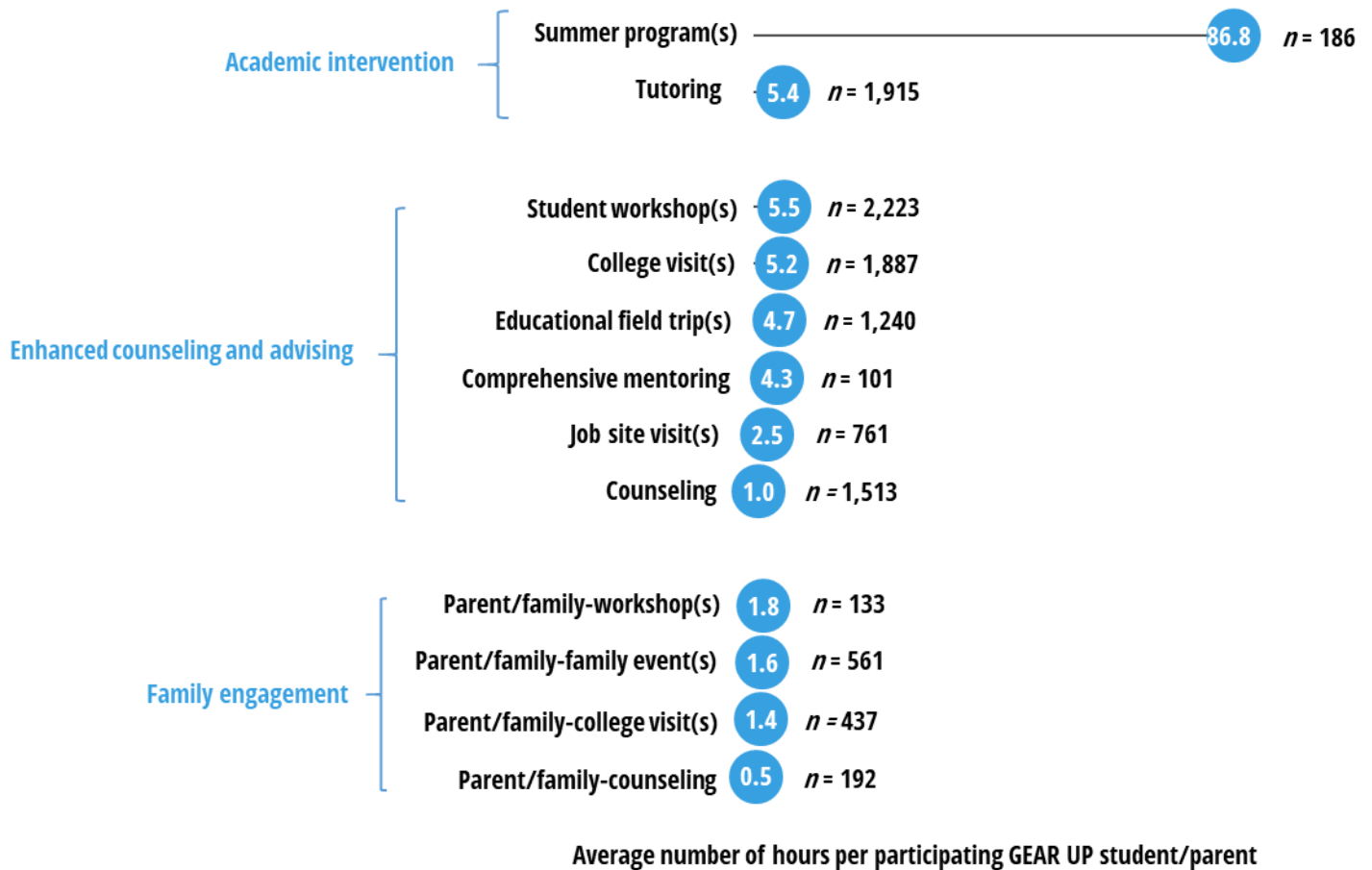


Source. AISD eCST data system, 2018–2019

Overall, participating GEAR UP students had an average of 13.6 hours of academic intervention activities and 13.3 hours of enhanced counseling and advising activities. Each participating family had an average of 1.8 hours of family services. Although a small percentage of GEAR UP students participated in summer programs, each of these participating students ( $n = 186$ ), on average, completed 86.8 hours of summer programming (Figure 3).

Figure 3.

The average number of hours per participating GEAR UP student ranged from 0.5 hour for parent counseling to 86.8 hours for the summer program.



Source. AISD eCST data system, 2018–2019

Note. Average number of hours were based on participating students with dosage records only.

## Implementation Finding 2: The implementation of GEAR UP services varied across GEAR UP campuses.

The percentages of GEAR UP students receiving academic intervention and family engagement activities varied across campuses, and all schools involved more than 90% of GEAR UP students in enhanced counseling and advising (Appendix E). Specifically, at Covington, all GEAR UP students participated in workshops, and almost all GEAR UP students participated in tutoring and job site visits (Appendix F). Almost all GEAR UP students at Bedichek, Burnet, Garcia YMLA, Fulmore, and Sadler Means YWLA participated in workshops. However, Garcia YMLA, Mendez, and Webb took less than 50% of GEAR UP students on college visits. Bedichek, Burnet, Dobie, and Mendez involved less than 50% of GEAR UP students in counseling.

Almost all GEAR UP schools provided participating students with at least 10 hours of academic intervention services and enhanced counseling and advising services (Appendix E). While high percentages of GEAR UP students participated in workshops, tutoring, and college visits, the average number of hours each participating GEAR UP student received services varied, ranging from 0.6 hour to 15.8 hours (Appendix G). Covington involved 98% of GEAR UP students in tutoring, and each participating student had 12 hours of tutoring, on average. Sadler Means YWLA involved 98% of GEAR UP students in workshops, and each participating student had 16 hours of workshops, on average.

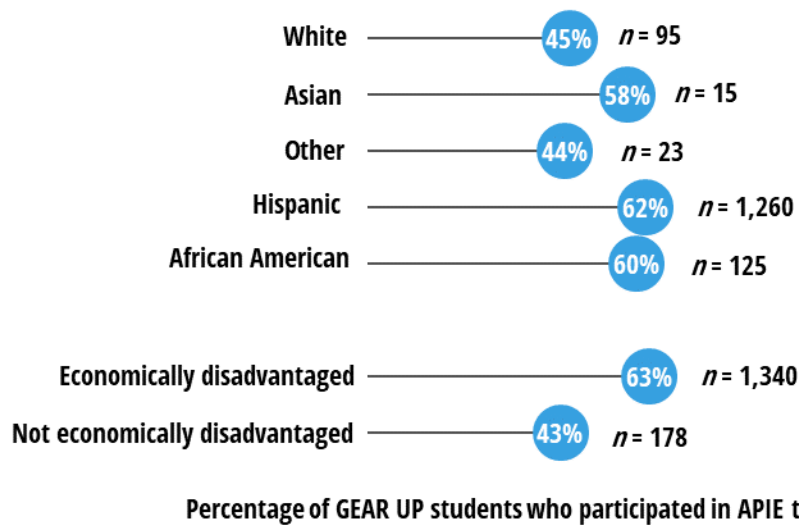
However, there were areas of implementation with lower rates of participation. Each participating student at all GEAR UP campuses had less than 2 hours of counseling, on average. Each participating student at Burnet and Mendez had the lowest number of hours of workshops, on average. Each participating student at Burnet, Fulmore, Mendez, and Paredes had less than 5 hours of college visits, on average.

### **Implementation Finding 3: GEAR UP service participation differed for GEAR UP students according to their ethnic group and economically disadvantaged status.**

To further describe students' access to GEAR UP services, GEAR UP student participation in APIE tutoring, college visits, counseling, and family services was disaggregated by ethnicity and by economically disadvantaged status. The percentages of GEAR UP African American and of Hispanic students participating in APIE tutoring were higher than those of White and Asian students (Figures 4), while their percentages were lower for college visits, counseling, and family services (Figures 5, 6, and 7). A greater percentage of GEAR UP students who were economically disadvantaged than of those who were not economically disadvantaged participated in APIE tutoring (Figure 4). A greater percentage of GEAR UP students who were not economically disadvantaged than of those who were economically disadvantaged participated in college visits, counseling, and family services (Figures 5, 6, and 7).

Figure 4.

Higher percentages of Hispanic, African American, and economically disadvantaged students than of their peers participated in **APIE tutoring**.

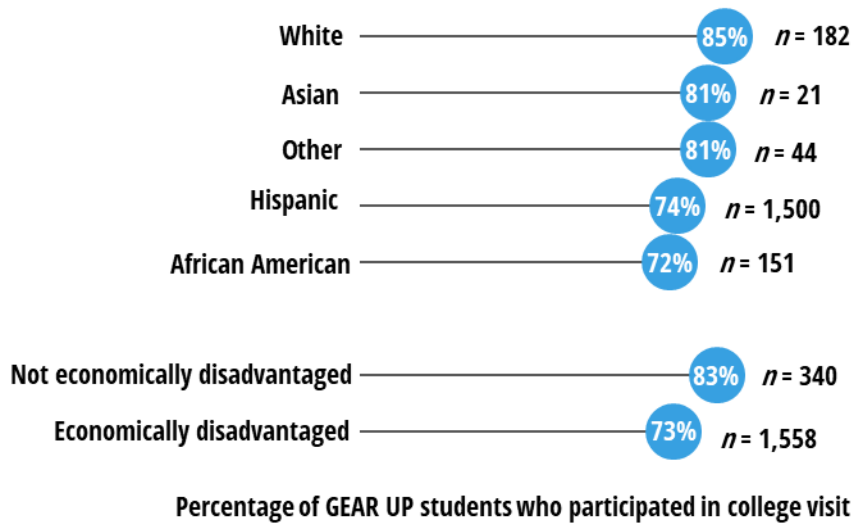


Source. 2018–2019 AISD student demographics records, AISD eCST data system, 2018–2019

Note. Only GEAR UP students who participated in small-group or individualized tutoring provided by APIE were included. The difference in percentage of GEAR UP students participating in APIE tutoring between racial groups and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged groups was significant ( $p < .01$ ).

Figure 5.

The percentage of GEAR UP students who participated in **college visits** was greatest for White students and for those who were not economically disadvantaged.

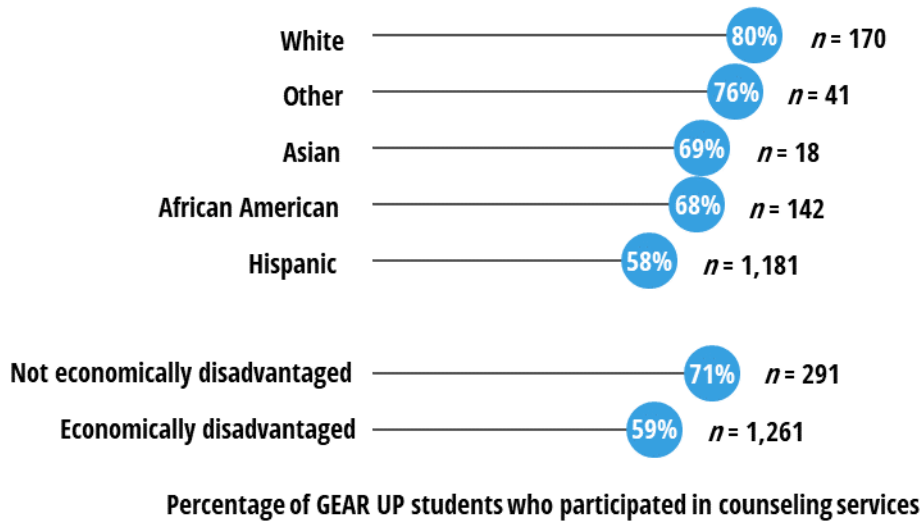


Source. 2018–2019 AISD student demographics records, AISD eCST data system, 2018–2019

Note. The difference in percentage of GEAR UP students participating in college visits between racial groups and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged groups was significant ( $p < .01$ ).

Figure 6.

Lower percentages of Hispanic and of economically disadvantaged students than of their peers participated in **GEAR UP counseling**.

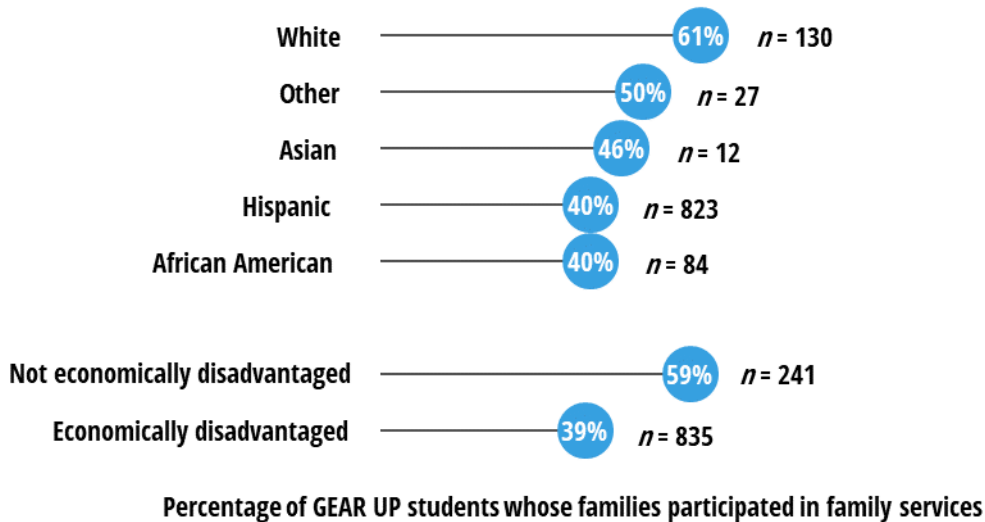


Source. 2018–2019 AISD student demographics records, AISD eCST data system, 2018–2019

Note. The difference in percentage of GEAR UP students participating in counseling between racial groups and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged groups was significant ( $p < .01$ ).

Figure 7.

Lower percentages of Hispanic, African American, and economically disadvantaged students than of their peers had families who participated in **GEAR UP family services**.



Source. 2018–2019 AISD student demographics records, AISD eCST data system, 2018–2019

Note. The difference in percentage of GEAR UP families participating in family services between racial groups and between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged groups was significant ( $p < .01$ ).

## Implementation Finding 4: GEAR UP students and campus staff perceived the GEAR UP services positively.

The comments provided by GEAR UP students and campus staff in the surveys and focus groups consistently reflected the enjoyable, helpful, and inspiring nature of GEAR UP activities. Both students and campus staff applauded the facilitators for being supportive and helpful in various ways, including college and career explorations, school work, and students' personal issues. In particular, students and campus staff identified college visits as the most helpful activity in preparing students for college. Excerpts of **students'** and **campus staff's** comments included:

*GEAR UP helps show me colleges and jobs that I like.*

*They are very nice people trying to help you improve your grades.*

*The field trips to college really help you with your options to choose a college.*

*The facilitator is like a counselor because he is someone you can trust, so we can talk about other issues too.*

*I really like how GEAR UP has tried to support students and families at this school.*

*The facilitator is keeping students focused on academic success. Students lean on the facilitator for support.*

*GEAR UP is an amazing program that has strongly encouraged our students to be successful in their current academic arena as well as future academic path.*

*I think the field trips to universities have been very beneficial for our students. Because they can expand their world and see what is out there.*

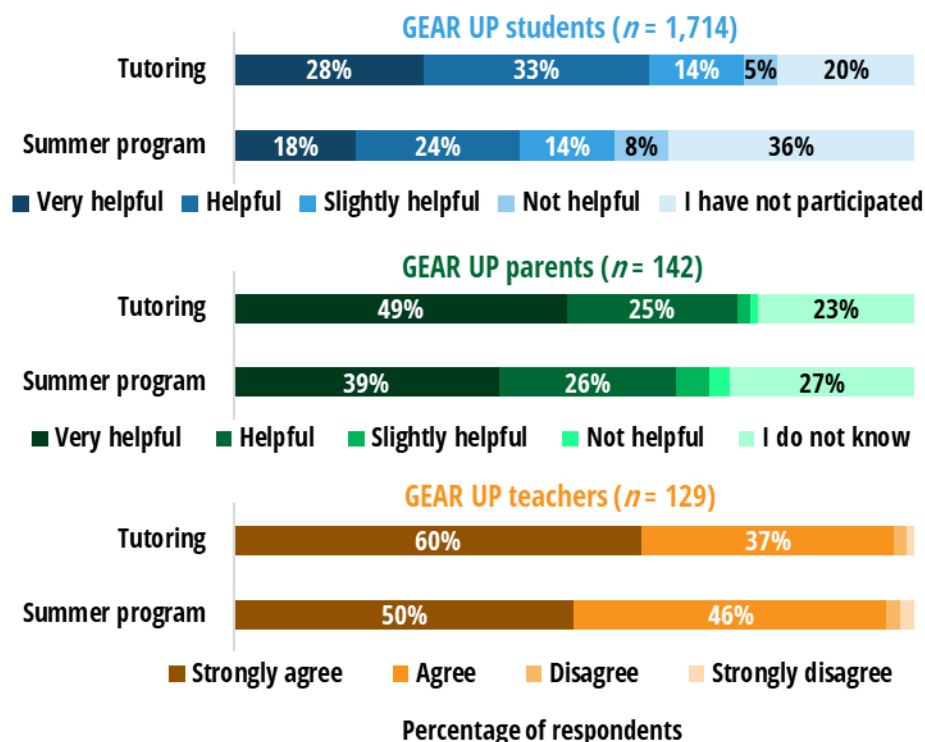
### Evaluation Question 2: For each program component, what were the outcomes for GEAR UP participants?

#### Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 1: GEAR UP participants had positive perspectives about academic support provided by the program.

Results from participants' self-reported surveys revealed that students, parents, and teachers had highly positive perspectives about academic support services provided by the GEAR UP program. They agreed that tutoring was helpful to prepare students for college. Teachers and parents perceived summer programs to be more helpful than did students (Figure 8).

Figure 8. The majority of GEAR UP students, parents, and teachers agreed that tutoring was helpful for college preparation.

Do you believe that the following GEAR UP activities are helpful for college preparation?



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Teacher Survey

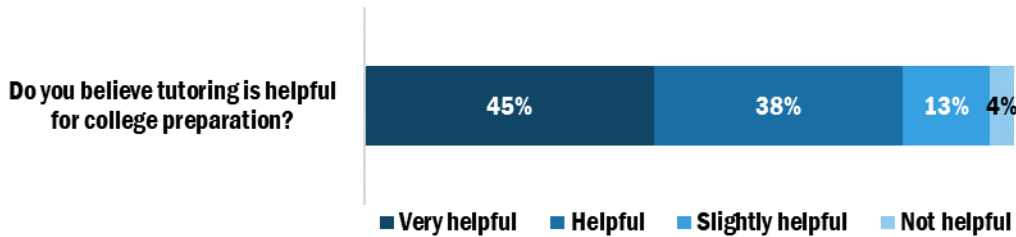
As the GEAR UP program started implementing in February 2018, the 2018–2019 school year signaled the first full year of comprehensive data collection for the program. This section presents a description of baseline outcomes for the 2018–2019 school year.

The GEAR UP/AVID Student, Family, and Teacher Surveys; student and staff focus groups; and archival student records (e.g., students' attendance, course enrollment, and STAAR testing) were used to describe baseline outcomes. Baseline outcomes were organized for each of the four program components: academic intervention, enhanced counseling and advising, professional development activities, and family engagement.



Additionally, GEAR UP students who participated in tutoring services felt tutoring was helpful for college preparation. Of the 2,073 GEAR UP students who participated in tutoring services, 688 provided feedback on the GEAR UP Student Survey about how they felt about tutoring services. Eighty-three percent reported that tutoring was very helpful or helpful for college preparation (Figure 9).

**Figure 9.**  
**The majority of GEAR UP students who participated in tutoring services agreed that tutoring was helpful for college preparation.**

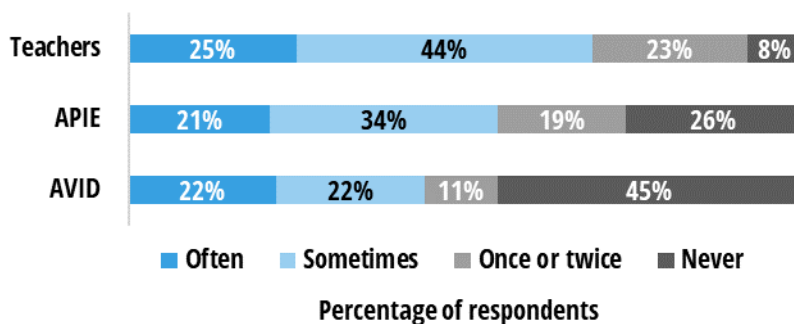


Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey

**Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 2: Participants perceived tutoring received from teachers, APIE tutors, and AVID tutors as helpful.**

GEAR UP students may have participated in tutoring provided by teachers, APIE tutors, and AVID tutors. GEAR UP students reported they most often received tutoring services from teachers and APIE tutors (Figure 10). Many GEAR UP students regarded the tutoring services received from teachers, APIE tutors, and AVID tutors as helpful (Figure 11).

**Figure 10.**  
**The majority of GEAR UP students received tutoring services from teachers or APIE tutors.**

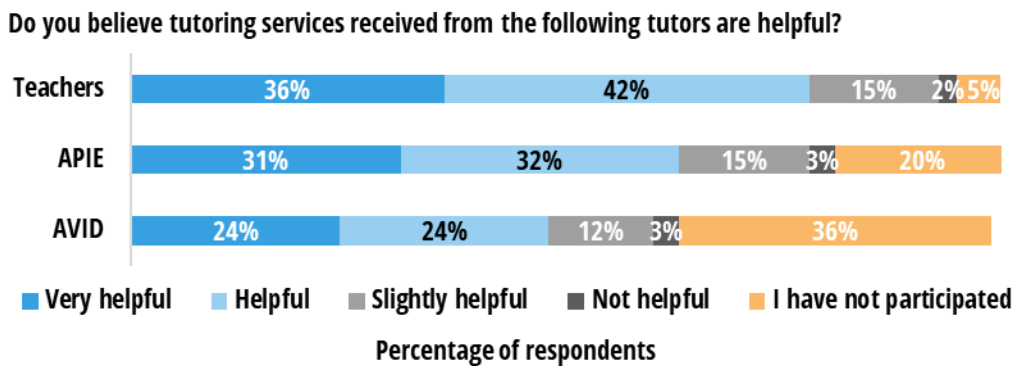


Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey



Figure 11.

The majority of GEAR UP students who received tutoring services from teachers and APIE tutors agreed that tutoring was helpful.



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey

In addition, staff who participated in focus groups reported that APIE tutoring was a helpful activity that contributed to students' academic progress. This year, 60% of GEAR UP students ( $n = 1,518$ ) participated in APIE tutoring. Staff participants in the focus groups reported APIE tutors were effective in preparing students for college. They emphasized that APIE tutors helped engage students in learning and motivated students to tackle challenges in a positive way (Wang & Orr, 2019b).

### Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 3: Participants perceived AVID classes as helpful for students to perform better.

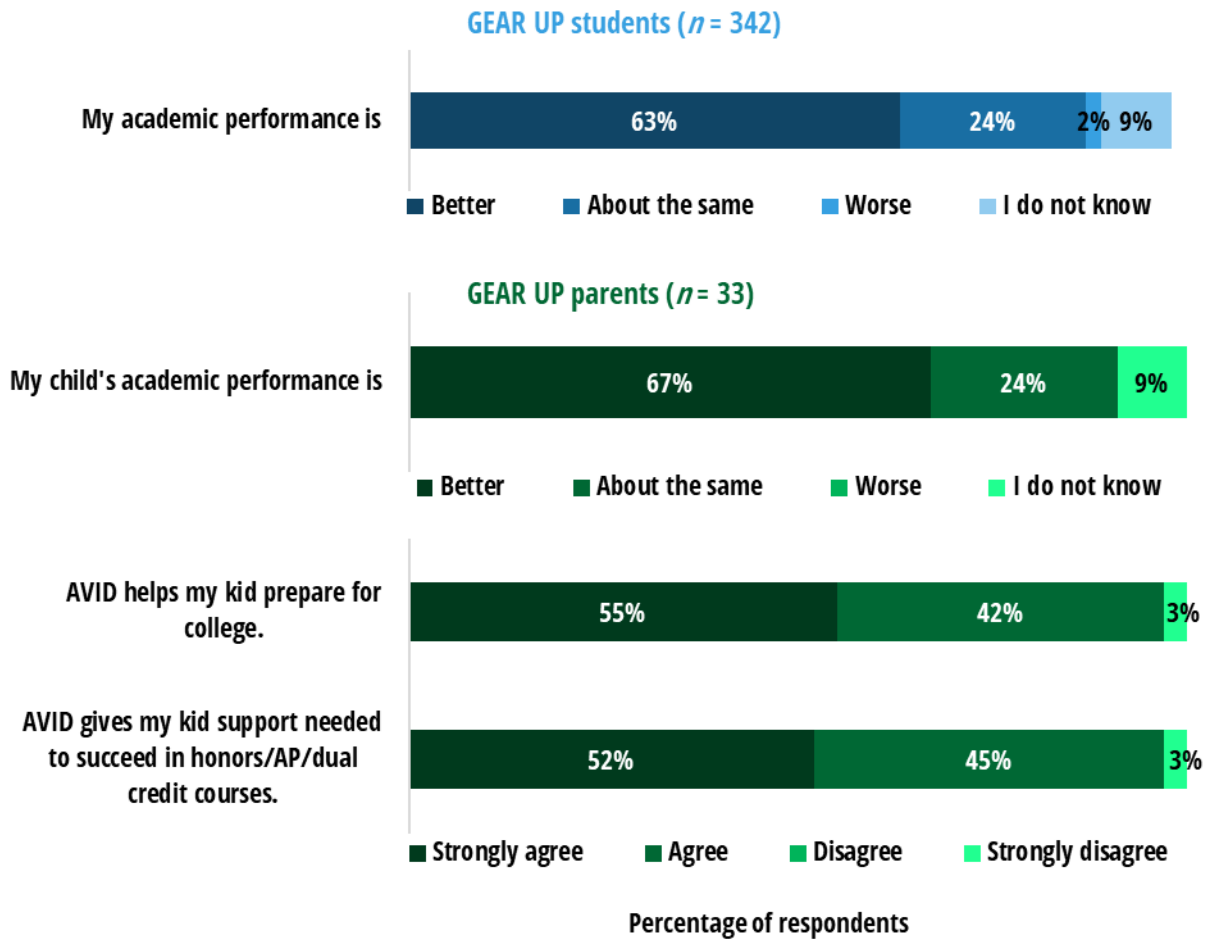
Fifteen percent of GEAR UP students ( $n = 381$ ) participated in AVID classes. Seven of 11 GEAR UP campuses provided students with an opportunity to enroll in AVID classes. Of the 381 GEAR UP students who participated in AVID classes, 90% ( $n = 342$ ) also participated in an AVID Student Survey. GEAR UP students highly rated the role of AVID in their academic preparation (Figure 12). GEAR UP students reported the AVID classes helped them perform better. More than 50% of GEAR UP students reported AVID also helped them improve in organization and goal setting.

Of the 381 students who participated in AVID classes, 8% ( $n = 33$ ) had a family member participate in the AVID Family Survey.<sup>1</sup> Results based on the small percentage of parents responding indicate that, similar to their child, GEAR UP parents felt AVID had a positive

<sup>1</sup> The confidence interval is +/-16.3%, meaning we can be 95% certain the sample percentage is within 16.3 percentage points on either side of the actual population percentage. In other words, responses provided by the 33 family members were not representative of the population of 381 GEAR UP family members whose child participated in AVID classes.

role in students' academic preparation (Figure 12). They recognized that AVID helped their child succeed in advanced courses and prepare for college.

**Figure 12.**  
**GEAR UP students who participated in AVID and their family members reported positive academic outcomes.**



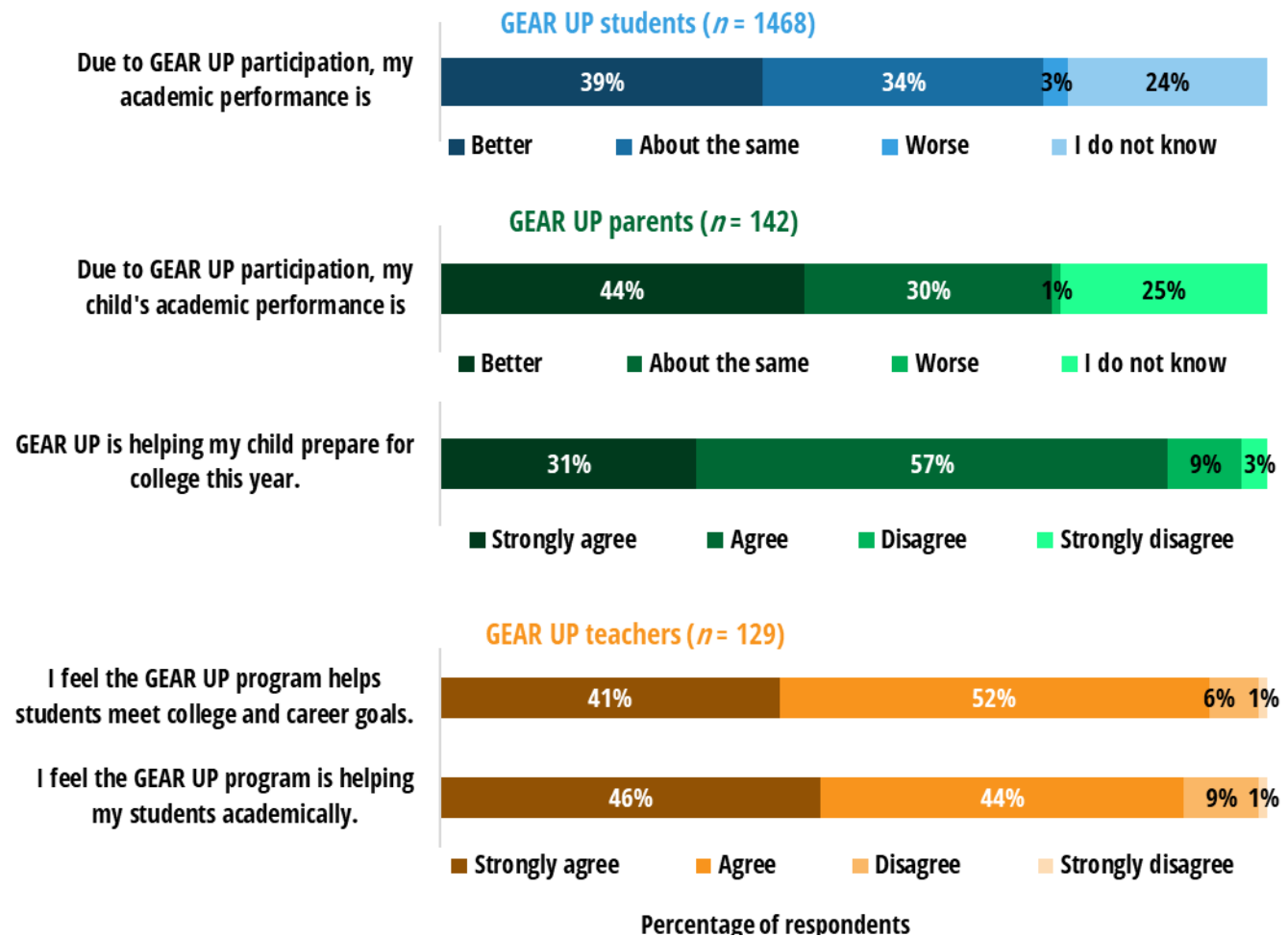
*Source.* 2018–2019 AVID Student Survey, 2018–2019 AVID Family Survey  
*Note.* Results about GEAR UP parents' responses to AVID classes were based on a small percentage of GEAR UP families whose child participated in AVID classes.

Additionally, findings obtained from the staff focus groups revealed the positive role of AVID in preparing students for college. Staff participants in the focus groups applauded AVID strategies in helping students develop learning skills and thereafter succeed in high school and beyond (Wang & Orr, 2019b).

## Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 4: Participants reported the GEAR UP program as a whole provided helpful academic support.

Based on student and staff focus group results, students and staff appeared to have a clear understanding of the GEAR UP program’s academic support in preparing students for college (Wang & Orr, 2019a and 2019b). Also, results from the GEAR UP Student, Family, and Teacher Surveys revealed that students, parents, and teachers felt the GEAR UP program as a whole had a positive role in students’ academic performance. Approximately 40% of students and parents indicated that due to students’ participation in the GEAR UP program, their academic performance was better (Figure 13). The majority of parents and teachers agreed the GEAR UP program helped students academically and prepared them for college.

Figure 13. The majority of **students**, **parents**, and **teachers** participating in the GEAR UP surveys agreed the GEAR UP program supported students’ academic performance and college preparation.

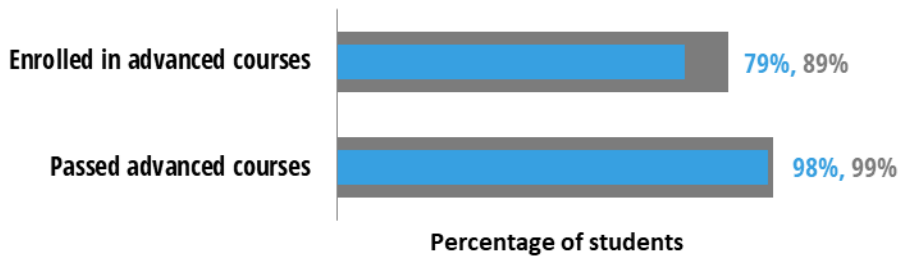


Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Teacher Survey

### Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 5: The percentage of GEAR UP students who passed advanced courses was similar to that of non-GEAR UP students

One of the GEAR UP program objectives indicated that by the end of each year, at least 50% of its students enrolled in and passed an advanced-level courses. This objective was met in the 2018–2019 school year. Seventy-nine percent of GEAR UP students enrolled in advanced-level courses, and 89% of non-GEAR UP students enrolled in advanced-level courses (Figure 14). However, GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students had similar advanced-level course passing rates. Ninety-eight percent of GEAR UP students who enrolled in the advanced-level courses passed, and 99% of non-GEAR UP students passed.

Figure 14. The percentage of non-GEAR UP students taking advanced-level courses was higher than that of GEAR UP students; however, both groups had similar passing rates.



Source. 2018–2019 AISD course enrollment records

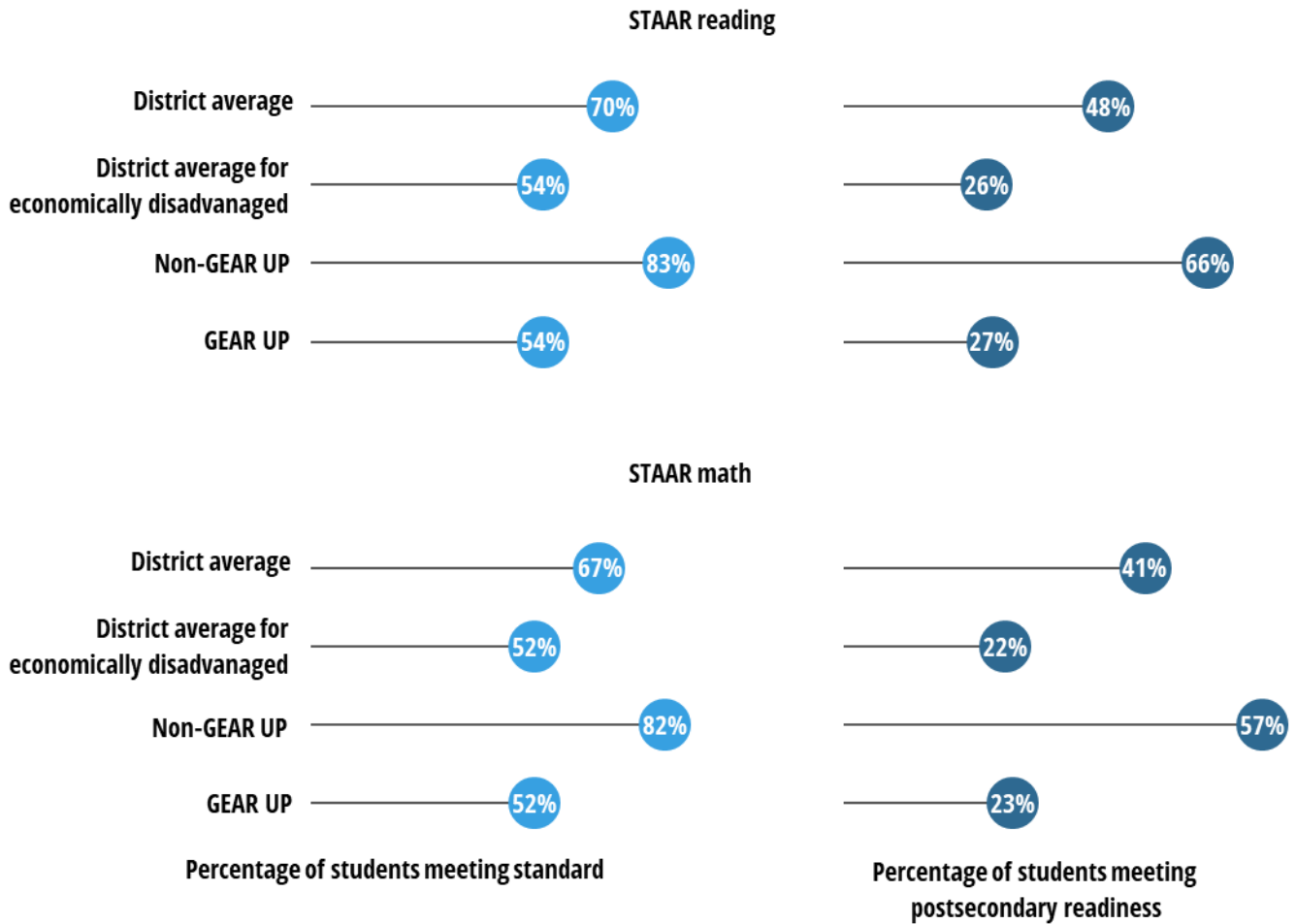
### Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 6: Non-GEAR UP students performed better in STAAR reading and STAAR math than did GEAR UP students.

One of the GEAR UP program objectives was that 54% of GEAR UP students met the STAAR postsecondary readiness standard in reading and 51% met the STAAR postsecondary readiness standard in math. This objective was not met in the 2018–2019 school year. Twenty-seven percent of GEAR UP students met the STAAR postsecondary readiness standard in reading, and 23% met the STAAR postsecondary readiness standard in math (Figure 15).

There was a gap between GEAR UP students and non-GEAR UP students with respect to STAAR passing rates and postsecondary readiness (Figure 15). The GEAR UP program continues to address the educational disparities between GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students in the district.

Figure 15.

The percentages of GEAR UP students who met the **STAAR passing standard** in reading and math and who achieved the **postsecondary readiness standard** in STAAR reading and math were lower than those of non-GEAR UP students, and similar to the district average for economically disadvantaged students.



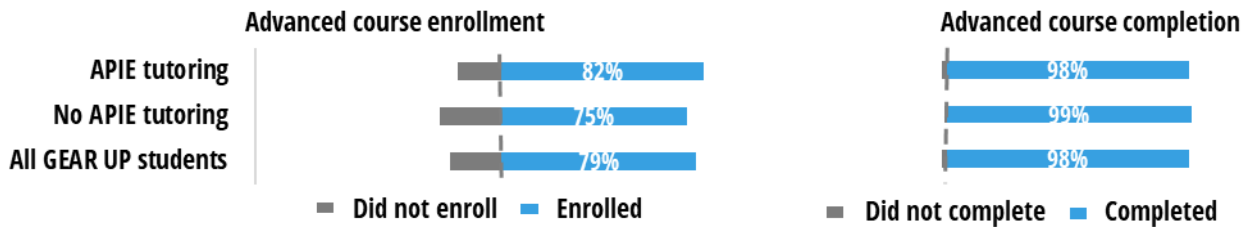
Source. 2018–2019 AISD student STAAR records

Note. District average includes all 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students at GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP campuses. Because 84% of GEAR UP students were economically disadvantaged, the STAAR results for economically disadvantaged students at the district level are presented in the figure.

**Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 7: GEAR UP students who participated in APIE tutoring did not perform better academically than did GEAR UP students who did not participate in APIE tutoring.**

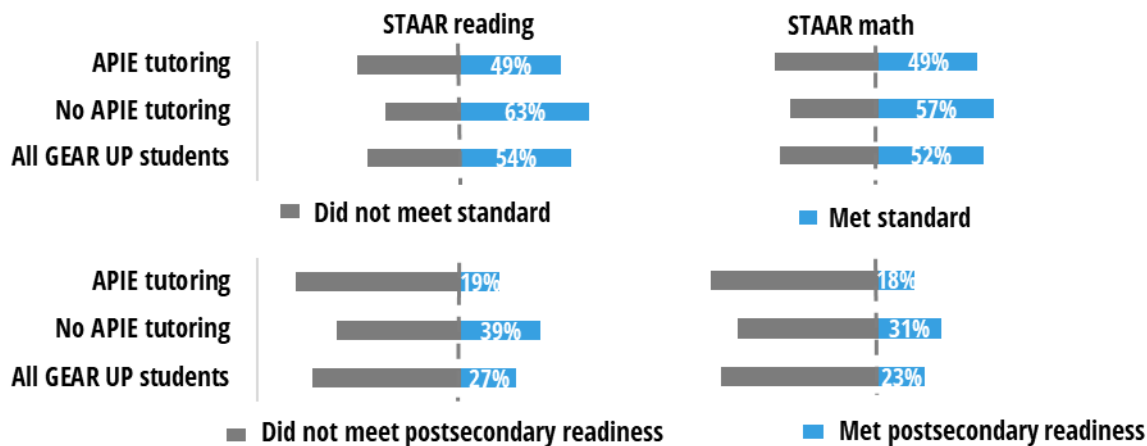
A greater percentage of GEAR UP students who received APIE tutoring (82%) than of the group of GEAR UP students who did not receive APIE tutoring (75%) were enrolled in advanced courses. Among GEAR UP students who enrolled in advanced courses and received APIE tutoring, 98% successfully completed the advanced course (Figure 16). GEAR UP students who did not receive APIE tutoring performed better in STAAR reading and math tests than did those who received APIE tutoring (Figures 17).

**Figure 16.** Greater percentages of GEAR UP students who received APIE tutoring services than of GEAR UP students who did not receive APIE tutoring services were enrolled in advanced courses; both groups had high course passing rates.



Source. 2018–2019 AISD course enrollment records  
 Note. The difference in percentage between GEAR UP students with APIE tutoring and GEAR UP students without APIE tutoring taking advanced courses was significant ( $p < .01$ ).

**Figure 17.** A gap existed between GEAR UP students who received APIE tutoring services and GEAR UP students who did not receive APIE tutoring services with respect to the percentage meeting the STAAR reading and math standard and the percentage meeting the postsecondary readiness standard.



Source. 2018–2019 AISD student STAAR records

## The Effect of College Visits

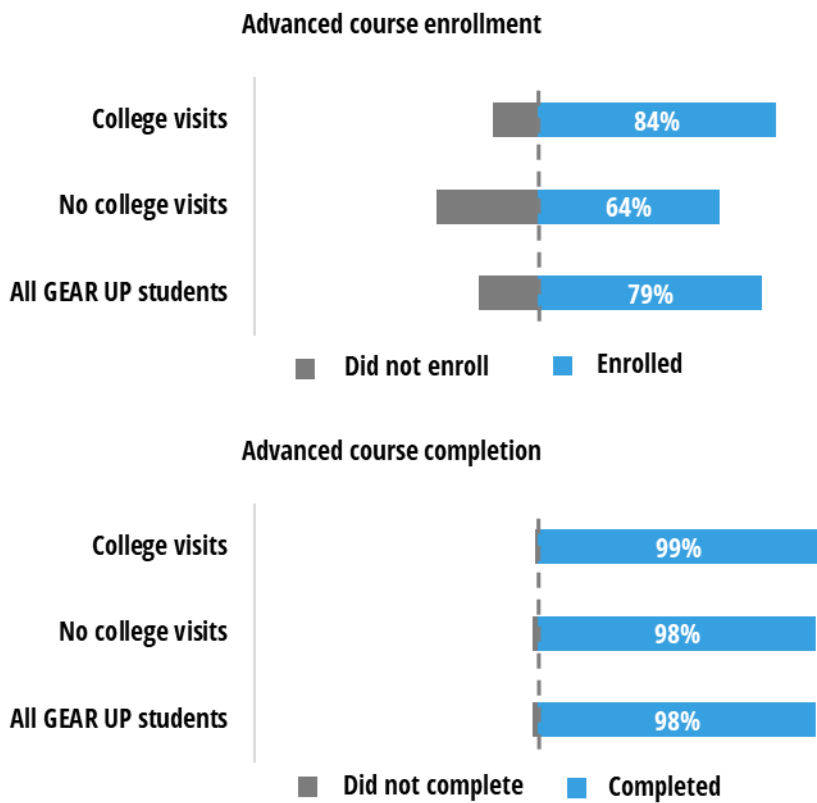
Studies suggest GEAR UP services have positive effects on students' academic outcomes. Kim, Bowman, Ingleby, Ford, & Sibaoui (2018) reported that college visits were positively related to college enrollment and college persistence. Kim et al. indicated that college visits allow students to gather firsthand college-related information and provide students with insights into what it means to attend college.

Similarly, a study conducted by Swanson et al. (2019) found 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students who participated in college visits demonstrated a higher level of knowledge about college, and a higher likelihood of talking about college with school personnel and of enrolling in advanced math and science courses in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, than did 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students who did not participate in college visits.

### Academic Intervention Outcomes Finding 8: GEAR UP students who participated in college visits performed better academically than did GEAR UP students who did not participate in college visits.

As stated previously, 75% of GEAR UP students participated in college visits. Greater percentage of GEAR UP students who participated in college visits than those who did not participate in college visits was enrolled in advanced courses (Figure 18), met the STAAR passing standards in reading and math, and met the postsecondary readiness standards in STAAR reading and math (Figures 19).

Figure 18. The percentages of GEAR UP students with college visits who took and passed advanced courses were higher than those of GEAR UP students without college visits.



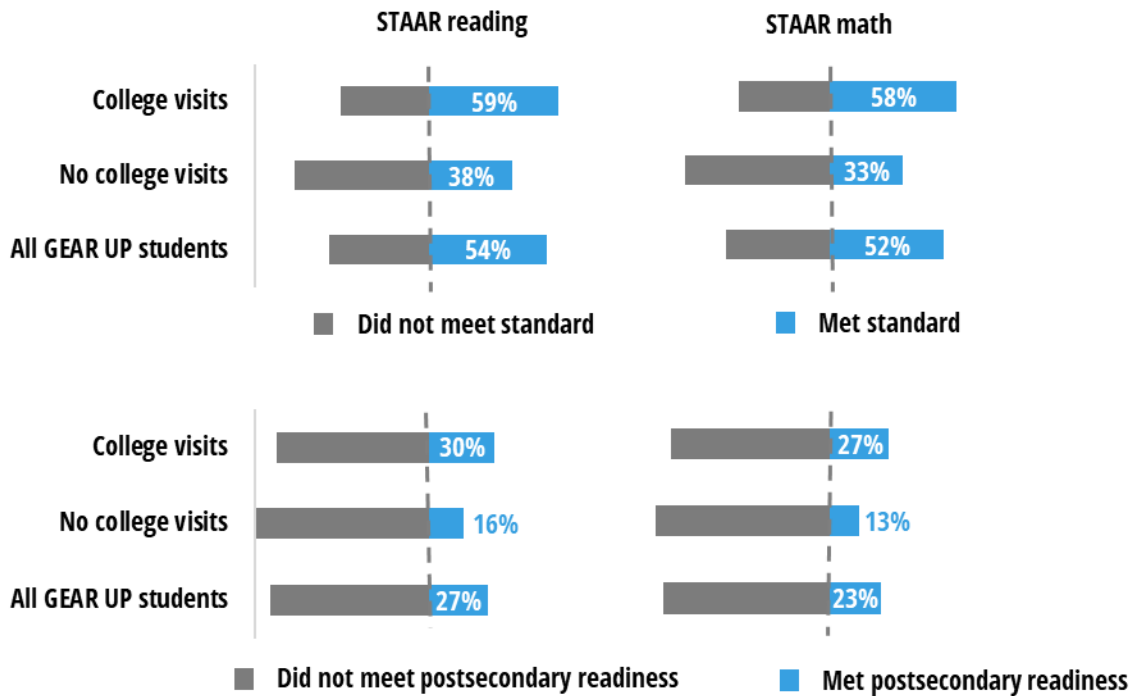
Source. 2018–2019 AISD course enrollment records

Note. The difference in percentage between GEAR UP students with college visits and GEAR UP students without college visits taking advanced courses was significant ( $p < .01$ ).



Figure 19.

The percentages of GEAR UP students with college visits who met the STAAR passing standards in reading and math and who achieved the postsecondary readiness standards in STAAR reading and math were higher than those of GEAR UP students without college visits.



Source. 2018–2019 AISD student STAAR records

Note. The difference in percentage between GEAR UP students with college visits and GEAR UP students without college visits meeting standards was significant ( $p < .01$ ).

While almost all GEAR UP students (98%) participated in at least one GEAR UP service, almost all GEAR UP students who participated in college visits also participated in other GEAR UP services (e.g., counseling, tutoring, educational field trip, workshop, job site visits); therefore, college visits may not be the only influence on students’ academic outcomes. Additional analysis revealed that students’ participation in college visits, job site visits, and counseling were positively related to students’ advanced course enrollment status ( $p < .01$ ). Students’ participation in college visits and job site visits were positively related to STAAR reading passing status ( $p < .01$ ), and students’ participation in college visits and counseling were positively related to STAAR math passing status ( $p < .01$ ). College visits appeared to have a stronger effect on student outcomes than did their participation in job site visits and counseling.



## **Enhanced Counseling and Advising Outcomes Finding 1: Participants reported college visits to be the most helpful activity preparing students for college.**

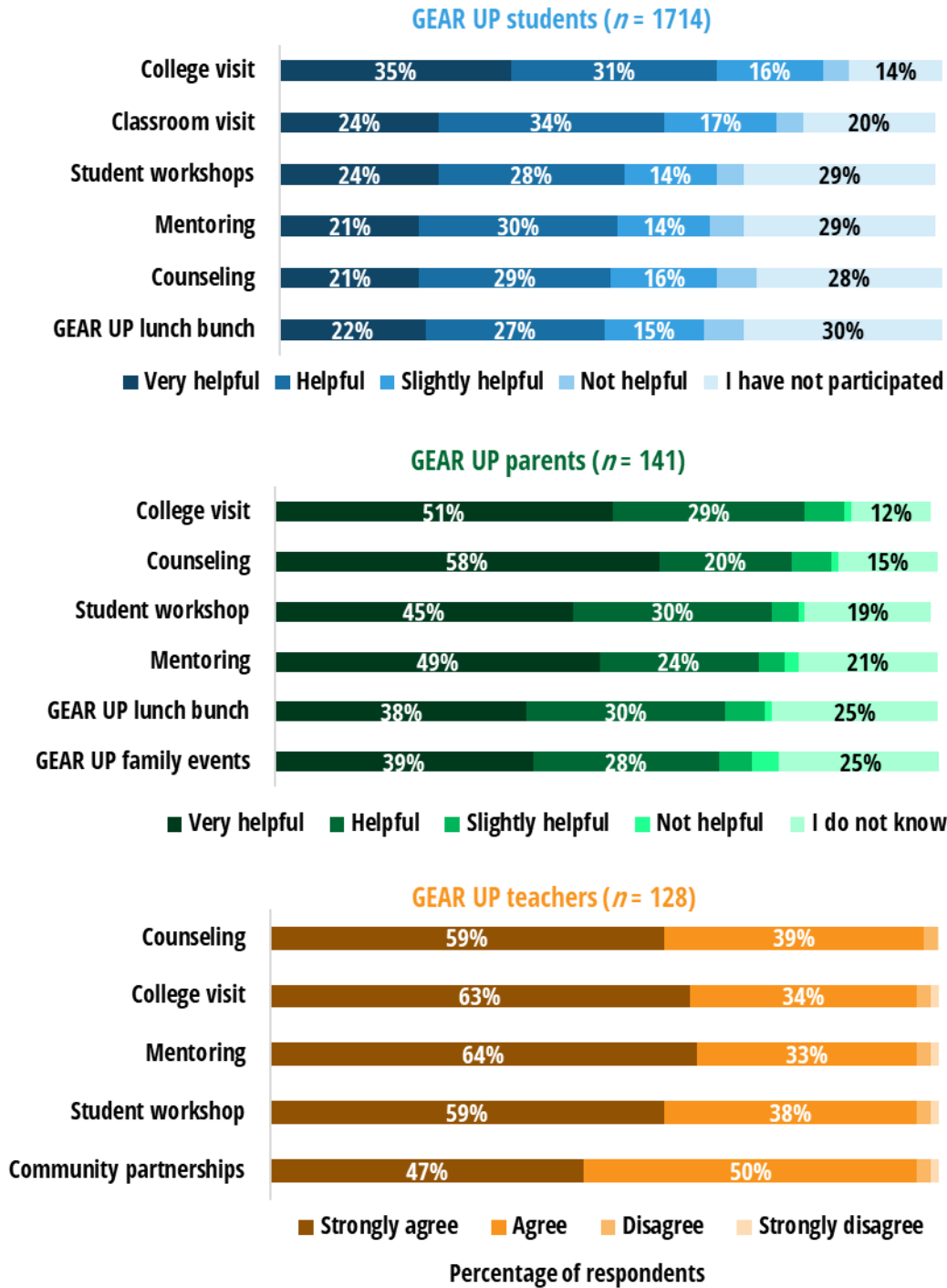
GEAR UP participants reported positive perspectives about GEAR UP activities (Figure 20). College visits, classroom visits from the GEAR UP facilitators, and counseling were the most highly rated as helpful to prepare students for college. For example, GEAR UP students who participated in the GEAR UP Student Survey indicated college visits and classroom visits from the GEAR UP facilitators were the most helpful activities in preparing students for college. Findings obtained from the GEAR UP Family and Teacher Surveys indicated both parents and teachers cited college visits and counseling as most helpful. It is notable that teachers at GEAR UP campuses also highly rated all other GEAR UP activities, including mentoring, student workshop, and community partnerships.

In addition, both students and staff participants in the student and staff focus groups perceived college visits as being the most helpful activity in preparing students for college (Wang & Orr, 2019a and 2019b). They said college visits encouraged students to think about college, exposed them to a postsecondary learning environment, and helped them develop understanding about college options that fit their interests.

Figure 20.

GEAR UP **students** rated college visits and classroom visits from the GEAR UP facilitators as the most helpful GEAR UP activities that prepare students for college; **parents** and **teachers** rated college visits and counseling as most helpful.

Do you believe that the following GEAR UP activities are helpful for college preparation?



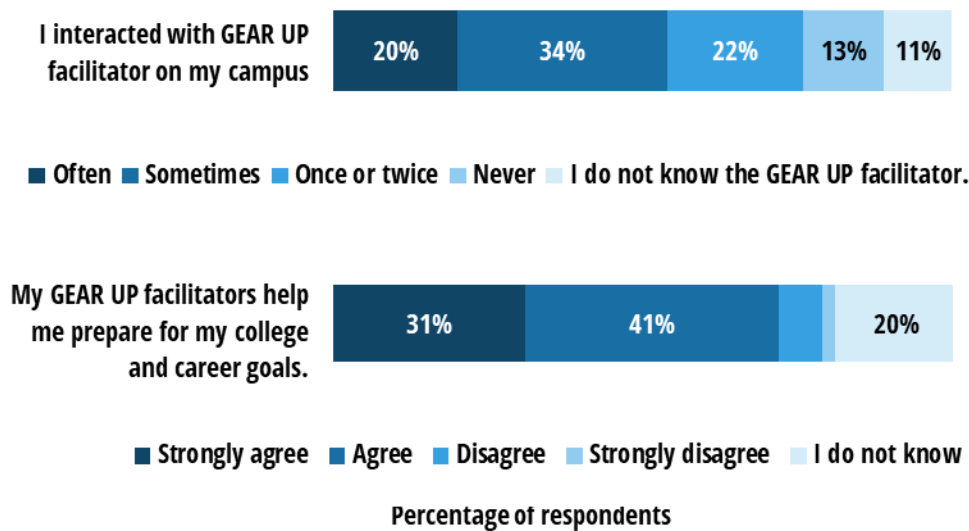
Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Teacher Survey

## Enhanced Counseling and Advising Outcomes Finding 2: Participants highly rated the GEAR UP facilitators.

GEAR UP facilitators reached out to almost all students, with 98% of students receiving GEAR UP services. The majority (76%) of students indicated they interacted with GEAR UP facilitators at least once (Figure 21). The majority (72%) of respondents stressed the positive role of GEAR UP facilitators in helping them prepare for college and career (Figure 21).

Figure 21.

**The majority of GEAR UP students interacted with GEAR UP facilitators and agreed that their facilitators were helpful in preparing them for college and career.**



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey

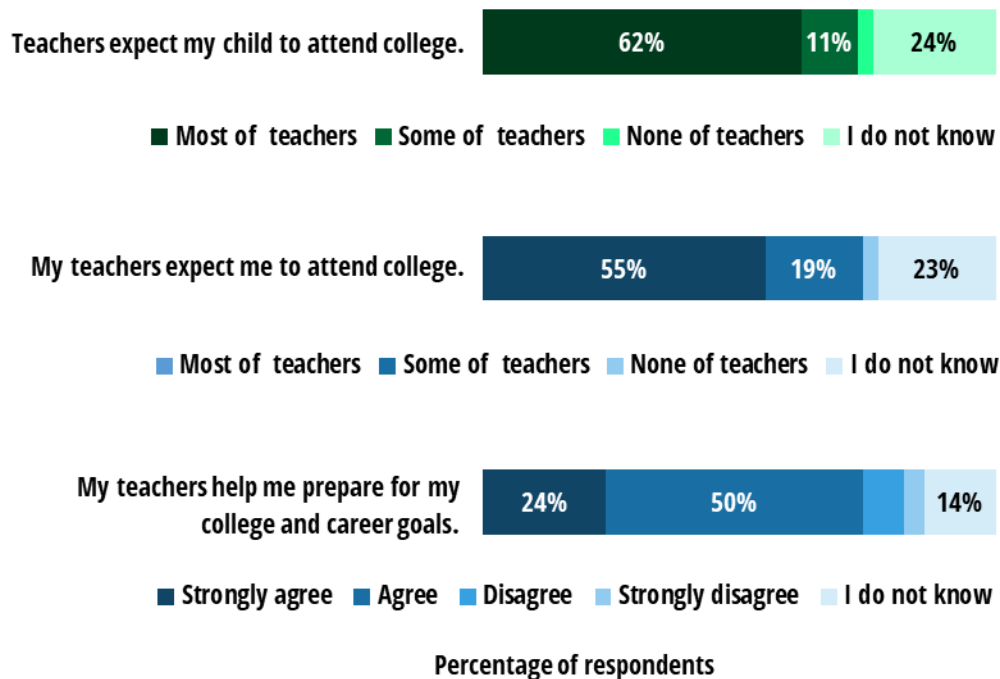
Findings from the student and staff focus groups consistently demonstrated the GEAR UP facilitators were a valuable asset to both students and campus staff (Wang & Orr, 2019a and 2019b). Students and staff commented that the GEAR UP facilitators provided academic support, as well as emotional support to students, in college preparation. Both students and staff described the trustworthy relationships built between students and GEAR UP facilitators. Staff indicated the GEAR UP facilitators were especially helpful in their classroom by co-teaching or implementing college readiness activities.

### Enhanced Counseling and Advising Outcomes Finding 3: GEAR UP teachers were perceived as supportive for college preparation.

Students’ self-reports from the GEAR UP Student Survey revealed that most students felt supported by their teachers, who helped them prepare for college and career (Figure 22). Parents also agreed that most GEAR UP teachers expected students to attend college.

This finding echoed what students and teachers conveyed in the focus groups. Students commented that their teachers wanted them to succeed and provided support, such as tutoring, information sharing, positive feedback, and encouraging words for students’ college preparation (Wang & Orr, 2019a). During the staff focus groups, teachers consistently expressed their expectations about students’ future education. Teachers indicated their support for students’ college preparation in various ways, including providing academic support, sharing information about college, encouraging students to build ownership of their study, and teaching learning skills necessary for future education and career (Wang & Orr, 2019b).

Figure 22. The majority of students and parents agreed that teachers expected students to go to college; students agreed their teachers helped them meet college and career goals.



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey

## Enhanced Counseling and Advising Outcomes Finding 4: Participation in GEAR UP activities was inspiring for students' college aspirations.

GEAR UP activities were designed to motivate students to go to college. Respondents to the GEAR UP Student and Family Surveys consistently indicated that GEAR UP activities contributed to their plans to attend college (Figure 23). Findings from the AISD Student Climate Survey also indicated more than half (57%) of GEAR UP students planned to enroll in college (Figure 24).

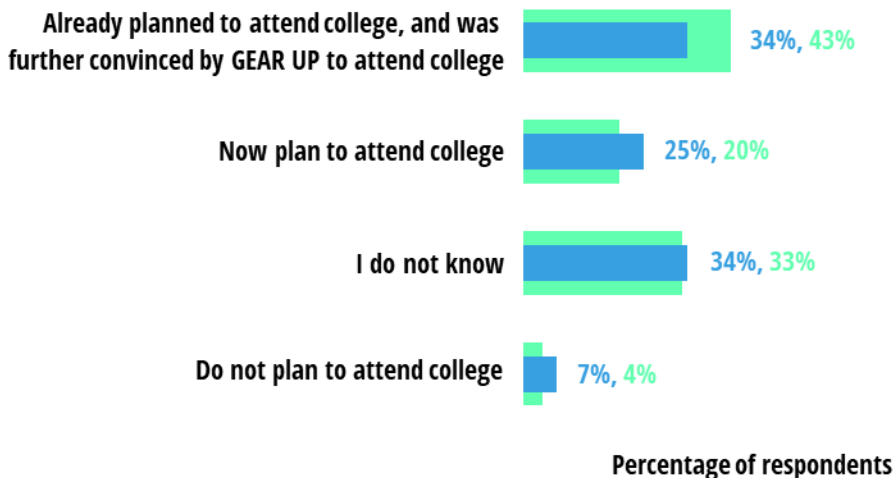
*GEAR UP has made me want to go to college to get a career.*  
– GEAR UP student

Students' comments in the GEAR UP Student Survey and in focus groups consistently indicated the GEAR UP program helped them learn about

college and helped them feel motivated to go to college. Student participants in the focus groups also indicated their career goals influenced their college aspirations. Students indicated college/career readiness activities, such as talking with college students or professionals, were inspirational for college and career preparation.

Figure 23.

The majority of **students** and **parents** consistently indicated that students planned to attend college.

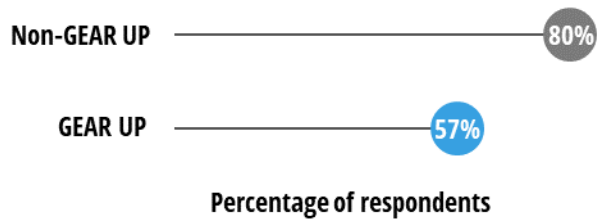


Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey, 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey

By the end of each year, the program aimed to have the percentage of GEAR UP students who aspired to enroll in college match that of those enrolled in non-GEAR UP schools, as measured by the AISD Student Climate Survey. This objective was not met in the 2018–2019 school year. The percentage of non-GEAR UP students who planned to go to college was higher than that of GEAR UP students (Figure 24).

Figure 24.

**Although many GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students indicated they planned to go to college after high school, a significant gap existed between the two groups.**



Source. 2018–2019 AISD Student Climate Survey

Note. The difference between GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students' college aspirations was significant ( $p < .01$ )

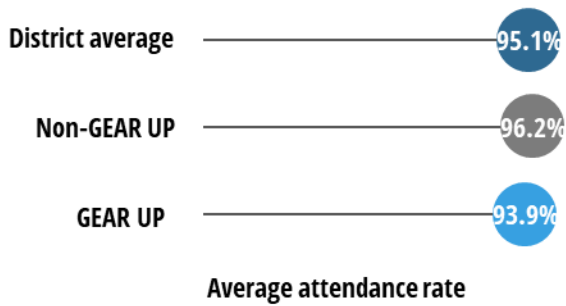
### **Enhanced Counseling and Advising Outcomes Finding 5: A gap existed between GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students' attendance rates.**

Each year, the GEAR UP program staff uses strategies to improve GEAR UP students' attendance, with the goal of 90% or greater. The average student attendance rate at non-GEAR UP campuses (96%) was higher than at GEAR UP campuses (94%) (Figure 25). A gap also existed between GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP campuses with respect to chronic absenteeism (i.e., less than 90% attendance during the academic year).

One of the program objectives was that by the end of each year, at least 90% of GEAR UP students had an attendance rate greater than 90%. This objective was not met in the 2018–2019 school year. Eighty-three percent of GEAR UP students had an attendance rate greater than 90%, meaning 17% were chronically absent (Figure 26). In contrast, only 6% of non-GEAR UP students were chronically absent.

Figure 25.

**GEAR UP students' attendance rate was lower than that of non-GEAR UP students.**

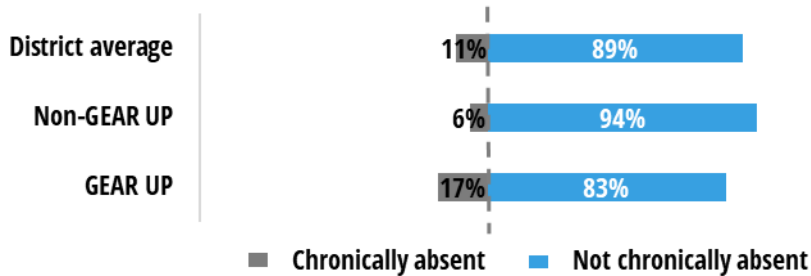


Source. 2018–2019 AISD attendance records

Note. District average includes all 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students at GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP campuses.

Figure 26.

**The percentage of GEAR UP students who were chronically absent was higher than that of non-GEAR UP students.**



Source. 2018–2019 AISD attendance records

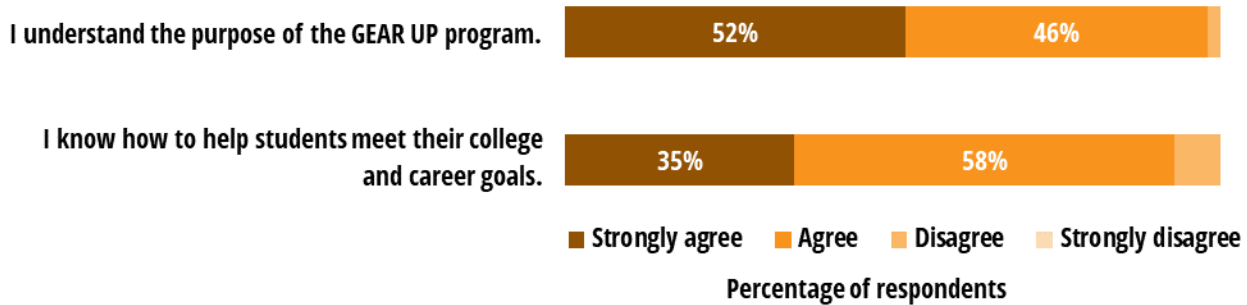
Note. District average includes all 7<sup>th</sup>-grade students at GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP campuses.

### **Teacher Professional Development Training Outcomes Finding 1: GEAR UP teachers felt knowledgeable to help students with college preparation.**

Teachers' self-report from the GEAR UP Teacher Survey demonstrated that the majority of educators at GEAR UP campuses knew about the purpose of the GEAR UP program (98%) and agreed that they knew how to prepare their students for college and career (93%) (Figure 27). The GEAR UP facilitators' presence and outreach on campus helped teachers understand the purpose of the GEAR UP program.

Figure 27.

The majority of **teachers** were aware of the purpose of the program and how to help students prepare for college and career.



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Teacher Survey

### **Teacher Professional Development Training Outcomes Finding 2: GEAR UP teachers reported increasing students’ engagement and culturally responsive practices as the top two areas of needed support.**

The GEAR UP program also provided teachers with professional development activities to increase the rigor of instruction and student engagement. Teachers’ feedback from the GEAR UP Teacher Survey about GEAR UP professional development support indicated that increasing students’ engagement, enhancing culturally responsive practices, and managing students’ behavior were their top three concerns (Figure 28).

Staff participants in the focus groups indicated they had adequate opportunities for professional development activities that supported students’ college preparation. They also asked to learn more about academic content, culturally responsive strategies, and collaboration with teachers in other schools (Wang & Orr, 2019b).



Figure 28.

**Increasing students' engagement and culturally responsive practices were the top two areas of support requested by teachers.**



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Teacher Survey

### **Family Engagement Outcomes Finding 1: Families supported their child's college preparation.**

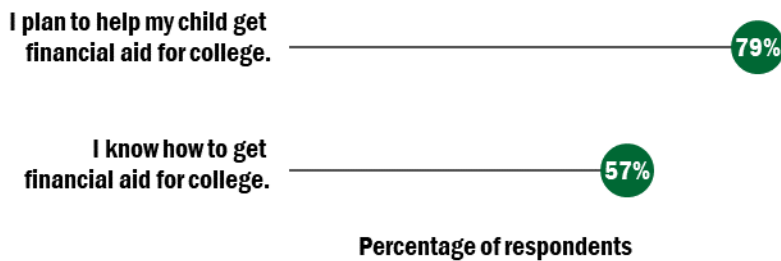
The GEAR UP program provided family support services aimed at improving students' academic achievement and preparation for college. The program's goal was to have at least 50% of GEAR UP parents participate in academic preparation and/or college readiness activities. Forty-two percent of parents/family members participated in GEAR UP activities during the second year of program implementation, as compared with 8% last year. This year, most of those participating families attended family events at school (25%) and college visits (17%).

Information collected from teachers and parents/family members revealed that participants recognized the importance of family engagement as a factor contributing to student outcomes. In the GEAR UP Teacher Survey, the majority of teachers reported parent engagement activities (94%) and parent workshops on college (94%) were helpful to prepare students for college.

Survey results also indicated that many families were engaged in their child’s education in a variety of ways. The majority of families (69%) reported they talked frequently with their child about attending college, and 54% reported their child would continue his or her education after high school. Many families appeared to have a good sense of preparing their child for college financially, and 82% reported their child could afford to attend a public 4-year college, using financial aid, scholarships, and family’s resources. Families reported they planned to help their child get financial aid (79%) and knew how to get financial aid for college (57%) (Figure 29). In the GEAR UP Student Survey, 75% of students agreed that their families helped them prepare for college and career (Figure 30).

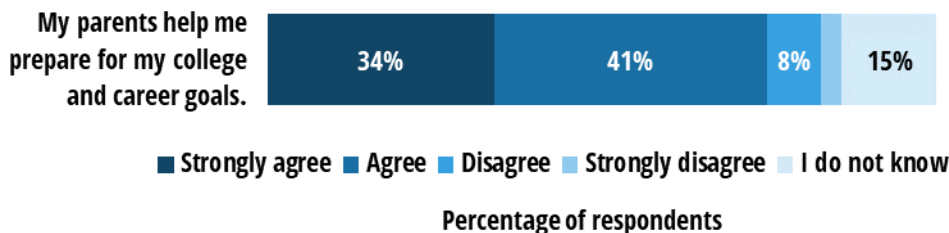
In the GEAR UP Family Survey, 75% of families indicated they knew at least a few things about the GEAR UP program. They appreciated the program’s support for their child’s college preparation. Seventy-three percent of families expected their child to pursue at least a college degree, and 85% desired their child to pursue a college degree (Figure 31).

**Figure 29.**  
**Most parents/family members indicated interest in helping their child get financial aid for college.**



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey

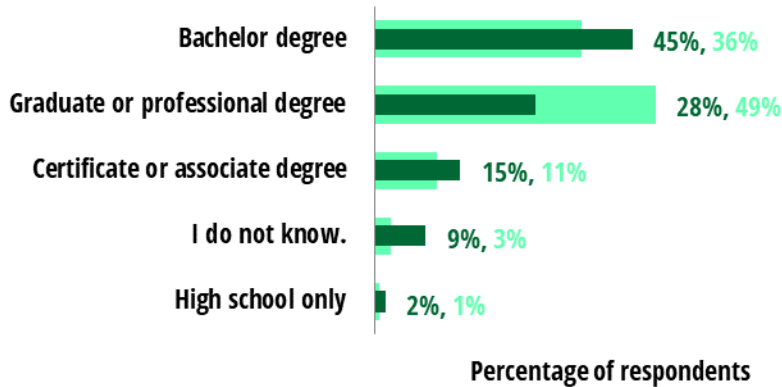
**Figure 30.**  
**The majority of students indicated their parents/family members helped them prepare for college and career.**



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Student Survey

Figure 31.

The majority of respondents' **expectation** about their child's college education matched their **desire** for their child's college education.



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey

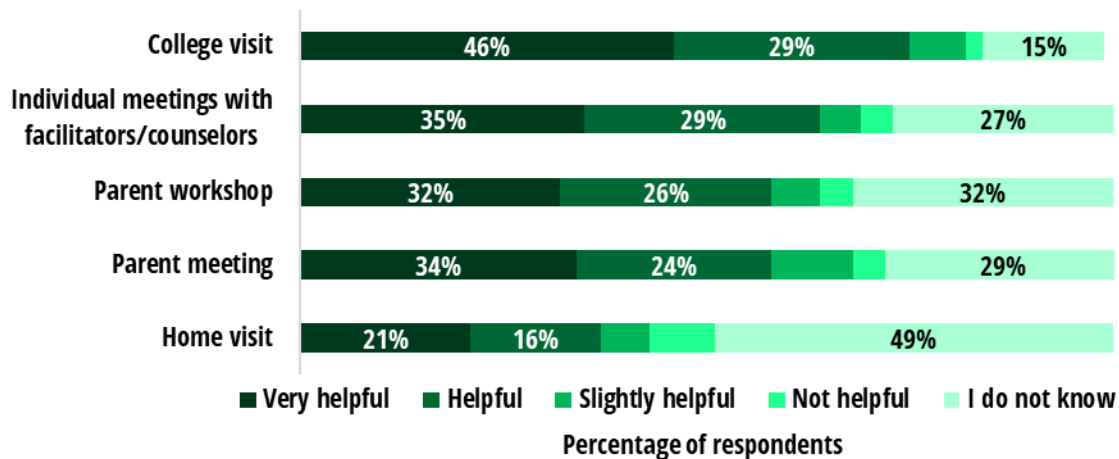
### Family Engagement Outcomes Finding 2: College visits and individual meetings with facilitators/counselors were considered most helpful by families.

According to the GEAR UP Family Survey results, parents regarded college visits and individual meetings with facilitators/counselors as the activities most helpful in supporting them to prepare their child for college (Figure 32). However, only 8% of families participated in the GEAR UP Family Survey. Thus, parents' perceptions of the GEAR UP program may not represent all parents participating in the program's activities.

Figure 32.

College visits and individual meetings with facilitators/counselors were the activities respondents felt were most helpful in supporting them to prepare their child for college.

Do you believe that the following GEAR UP activities are helpful to support your participation in your child's college preparation?



Source. 2018–2019 GEAR UP Family Survey

A chalkboard with a white mouse on it. The mouse is in the bottom left corner, and the chalkboard has some faint white markings. The background is dark blue/black.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Data presented in this report indicated that the GEAR UP program engaged students, teachers, and parents/families in a variety of services to support students' academic and college preparation outcomes. It was noted that 98% of GEAR UP students participated in one or more services. The majority of GEAR UP students participated in student workshops, tutoring, and college visits. In the 2018–2019 school year, the GEAR UP program met the objective that 75% of GEAR UP students participated in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program.

Participants regarded GEAR UP activities as helpful for college preparation. The majority of students, teachers, and parents cited the following activities as helpful for college preparation:

- APIE tutoring
- AVID classes
- College visits
- Counseling

The GEAR UP program met the objective of at least 50% of its students enrolling in and passing an advanced-level courses. Fifty-four percent of GEAR UP students met the STAAR passing standard in reading, and 52% met the STAAR passing standard in math. However, a gap existed between the academic performance of GEAR UP and non-GEAR UP students.

Greater percentages of GEAR UP students who participated in college visits than of those who did not participate in college visits:

- Enrolled in advanced courses
- Met the STAAR passing standard in reading and math
- Achieved the postsecondary readiness standard in STAAR reading and math

The facilitators were supportive and helpful to students, teachers, and parents. The majority of students reported their facilitators were helpful in preparing them for college and careers. Campus staff also recognized the positive role of GEAR UP facilitators in supporting their teaching and students' college preparation.

Additionally, teachers of GEAR UP students were supportive in helping students prepare for college. Teachers expected their students to go to a variety of colleges (e.g., 4-year college, 2-year college, technical college). The majority of teachers felt knowledgeable about preparing their students for college. Consistently, the majority of students reported their teachers expected them to attend college and helped them to prepare for college and career goals.

Students, teachers, and parents were aware of the important role of family engagement in students' preparation for college. Most teachers reported GEAR UP activities that engaged parents and parent workshops on college were helpful for students' college preparation. The majority of parents expected and wanted their child to attend college. The majority of students agreed that their parents helped them to prepare for college and career. The majority of parents perceived college visits and individual meetings with facilitators/counselors to be most helpful in supporting them to prepare their child for college.

The evaluation results informed recommendations for program improvement.

- **Increase opportunities for college and career exploration.** Students were in favor of college visits and career-related activities. Some students requested more field trips. They liked the experiences/activities that helped them think about colleges and careers. Students felt it was helpful to talk with college students/professionals about college preparation. Teachers also recommended visits from professionals/college students as helpful for college preparation. College visits appeared to be related to academic achievement; therefore, the GEAR UP program should provide more opportunities for college visits. Field trip experiences could provide students with a vivid impression of what college and career life look like and therefore inspire them with a vision of college and career goals.
- **Provide more information about financial aid/scholarships.** Students expressed a desire to know more about financial aid/scholarships that would prepare them for college. Parents suggested the program provide students with more information about financial aid/scholarships. Preparing students and parents at the middle school level for financial planning would be an effective strategy to motivate students to go to college. We recommend campus facilitators spend more time educating students about financial planning through more student workshops, one-on-one counseling, and online resources.
- **Provide more information about college preparation tasks.** Students were interested in knowing more about college preparation steps, such as which classes to take, grade requirements, grade point average (GPA), and admission tests. Teachers suggested the program provide students with information, including a checklist of tasks students need to do for their future education, preparation for high school transition, and the college application process. As the program continues to educate students about college preparation tasks, students should better understand how to prepare for their future education and career.
- **Increase opportunities for family participation.** Considering that fewer than half of families participated in GEAR UP services in the 2018–2019 school year, the program should expand outreach to families so they have more opportunities to participate in family services. With more opportunities for family participation, the

likelihood of increasing families' knowledge about postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing would be higher.

- **Increase access to program services for Hispanic, African American, and economically disadvantaged students.** Findings showed much lower percentages of Hispanic and African American and economically disadvantaged students than of their peers participated in counseling and family services. The GEAR UP program aims to prepare traditionally underrepresented groups and economically disadvantaged students for college. In alignment with its goals, the program should strategize to provide students with more equitable access to its services.
- **Provide more consistent implementation of GEAR UP services across GEAR UP campuses.** Campus variations existed in the implementation of GEAR UP services, such as college visits, counseling, job site visits, and tutoring. A consistent implementation of GEAR UP services at all GEAR UP campuses would help ensure the fulfillment of the GEAR UP program's implementation objectives.

# Appendix A

## Glossary

**At risk** applies to students who meet state-defined criteria for increased likelihood of dropping out of school. These criteria include poor academic performance, grade-level retention, alternative education, being a parent or pregnant, expulsion, previous dropout, limited English proficiency (LEP), homeless, in care or custody of the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (DPRS). A student with a disability may be defined as at risk, but not necessarily (Department of Campus and District Accountability, 2016).

The following definitions of GEAR UP services were prepared by the College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium. Fifteen GEAR UP state grantees have formed a member consortium, the College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium, which includes the following states: Arizona, Idaho, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming (College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium, 2013).

**Advising** services provides assistance on course selection (secondary or postsecondary), college and/or career choices, and college and/or career planning.

**College visit** services provide students with a physical visit to a college campus facilitated/supervised/led by GEAR UP staff, teachers, college representatives, and/or other school staff. College visits should include an official tour, presentation(s) by admissions, financial aid, academic departments, athletics, student affairs, residence life, multicultural affairs, and/or other college departments.

**Comprehensive mentoring** services are provided when GEAR UP staff, teachers, or other school staff identify students who would benefit from an ongoing supportive relationship with a trained, caring adult or older student (i.e., “mentor”). Typical issues addressed during mentoring meetings include academic, social, organizational, and life skill development.

**Counseling** services discuss personal growth issues, such as decision making, problem solving, goal setting, attendance, behavior concerns, and family issues.

**Educational field trips** are services during which students leave their school or travel to another location, and include an academic component that is linked to classroom activities.

**Family college visit** services take place on college campuses. A physical visit to a college campus is made by a parent/guardian, with or without a student present, and facilitated/supervised/led by GEAR UP staff, teachers, college representatives, and/or other school staff.



**Family counseling/advising** services span a spectrum of activities that can include one-on-one or small group advising for parents/guardians/adult family members and are designed to meet the specific needs of the individuals engaged in the activity.

**Family events** are services in which parents or families participate. These services involve GEAR UP students and their families/guardians or just their parents/guardians.

**Family workshops** about college preparation/financial aid services include a parent/guardian or adult family member's attendance, with or without their child(ren), at a workshop that demonstrates how to assist their student with college preparation or financial aid information.

**Financial aid counseling/advising** services assist students in understanding and navigating the complexities of financial aid, including providing hands-on assistance with the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and scholarship applications, presentations about financial aid or literacy, using financial aid or the literacy curriculum, and the benefits and how-tos of participation in college savings plans.

**Job site visit/job shadowing** services offer students exposure to the workplace in an occupational area of interest and reinforce the link between classroom learning, work requirements, and the need for postsecondary education.

**Student workshops** are services that include interactive, informational classroom-level or large- or small-group sessions that involve hands-on experience for each student in the workshop.

**Summer programs** are services that include an experience over one or multiple days during the summer (or other non-school-year time; i.e., for year-round schools). Summer programs include academic enrichment, college preparatory programs/camp experience, credit recovery, and/or remediation programs.

**Tutoring/homework assistance** services provide additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students. Tutoring can occur one-on-one or in small groups before school, during school, after school, during study or lunch breaks, or on weekends and can be provided by GEAR UP staff, hired tutors, teachers, trained peers, and/or volunteers.

**Virtual college visits** include services that are provided via remote access through the Internet or other means. Virtual college visits must be facilitated/supervised/led by GEAR UP staff, teachers, and/or other school staff and include the same elements as a physical college visit.



## Appendix B

### GEAR UP Student Survey Results

The purpose of the GEAR UP Student Survey was to capture information related to students' experience with the program. Program staff were encouraged to use the survey results to make decisions that would refine and improve the program. A total of 1,795 students participated in the survey, representing a 71% response rate. The confidence interval was +/-1.3%, meaning we can be 95% certain the sample percentage was within 1.3 percentage points on either side of the actual population percentage. In other words, responses provided by the 1,795 students were representative of the population of 2,536 students.

The survey addressed middle school experiences, the GEAR UP program, college preparation, financial aid, and perceived outcomes. Results showed that students had positive perspectives about the program. The majority of students reported that their teachers/GEAR UP facilitators/families helped them prepare for college and career goals, and that their teacher expected them to attend college. The majority of students regarded college visits, tutoring, and classroom visits from GEAR UP facilitators as the top three GEAR UP activities that helped them prepare for college.

## Middle school experiences

	% answered "Yes"				
Have you participated in activities outside of your school time?	64%				
Have you participated in any community service opportunities this year?	35%				
	None	1-5	6-10	11-15	16 or more
How many hours per week do you spend studying or doing homework?	26%	59%	11%	3%	2%
	AVID	Pre-AP	Career and technology	None of these	I do not know.
I plan to take the following types of classes next school year:	27%	45%	27%	8%	32%

## The GEAR UP program

	A few things	Everything	I do not know anything about it.					
How much do you know about the GEAR UP program?	69%	14%	18%					
	Never	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often	I do not know.			
How often do you interact with your GEAR UP facilitator on your campus?	13%	22%	34%	21%	11%			
How often do you participate in tutoring services received from:	Never	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often				
Teachers	8%	23%	44%	25%				
APIE	26%	19%	33%	21%				
AVID	45%	11%	22%	22%				
	A family member	A GEAR UP facilitator	A classroom teacher	A school counselor	A GEAR UP mentor	A GEAR UP tutor	A classmate or friend	No one has helped.
Who has helped you learn the most about preparing for college?	32%	29%	18%	3%	4%	2%	3%	8%
Do you believe that the tutoring services received from the following tutors are helpful?	Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	I have not participated.			
Teachers	2%	15%	42%	36%	5%			
APIE	3%	15%	32%	31%	20%			
AVID	3%	12%	24%	24%	36%			
Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	I do not know.			
My teachers help me prepare for my college and career goals.	4%	8%	50%	24%	14%			
My GEAR UP facilitators help me prepare for my college and career goals.	2%	7%	41%	31%	20%			
My parents help me prepare for my college and career goals.	3%	8%	41%	34%	15%			
	None of my teachers	Some of my teachers	Most of my teachers	I do not know.				
My teachers expect me to attend college.	3%	19%	55%	23%				

Do you believe that the following GEAR UP activities are helpful to prepare you for college?	Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	I have not participated.
College visits (during school year)	4%	16%	31%	35%	14%
Tutoring	5%	14%	33%	28%	20%
GEAR UP classroom visits	4%	17%	34%	24%	20%
Student workshops	4%	14%	28%	24%	29%
Mentoring	5%	14%	30%	21%	29%
Counseling	6%	16%	29%	21%	28%
GEAR UP lunch bunch	6%	15%	27%	22%	30%
Summer programs	8%	14%	24%	18%	36%

### College preparation

	I do not plan to finish high school	High school only	Certificate or associate degree (2 year)	Bachelor degree (4 year)	Graduate or professional degree	I do not know.		
What level of education do you plan to complete?	2%	11%	13%	27%	22%	25%		
	NA	It costs too much.	I need to work.	My grades are not good enough.	I want to join military service.	I need to take care of my family.	The job I am interested in will provide training.	I am not interested.
What is the main reason you might not continue your education after high school?	38%	22%	9%	7%	4%	4%	7%	8%
	Never		Once or twice	Sometimes	Often			
I have talked with my parent about attending college.	13%		25%	39%	22%			
	I do not know anything.		I know a few things.	I know a lot.				
Do you know which classes you should take to prepare for college?	34%		51%	15%				

### Financial aid

	Never	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often	I do not know anything.
Have you talked with someone about the availability of financial aid to help pay for college?	28%	24%	20%	7%	21%
	I do not know anything.		I know a few things.	I know a lot.	
Do you know how to get financial aid for college?	55%		36%	9%	
	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably	Definitely	I do not know.
Can you afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?	5%	14%	39%	11%	31%

	Not sure	No	Yes		
Are you planning to apply for financial aid for college?	64%	9%	27%		
	I am not planning to go to college.	The process is too difficult.	The process is too time consuming.	My family has money to pay for college.	I do not have enough information.
What might prevent you from seeking financial aid for college?	12%	18%	11%	17%	52%

### Perceived outcomes

	Worse	About the same	Better	I do not know	I do not participate in GEAR UP activities.
Due to my participation in GEAR UP, my academic performance is:	2%	30%	34%	20%	14%
	No, I do not plan to Attend college.	Yes, I now plan to Attend college.	Yes, I already planned, and GEAR UP further convinced me to attend college.	I do not know.	
My participation in GEAR UP activities has changed my plans about attending college.	7%	25%	34%	34%	

## Appendix C

### GEAR UP Family Survey Results

The purpose of the GEAR UP Family Survey was to capture information related to parents' experiences with the program for their child. Program staff were encouraged to use the survey results to make decisions that would refine and improve the program. A total of 165 parents participated in the online survey, representing an 8% response rate. The confidence interval was +/-7.3%, meaning we can be 95% certain that the sample percentage was within 7.3 percentage points on either side of the actual population percentage. In other words, responses provided by the 165 family members were not representative of the population of 2,004 family members.<sup>2</sup>

The survey addressed students' middle school experiences, family expectation, the GEAR UP program, students' college preparation, family participation, financial aid, and perceived outcomes. Results showed that families had positive perspectives about the program. The majority of families' expectations about their child's college education matched their desire for their child's college education. Families regarded college visits, counseling, student workshops, and tutoring as the top four GEAR UP activities they felt were helpful in preparing their child for college. College visits and individual meetings with facilitators/counselors were the activities families felt were most helpful in supporting them to prepare their child for college. The majority of families indicated an interest in seeking financial aid for their child's education, although many never talked with anyone about getting financial aid for college.

<sup>2</sup> GEAR UP families with emails recorded in the district system were contacted for the GEAR UP Family Survey.

## Middle school experiences

	% answered "Yes"				
My child has participated in extracurricular activities outside of his/her school time.	66%				
My child has participated in any community service opportunities during middle school?	49%				
	None	1-5	6-10	11-15	16 or more
How many hours per week does your child spend studying or doing homework?	8%	65%	21%	2%	4%

## Parent expectation

	High school only	Certificate or associate degree (2 year)	Bachelor degree (4 year)	Graduate or professional degree	I do not Know.	
What level of school do you expect your child to complete?	2%	15%	45%	28%	9%	
	High school only	Certificate or associate degree (2 year)	Bachelor degree (4 year)	Graduate or professional degree	I do not Know.	
What level of school do you want your child to complete?	1%	11%	36%	49%	3%	
	NA	It costs too much.	My child needs to work.	My child's grades are not good enough.	The job my child is interested in will provide training.	My child is not interested.
Why might your child not continue his/her education after high school?	54%	21%	3%	5%	8%	7%
	Never	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often		
I have talked with my child about attending college.	1%	5%	26%	69%		

## The GEAR UP program

	My child sent home	Flyers	Back to school night	School website	Have not received any information
From where did you receive GEAR UP information this year?	53%	30%	20%	10%	19%
	A few things	Everything	I do not know anything about it.		
How much do you know about the GEAR UP program?	65%	10%	25%		
	None of his/her teachers	Some of his/her teachers	Most of his/her teachers	I do not know.	
My child's teachers expect him/her to go to college.	3%	11%	62%	24%	
Do you believe that the following GEAR UP activities are helpful to prepare your child for college?	Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	I do not know.
College visits (during school year)	1%	6%	29%	51%	12%
Counseling	1%	6%	20%	58%	15%

Student workshops	1%	4%	30%	45%	19%
Tutoring	1%	2%	25%	49%	23%
Mentoring	2%	4%	24%	49%	21%
GEAR UP lunch bunch	1%	6%	30%	38%	25%
GEAR UP family events	4%	5%	28%	39%	25%
Summer programs	3%	5%	26%	39%	27%

### Student college preparation

	I do not know anything.		I know a few things.		I know a lot.
Do you know which classes your child should take to prepare for college?	30%		44%		26%
	No		Maybe		Yes
Has your child discussed college with you this year?	16%		8%		76%
	AVID	Pre-AP	Career and technology	None of these	I do not know.
My child plans to take the following types of classes:	37%	50%	20%	2%	28%

### Parent participation

	% answered "Yes"						
My participation in GEAR UP activities has changed my ideas about my child's attending college.	61%						
	Myself/ another family member	A GEAR UP facilitator	A classroom teacher	A school counselor	A GEAR UP tutor	A classmate or friend	No one has helped.
Who has helped your family learn the most about preparing for college?	41%	23%	5%	6%	2%	2%	20%
Do you believe that the following GEAR UP activities are helpful to support your participation in your child's college?	Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Helpful	Very helpful	I do not know.		
College visits	2%	7%	29%	46%	15%		
Individual meetings with facilitators/counselors	4%	5%	29%	35%	27%		
Parent workshops	4%	6%	26%	32%	32%		
Parent meetings	4%	10%	24%	34%	29%		
Home visits	8%	6%	16%	21%	49%		

## Financial aid

	Never	Once or twice	Sometimes	Often
I have talked with someone about getting financial aid to help pay for college?	71%	16%	10%	3%
	I do not know anything   I know a few things   I know a lot.			
Do you know how to get financial aid for college?	43%	38%	18%	

	Definitely not	Probably not	Probably	Definitely	
Can your child afford to attend a public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?	3%	14%	51%	31%	
	Not sure		No	Yes	
Are you planning to help your child get financial aid for college?	19%	2%	79%		
	My child is not planning to go to college.	The process is too difficult.	The process is too time consuming.	My family has money to pay for college.	I do not have enough information.
What might prevent your child from seeking financial aid for college?	3%	9%	3%	6%	56%

## Perceived outcomes

	Worse	About the same	Better	I do not know.	
Due to GEAR UP, my child's academic performance is:	1%	30%	44%	25%	
	Strongly disagree		Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
GEAR UP is helping my child prepare for college this year.	3%	9%	57%	31%	
	No, my child does not plan to attend college.	Yes, my child now plans to attend college.	Yes, my child already planned, and GEAR UP further convinced him/her to attend college.	I do not know.	
My child's participation in GEAR UP activities has changed his/her plans about attending college.	4%	20%	43%	33%	



## Appendix D

### GEAR UP Campus Teacher Survey Results

The purpose of the GEAR UP Teacher Survey was to capture information related to teachers' experiences in preparing students for college, career, and life. Program staff were encouraged to use the survey results to make decisions that would refine and improve the program. A total of 133 teachers at GEAR UP campuses participated in the survey, representing a 55% response rate. The confidence interval was +/-5.7%, meaning we can be 95% certain that the sample percentage was within 5.7 percentage points on either side of the actual population percentage. In other words, responses provided by the 133 teachers were not representative of the population of 241 teachers at GEAR UP campuses.

Results showed that the majority had positive perspectives about the program. Teachers appeared to have adequate knowledge of the GEAR UP program. Teachers indicated students' engagement, culturally responsive practices, and students' behaviors as the top three areas for which they wanted more feedback and support. The vast majority of teachers agreed that all GEAR UP activities were helpful to prepare students for college and career.

## The GEAR UP program

Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I understand the purpose of the GEAR UP program.	-	2%	46%	52%
I feel the GEAR UP program is building a college-going culture On campus.	1%	5%	48%	46%
I feel the GEAR UP program helps students meet college and career goals.	1%	6%	52%	41%
I know how to help students meet their college and career goals.	-	7%	58%	35%
I feel the GEAR UP program is helping my students academically.	1%	9%	44%	46%
I think the following GEAR UP activities are helpful to prepare students for college and careers:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Counseling	1%	2%	39%	59%
Mentoring	2%	2%	33%	64%
College tours	2%	2%	34%	63%
Tutoring	1%	2%	37%	60%
Student workshops	2%	2%	38%	59%
Community partnerships	2%	2%	50%	47%
Summer programs	2%	2%	46%	50%
Parent engagement	1%	5%	44%	50%
Parent workshops on college	2%	5%	46%	48%

## Teacher support

In which area(s) would you like more feedback and support: (Please select all that apply.)	% selected
Increasing student engagement	46%
Culturally responsive practices	33%
Managing student behavior	32%
Increasing students' college awareness	31%
Incorporating more inquiry	28%
Collaborative study groups	26%
Tutoring	25%
Incorporating more leadership skills (SEL)	24%
Increasing rigor in the classroom	20%

Incorporating more active reading strategies	17%
Improving my instructional practices	16%
Incorporating more writing	16%
<b>% answered "Yes"</b>	
I expect most of my students to attend college.	80%

## Appendix E

### Percentage of Students/Parents Participating and Average Number of Hours Participating in Academic Intervention, Enhanced Counseling and Advising, and Family Engagement Activities at Each GEAR UP Campus

Campus	Academic intervention		Enhanced counseling and advising		Family engagement	
	% students participating	Average number of hours of service	% students participating	Average number of hours of service	% students participating	Average number of hours of service
Bedichek (n = 266)	60%	12.6	99%	10.9	64%	1.8
Burnet (n = 327)	72%	11.7	98%	6.5	22%	0.6
Covington (n = 225)	98%	14.8	100%	22.0	59%	1.4
Dobie (n = 207)	78%	12.9	91%	11.9	15%	2.0
Fulmore (n = 332)	76%	19.5	99%	12.6	72%	1.6
Garcia YMLA (n = 151)	85%	11.9	100%	9.1	38%	1.0
Martin (n = 176)	76%	9.8	95%	17.4	41%	2.2
Mendez (n = 208)	58%	3.7	91%	7.4	29%	1.1
Paredes (n = 309)	86%	12.1	99%	13.0	33%	2.6
Sadler Means YWLA (n = 114)	92%	16.1	99%	29.6	70%	2.1
Webb (n = 221)	79%	19.7	91%	14.9	27%	2.8
Overall average (n = 2,536)	77%	13.6	97%	13.3	42%	1.8

# Appendix F

## Percentage of Students/Parents Participating in Services at Each GEAR UP Campus

Campus	Tutoring	Summer program	Student workshop	College visit	Educational field trip	Job site visit	Counseling	Comprehensive mentoring	Family event	Family college visit	Family workshop	Family counseling
Bedichek (n = 266)	57%	8%	99%	86%	45%	19%	22%		43%	39%	5%	
Burnet (n = 327)	71%	3%	98%	95%	73%	5%	19%		15%	1%	1%	8%
Covington (n = 225)	98%	6%	100%	91%	67%	96%	80%	22%	46%	13%	5%	20%
Dobie (n = 207)	78%	6%	89%	52%	30%	8%	20%		14%		1%	
Fulmore (n = 332)	74%	8%	99%	86%	36%	16%	92%	1%	20%	60%		16%
Garcia YMLA (n = 151)	85%	6%	99%	47%	30%	21%	99%		36%	1%	9%	
Martin (n = 176)	76%	3%	93%	89%	78%	60%	72%	4%	26%	9%	16%	11%
Mendez (n = 208)	57%	2%	84%	36%	41%	37%	31%	5%	9%	15%	1%	13%
Paredes (n = 309)	85%	14%	94%	91%	58%	29%	90%	6%	24%	5%	8%	2%
Sadler Means YWLA (n = 114)	89%	13%	98%	91%	94%	93%	86%		26%	36%	27%	7%
Webb (n = 221)	76%	12%	88%	34%	12%	9%	85%	7%	17%		2%	14%
Overall average (n = 2,536)	76%	7%	95%	75%	50%	31%	61%	4%	25%	17%	5%	8%

## Appendix G

### Average Number of Hours of Service per Participating Student/Parent at Each GEAR UP Campus

Campus	Tutoring	Summer program	Student workshop	College visit	Educational field trip	Job site visit	Counseling	Comprehensive mentoring	Family event	Family college visit	Family workshop	Family counseling
Bedichek (n = 264)	2.5	82.1	4.3	5.1	4.2	1.4	0.5		0.7	2.0	1.2	
Burnet (n = 317)	5.7	129.5	1.0	2.1	4.7	3.3	0.7					0.6
Covington (n = 225)	11.7	52.2	7.9	8.0	5.1	1.3	0.8	6.9	1.2	0.4	2.6	0.6
Dobie (n = 189)	2.3	130.5	3.5	10.6	4.4	4.6	1.2		1.9		2.0	
Fulmore (n = 331)	6.7	116.2	6.6	4.3	3.4	1.3	0.9	4.1	1.1	1.5		0.3
Garcia YMLA (n = 149)	3.3	120.4	4.2	6.2	3.2	1.1	0.9		0.9	3.5	0.4	
Martin (n = 171)	4.4	120.0	4.5	7.1	4.2	4.3	0.4	0.3	2.2	1.0	1.4	0.3
Mendez (n = 175)	2.6	32.0	0.6	4.5	3.4	4.8	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.0	0.5	0.4
Paredes (n = 305)	4.7	48.5	4.2	4.1	5.9	1.9	1.4	1.9	2.7	0.5	2.0	0.9
Sadler Means YWLA (n = 114)	9.3	49.3	15.8	5.0	6.6	3.0	0.4		2.3	0.7	2.3	0.3
Webb (n = 204)	3.8	107.1	9.5	7.7	5.8	5.0	1.7	2.8	3.2		6.0	0.6
Overall average (n = 2,444)	5.4	86.8	5.5	5.2	4.7	2.5	1.0	4.3	1.6	1.4	1.8	0.5

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