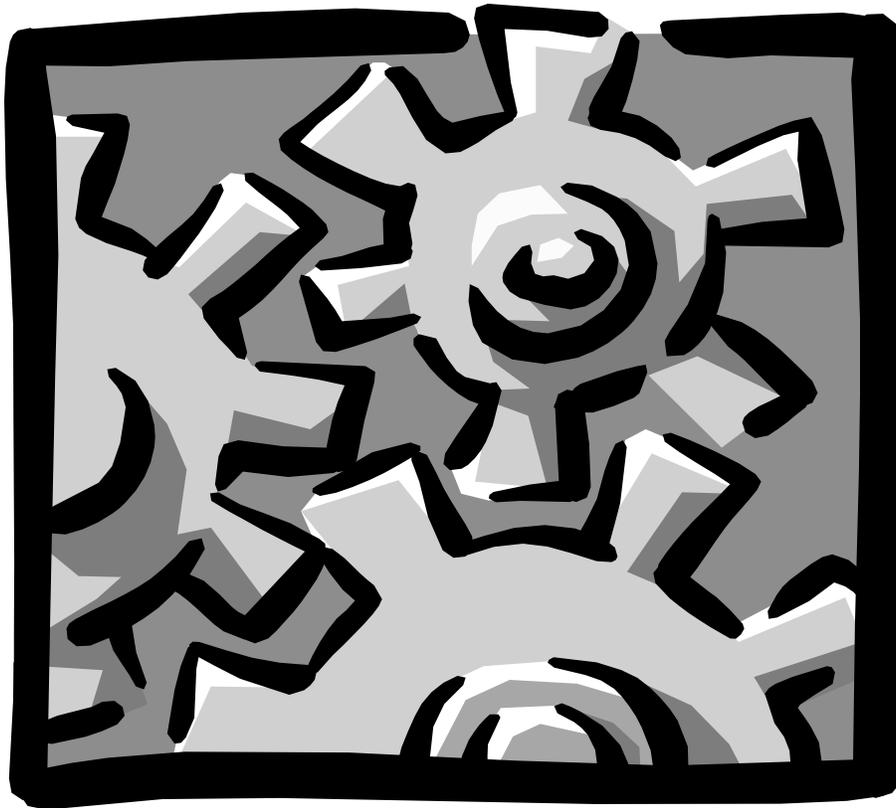


GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project



Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

Austin Independent School District
Office of Program Evaluation

November 2002

GEAR UP AUSTIN: IMPACTING LIVES PROJECT*2001-2002 Evaluation**Austin Independent School District***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY****Overview**

“If you can dream it, you can do it” is the classic quote by Walt Disney printed on the back of thousands of t-shirts worn by students participating in the *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* during the 2001-2002 school year. Indeed, the statement seems to capture the essence of the project in its second year of implementation. Project staff and community partners have worked diligently to begin inspiring dreams of college for students who are traditionally underrepresented in post-secondary institutions as they provide individualized tutoring, offer unique summer programs, sponsor multiple college visits, facilitate college preparation and financial aid seminars, sponsor teacher professional development opportunities, and engage parents in planning for the future of their children.

In its second year, GEAR UP served approximately 3,670 eighth grade students enrolled ten Austin Independent School District middle schools and the Texas Empowerment Academy. The students come from primarily low-income households and many are categorized by state criteria as “at-risk”. The GEAR UP cohort is ethnically diverse with as many as 46 countries represented within one school. They are considered to be highly mobile with nine of the eleven campuses having student mobility rates over the district average of 23.8%. Further, a GEAR UP project survey indicated that 1,203 (39%) of the GEAR UP cohort are potential first-generation college students. Thus, project staff are challenged to create and implement a variety of services to meet diverse student needs.

The foundation for providing intensive student and parent services was laid during the first project year as project structures were developed and initial implementation began. The initial performance evaluation found a highly dedicated and creative project staff developing a project that showed promise for ensuring student success through the provision of rigorous coursework, comprehensive support services, and information about college opportunities and financial aid.

Using student academic information and project evaluation data early in the second year, GEAR UP staff and partners continued to work diligently to expand and improve those initial project services. Thus, the purpose of this second annual performance report is to provide an update on project implementation and to articulate the subsequent outcomes for the project’s participants. In plain words, this report seeks to tell the story of the *GEAR UP Project* and whether or not its services have indeed begun to prepare students to realize dreams for college.

Summary of Findings

The results of this annual performance were consistently positive for the *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* in its second year of implementation. Most project objectives were met during the second year of implementation. The analysis of data showed:

- The GEAR UP project has continued to provide reliable and enhanced academic support for students. Over 140 tutors were hired during the 2001-2002 school year and provided tutoring services in Language Arts for 41%, in Mathematics for 49%, in Science for 27%, in Social Studies for 32%, and in Reading for 25% of the student cohort. GEAR UP summer school programs served 529 GEAR UP students, an increase of 32% over the previous summer's program enrollment.
- The guidance and counseling component of the project has offered enhanced support for students during the second project year. College visits supported by 12 post-secondary institutions went beyond the traditional tour model where cohort students actively participated in a variety of activities. The College and Career Centers (CCC's) were fully operational at the beginning of the school year. Students used the centers to explore future career interests and learn about post-secondary institutions. Approximately 208 cohort teachers used the centers' to enhance core-content instruction and technology skills acquisition by the students.
- GEAR UP supported the continuing professional development for all cohort teachers. Seventy-six percent of the cohort's teachers completed an average of 31 hours of recommended professional development provided by AISD's Professional Development Academy. The project provided \$68,935.89 in support of professional development opportunities outside AISD's Professional Development Academy.
- GEAR UP used parent needs assessment to increase parent services. GEAR UP staff individualized parent support services as they made 8-10 home visits a week. GEAR UP project records showed that 942 parents attended at least one parent meeting during the second project year. Approximately 531 parents attended a teen-communication seminar conducted by a motivational speaker, Retired Lt. Colonel Consuelo Castillo Kickbush. GEAR UP parent support specialists held a variety of small- and large-scale parent workshops, including the Recommended High School Plan Nights attended by 573 parents.
- Additional business and community partners have demonstrated strong support of the project. Seven colleges and universities that were not initial partners hosted college visit experiences for GEAR UP students. The University of Texas has made a long-term commitment to assisting the district in utilizing work-study students for tutoring purposes. LULAC became an official project partner and assisted staff in finding mentors to participate in the GEAR UP E-Mentoring program.
- Structures for sustaining the GEAR UP initiative are being developed. Middle school principals are committed to continuing services on their campuses for additional classes of students after the cohort moves to the high school level. All campuses have continued to operate the College and Career Centers. Seven of the GEAR UP middle schools are continuing to use college work-study students as tutors on their campus.

Recommendations

The results of this evaluation continue to show the enormous amount of work completed by the *GEAR UP Austin* project staff. In review of predominantly positive results, the following recommendations have been identified for further consideration during the next stages of project implementation at the high school level:

- ***Use the most accurate student information for tracking the academic progress of a highly mobile student population and implementing effective program services.***

It is recommended that GEAR UP staff decrease their dependence on other school personnel to provide the information and increase their utilization of the district student information system. Moreover, project management should choose a reliable method for documenting project services and determine standards for reporting those services, so that data can be formatively thereby increasing the chances that project services can be adjusted and improved throughout the year.

- ***Directly align all project support services with district goals and initiatives in order to increase project effectiveness.***

The GEAR UP project continues experience challenges created by a disconnect between student and teacher performance expectations, current instructional practices, and the support services offered by GEAR UP. It is recommended that the project provide training for tutors in core content areas that are aligned with district curriculum and state accountability tests. Supporting the recommendation for increased alignment, it is suggested that the GEARUP project offer ongoing, campus-based professional development for teachers directly linked to content areas and specific school improvement goals. To appropriately reflect project alignment, all project objectives should be reviewed and in some cases re-articulated to show the expected levels of achievement and measure those outcomes fittingly.

- ***Increase collaborative relationships with district personnel in order to serve students progressively well and develop structures for sustaining those improved services for additional groups of students after federal funding ceases.***

While the GEAR UP project has successfully coordinated its services with selected programs, these relationships have a relatively narrow impact on a finite group of students. Therefore, it is imperative that individuals across all levels of the district place priority on creating systems for working together more efficiently and effectively to sustain services designed to significantly improve student learning. This concerted effort will not only require increased communication and coordination between all levels of district personnel, but it will require changes in the ways that all think about the nature of college preparation and their individual roles in that process.

PREFACE

The *GEAR UP Austin Impacting Lives Project* was evaluated for the following purposes:

- To provide information to grant decision-makers and other project stakeholders on aspects of the project that work effectively and areas for improvement.
- To determine what impact the program is having on its participants.
- To fulfill federal reporting requirements of the grant.

Overall, the evaluation information will help project management/staff, project partners, and school administrators understand how the program is working and enable them to make informed decisions leading to positive outcomes for all persons participating in the GEAR UP program.

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INTRODUCTION

GEAR UP Project Context

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a nationally funded initiative encouraging young, low income, at-risk students to have high expectations, stay in school, and complete the required courses to enter college. GEAR UP awards multi-year grants to partnerships seeking to increase the enrollment of at-risk students in post-secondary institutions. The partnerships must:

- Start with a 7th grade cohort of students and continue provision of comprehensive support services through high school graduation;
- Inform students and parents about college opportunities and financial aid; and
- Promote rigorous academic coursework.

GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project

The *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* began serving a single-cohort of 7th grade students attending Burnet, Dobie, Fulmore, Kealing, Martin, Mendez, Paredes, Pearce, Porter, and Webb middle schools and the Texas Empowerment Academy during the 2000-2001 school year. The following year, the implementation of project services continued at these middle schools for the cohort at the 8th grade level. GEAR UP will serve this student cohort through the Spring of 2005. Throughout the five years of the project, capacity for sustaining project services for additional students will be built on each campus through the provision of teaching resources, teacher professional development, community partnership building, and parent training. For a complete report on GEAR UP's first year of implementation, refer to:

<http://www.austin.isd.tenet.edu/about/accountability/ope/reports.phtml#2001>

During the 2001-2002 school year, twenty-six ethnically diverse project staff provided a variety of services that addressed student academic support and enhanced guidance and counseling needs for the cohort at the 8th grade level. Additionally, the GEAR UP staff supported teacher professional development and provided a variety of services for parents. A detailed description of GEAR UP project components is provided in Appendix A.

Project Participants

According to district enrollment records, GEAR UP served 4,398 students from ten Austin Independent School District middle schools and the Texas Empowerment Academy charter school during the first two years of the project. At least 50% of the cohort students come from low-income households and meet state at-risk criteria. GEAR UP campuses experience mobility rates ranging from 13.3% to 69.5% with a district average of 23.8%. A summary of cohort demographic information for each GEAR UP campus is provided in Appendix B.

While the number of students participating in GEAR UP project activities varied throughout the school year, the project served approximately 3,200 students at any given time. The following table shows the total number of students enrolled at each school during the first and second year of the project, and the second table reports the mobility rate for each school. It is worth noting that the student mobility in nine of the eleven schools exceed the average district rate.

Table 1: Total Number of Students Enrolled/Served at GEAR UP Campuses, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

Campus Name	2000-2001 7th Grade Participants	2001-2002 8th Grade Participants
Burnet MS	433	442
Dobie MS	379	364
Fulmore MS	271	277
Kealing JH	580	547
Martin JH	401	381
Mendez MS	325	315
Paredes MS	347	366
Pearce MS	315	333
Porter MS	285	290
Webb MS	311	333
Tx Empowerment Academy	28	22
TOTAL	3,647	3,670

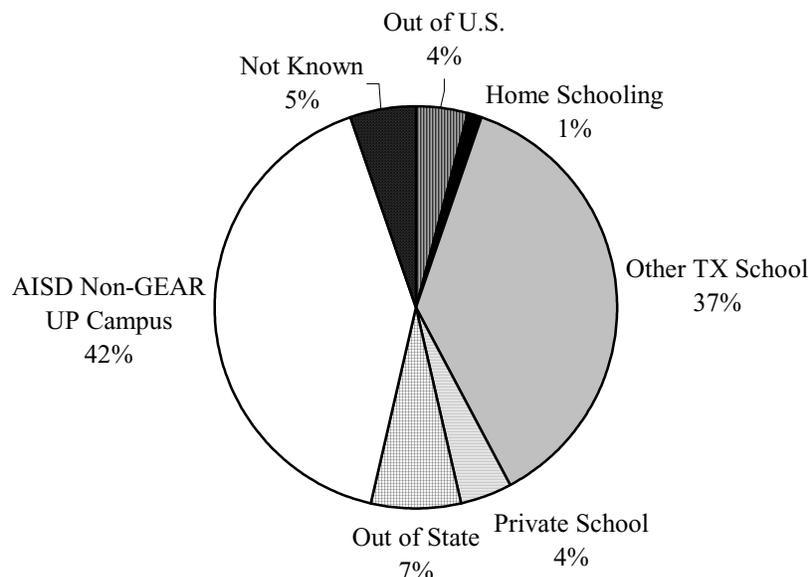
Source: Austin Independent School District Management Information Systems, August 19, 2002.

Table 2: Student Mobility Rates for GEAR UP Campuses in the Austin Independent School District, 1999-2000

	Mobility Rate
Austin Independent School District	23.8%
Burnet Middle School	26.9%
Dobie Middle School	32.4%
Fulmore Middle School	26.7%
Kealing Junior High School	14.7%
Martin Junior High School	20.3%
Mendez Middle School	39.1%
Paredes Middle School	13.3%
Pearce Middle School	33.1 %
Porter Middle School	28.6%
Webb Middle School	28.3%
Texas Empowerment Academy	69.5%

Source: Texas Education Agency, 2001-2002 (Rates reflect the most current calculations available)

To describe patterns of student mobility, inactive student enrollment records were marked with leaver codes. Two primary descriptors of student mobility were identified. Most of the student mobility occurs between AISD school campuses. Secondly, many students are transferring to schools outside of Austin Independent School District. A summary of student leaver reason codes used for Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) submissions to the Texas Education Agency follows.

Figure 1: GEAR UP Student Leaver Code Summary (N= 633)

Source: Student leaver codes reported by Austin Independent School District Management Information System, May 7, 2002.

The GEAR UP Budget

The *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* began its second year of funding on September 15, 2001 with an award for \$2,304,423. Within this budget, monies were allocated to cover project personnel, consultant services, supplies and instructional materials, travel expenses, and other miscellaneous items. At the end of the project year, there was a balance of \$544,439 rolled forward into the Year 3 budget. From this rollover, \$100,000 was moved into a trust fund for GEAR UP scholarships recently approved by the Department of Education. Each subsequent year, \$50,000 will be placed into the trust fund. In addition, the Year 2 rollover monies were used to purchase all computers, printers, furniture, hubs, wiring, etc for the new high school college and career centers. The following table provides a summary of expenditures for each budget category.

Table 3: GEAR UP Budget Summary, 2001-2002

Budget Category	Expenditure	Appropriation
Personnel	\$1,247,859.73	\$1,650,893
Contracted Services	\$88,201.99	\$135,573
Supplies and Instructional Materials	\$367,298.45	\$201,198
Miscellaneous/ Travel	\$19,670.79	\$279,806
Subtotal	\$1,723,030.96	\$2,267,470
Indirect Costs	\$36,953	\$36,953
TOTAL	\$1,759,983.96	\$2,304,423
Roll Over to Year 3, 2002-2003	\$544,439.00	

Source: GEAR UP budget records for Project Year, 2001-2002

In the second year, GEAR UP project partners continued to provide matching contributions. They supported the project in a variety of ways that included professional expertise, time, facilities, and materials. The following portion of this report provides an update on partner contributions during the second project year along with information concerning project capacity building.

Summary of Partner Contributions

The *GEAR UP Austin Project* management developed relationships with many different business and community partners. (A complete listing of partners can be found in Appendix C.) These business and community partners continued to help project staff to refine and develop additional support services for cohort students and their families by providing professional expertise, travel funding, equipment and supplies, and facilities use. The Austin Independent School District also supported GEAR UP by supplying support personnel, making facilities available, and covering utility costs for project services and events. Table 4 details project partner contributions for the 2001-2002 project year, with exception of Partners in Education whose calculations were not available at the time of this report. GEAR UP partnership contributions extended beyond the donations of financial resources and began building support structures for sustaining project services. Descriptions of partner contributions and sustaining services will be provided in subsequent sections of this report.

Table 4: Matching Funds Summary for GEAR UP Fiscal Year II, 2001-2002

Category	Partner	Partner Match	Austin ISD
Personnel	Austin ISD		\$571,976
	Austin Community College	\$4860	
	Communities in Schools	\$135,300	
	Huston Tillotson College	\$13,967	
	St. Edward's University	\$42,848	
	Southwest Texas University	\$38,745	
	University of Texas at Austin	\$12,978	
	The College Board	\$700	
	Girlstart	\$18,612	
Travel	Career Resources Development	\$350	
	The College Board	\$48	
	Huston Tillotson College	\$600	
	St. Edward's University	\$250	
	Southwest Texas University	\$1250	
	University of Texas at Austin	\$420	
	Austin Community College	\$900	
Equipment	Communities in Schools	\$2000	
	St. Edward's University	\$6500	
Materials	University of Texas at Austin	\$500	
	Communities in Schools	\$2000	
	St. Edward's University	\$5150	
	Austin Community College	\$900	
	Huston Tillotson University	\$750	
	Southwest Texas University	\$500	
	The College Board	\$320	
	Learning Systems	\$5000	

Table 4: Matching Funds Summary for GEAR UP Fiscal Year II, Continued

Category	Partner	Partner Match	Austin ISD
Materials	DAAMARS	\$6000	
	Girlstart	\$2250	
Contractual	Huston Tillotson University	\$1250	
	Career Resources Development	\$1220	
	University of Texas at Austin	\$1000	
	Learning Systems	\$10,000	
Other	Premier Agendas	\$1945	
	Austin ISD Bridges for Success		\$266,133
	Austin ISD Facilities		\$640,470
	St. Edward's University	\$1901	
	Huston Tillotson College	\$750	
	Southwest Texas University	\$3240	
	DAAMARS	\$12,000	
	LULAC	\$14,195	
Scholarship Trust	Austin ISD		\$50,000
Subtotal		\$351,199	\$1,528,579
TOTAL	\$1,879,778.00		

Source: GEAR UP Project Budget Records, 2001-2002

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this second annual performance report is to provide information on the status of project implementation and the extent to which project objectives have been achieved. A complete list of objectives for each project component is provided in Appendix D.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation focused on two broad questions:

1. For each project component, what program services were developed and implemented throughout the course of the GEAR UP Project?
2. For each project component, what are the project outcomes and impacts on the GEAR UP participants?

Data Collection

The project evaluator used data from multiple quantitative and qualitative sources for formative and summative evaluation purposes. 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. TAAS scores, course enrollment data, and course grade reports were analyzed.
- ***GEAR UP Student and Parent Surveys:*** Cohort students and their parents completed an updated survey adapted from the previous year's survey and a template provided by the Department of Education. 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 2002 with 2,573 (80%) students and 1188 (38%) parents responding. Survey questions and results are provided in Appendix E.
- ***Tutor Interviews:*** Project tutors participated in an interview to provide information concerning the implementation of tutoring services and perceived impacts on GEAR UP students. The interviews took place during May 2002. Initially, a random sample of tutors was contacted via phone or e-mail. However, few of the tutors originally chosen could participate due to their own semester test schedules. Subsequently, all tutors were asked to participate. Only 15 of the 99 tutors working during the spring semester (15%), representing 8 of the 11 GEAR UP campuses, chose to participate in an interview.

- ***Project Facilitator Interviews:*** During May and June 2002, all GEAR UP project facilitators and parent support specialists participated in an interview providing detailed information about the process of implementation and outcomes of the project. The interviews followed a fairly structured format with specific questions that were asked of each interviewee. Probing questions were used to elicit additional clarification or details as necessary.
- ***Professional Development Evaluation Surveys:*** With project partners, Learning Systems, the GEAR UP project sponsored professional development training. Teachers in attendance completed course evaluations for the training sessions. A summary of survey results is provided in Appendix F.
- ***GEAR UP Camp Evaluation Surveys:*** GEAR UP implemented PSAT/SAT test preparation, literature study, and algebra readiness camps during the summer of 2002. Students attending Level 1 (121 of 157, or 77%) and Level 2 (48 of 99, or 48%) of the test preparation camps completed camp evaluation surveys. Refer to Appendix H for a summary of results. Students attending sessions of the literature seminar camp (21 of 33, or 64%) completed an evaluation survey for this camp. Refer to Appendix J for a summary of results. Students attending algebra readiness camps completed individual skills assessments. The results are summarized in following sections of this report.
- ***Meeting and Activity Documentation.*** Documentation describing GEAR UP meetings and activities was gathered. These data consist of quantitative and qualitative materials including field notes, meeting/activity agendas and descriptions, attendance logs, project service contact hours. This documentation was used as support information for other primary data sources.

Data Analysis

This project evaluation used multiple data sources and analysis techniques to provide information concerning the implementation of project services and participant outcomes. Descriptive statistics were used to report student achievement data and the results from surveys and evaluation forms. The qualitative data obtained from interviews, field notes, meeting/activity agendas and descriptions provided detailed information about the process of implementing GEAR UP and the outcomes of service implementation. Content analysis techniques were used to identify important details, themes, and patterns in the data. Patterns and/or themes emerging from the analysis were summarized to characterize the project implementation process and participant outcomes.

EVALUATION RESULTS

This section of the report presents findings related to the project evaluation questions. The results are organized according to the project's components. For a complete list of objectives pertaining to each component, refer to Appendix D.

Results: Academic Intervention Component

GEAR UP Tutoring Initiative Description

With structures established during the first project year, GEAR UP mentoring/tutoring services were implemented at the outset of the 2001-2002 school year. Again, GEAR UP staff worked with the University of Texas to hire college work-study students as tutors. A job fair was held in August 2001 and tutors began working in schools shortly thereafter. This partnership allowed GEAR UP to cost-effectively employ about 140 work-study students with the America Reads/America Counts Program providing 100% of the math tutors' salaries and 70% of the reading tutors' salaries. Tutoring services continued to follow a variety of formats including supplemental instruction within the classroom, small group instruction within and outside of the classroom, and one-on-one instruction. Tutoring services were offered within and after school hours.

GEAR UP project objectives state that 100% of failing cohort students will receive mentoring/tutoring services each week (Objectives IA and B, Appendix D). Initially, teachers and project staff identified students failing two or more core curriculum courses or those at-risk of failing courses to receive services. When updated student records became available, tutoring services were reviewed and adjustments in service provision were made accordingly. Students may have received tutoring in one or more subjects. Variability in project record-keeping procedures and limitations in the database software prevented the determination of the total number of students participating and whether they were receiving services in one or more subjects. The figures below provide a summary of all students tutored in each subject during the 2001-2002 school year.

Figure 2: GEAR UP Students Tutored During and After School, 2001-2002

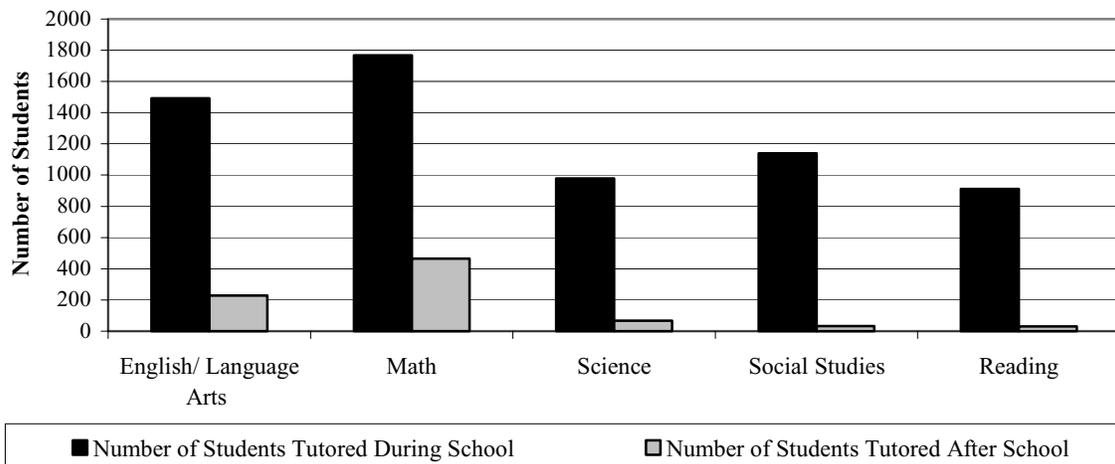
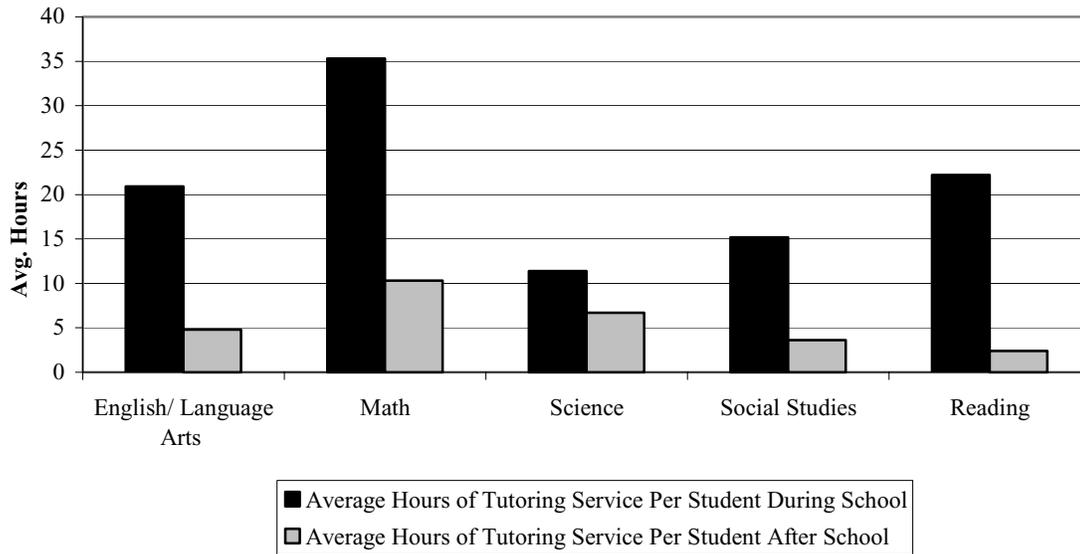


Figure 3: Average Number of Tutoring Hours per GEAR UP Student, 2001-2002

Tutoring Program Outcomes

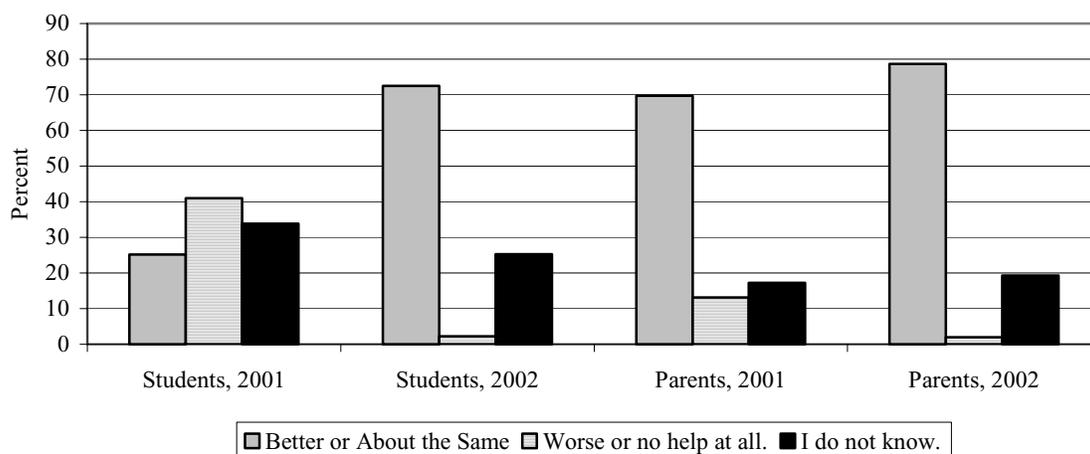
During interviews, GEAR UP project facilitators, parent support specialists, and tutors reported several key strengths of the GEAR UP tutoring program. The project staff indicated that the use of college work-study students provided the program with a high-quality tutoring staff marked by strong academic skills and the ability to communicate effectively with students. The tutoring program provided flexibility in meeting student needs as individualized assistance could be provided within or outside of the classroom, during or after school hours, as well as on an “as needed” basis. Most importantly, the use of college students provided GEAR UP students with role models similar to themselves. Countless vignettes illustrated how the relationships built between the tutors and GEAR UP students created an interest in improving academic performance, school attendance, and classroom conduct.

On the GEAR UP student survey, students and parents were asked about the impact of GEAR UP academic support services. Both students and their parents believed that the GEAR UP project had helped the student to improve or sustain their current level of academic performance. Notably during the second year, 72% of the GEAR UP students as opposed to 25% of the students last year reported that their academic performance was improved or about the same due to GEAR UP. A comparison of their responses follows.



“The relationship building with the tutors was key to student motivation and improved learning. The students really liked the extra attention from the college students, because they weren’t just another face in the crowd. They seemed to put forth the effort to learn.”

-- GEAR UP Project Facilitator

Figure 4: Due to GEAR UP My Academic Performance Is, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

Further, both GEAR UP project and tutoring staff reported that the tutoring program helped to improve student course grades. Tutors individualized instruction based on student learning needs. Tutoring sessions provided extra time for students to master course content and complete assignments successfully. Tutors continuously assisted students to plan and complete in assignments according to classroom deadlines thereby avoiding point penalties for turning in late work.

However, course grade records did not show much change in overall student performance by the end of second project year. The analysis of semester grade reports found for English, Math, and Science courses that include Regular, Honors, Magnet, ESL, and Special Education class sections show that there was a small decrease in the percentage of students failing these courses. The largest percentage increases were for students with course grades between 70 and 80 in Mathematics and Science courses.

It should be noted that the comparison of course averages between the 7th and 8th grade levels can be complicated. For example, at the 8th grade level, students are able to forego the standard 8th grade math course and enroll in Algebra I instead. In this case, 3% of the 8th grade students enrolled in Algebra I had course averages below 70. The remaining 9% of students with course averages below 70% were enrolled in the standard 8th grade math course. The table below summarizes the semester grade reports for GEAR UP students during the first two years of the project.

Table 5: End of Year Grade Report Summary, 2000-2001 and 2001- 2002

	Below 70		70 – 80		Above 80	
	2000-2001 (N=3,369)	2001-2002 (N=3,264)	2000-2001 (N=3,369)	2001-2002 (N=3,264)	2000-2001 (N=3,369)	2001-2002 (N=3,264)
English/ Language Arts	13%	12%	33%	32%	54%	56%
Mathematics	15%	12%	36%	40%	49%	48%
Science	16%	13%	34%	38%	50%	49%

Source: Student course grades reported by AISD Management Information System and the Texas Empowerment Academy. N= Total number of active 8th grade student grade records found for English, Math, and Science courses including Regular, Honors, Magnet, ESL, and Special Education sections.

Additionally, GEAR UP tutoring and project staff believed that the tutoring program helped a few students that were at-risk of failing to “stay at grade level”. Supporting this belief, student enrollment records showed that there were fewer cohort students retained during the second project year. At the end of the 2001-2002 school year, 69 GEAR UP students were retained in the 8th grade as compared to the 83 GEAR UP students retained in the 7th grade at the end of the 2000-2001 school year (AISD Management Information System, Fall 2002).

Finally, GEAR UP staff reported in their interviews that the tutoring program played a role in the improvement of student TAAS scores. Many campuses provided special tutoring sessions designed to help students prepare for the test. Other campuses identified students who had not passed portions of previous TAAS tests and provided individualized tutoring for those students.

Indeed, the analysis of TAAS scores shows improved TAAS passing rates for GEAR UP cohort students. Every GEAR UP school increased the percentage of students passing the TAAS Reading test. With the exception of the Texas Empowerment Academy, all GEAR UP campuses also increased the percentages of students passing the TAAS Math test. However, two schools have not met the GEAR UP project objective of 80% passing the TAAS reading test, and five schools have not met the GEAR UP project objective of 80% passing the TAAS math test. Also, the TAAS passing percentages in reading for GEAR UP students are still lower than the state’s passing percentage of 94.3%, and the student passing percentages in math continued to be lower than the state’s passing percentage of 92.9%. The students at Dobie Middle School and the Texas Empowerment Academy failed to meet the state’s minimum passing expectation of 70% on the TAAS math tests. The figures on the following pages show the 2002 passing percentages for GEAR UP students on the TAAS Reading and Math tests.

Figure 5: TAAS Reading Results for GEAR UP Cohort, 2000, 2001, and 2002.

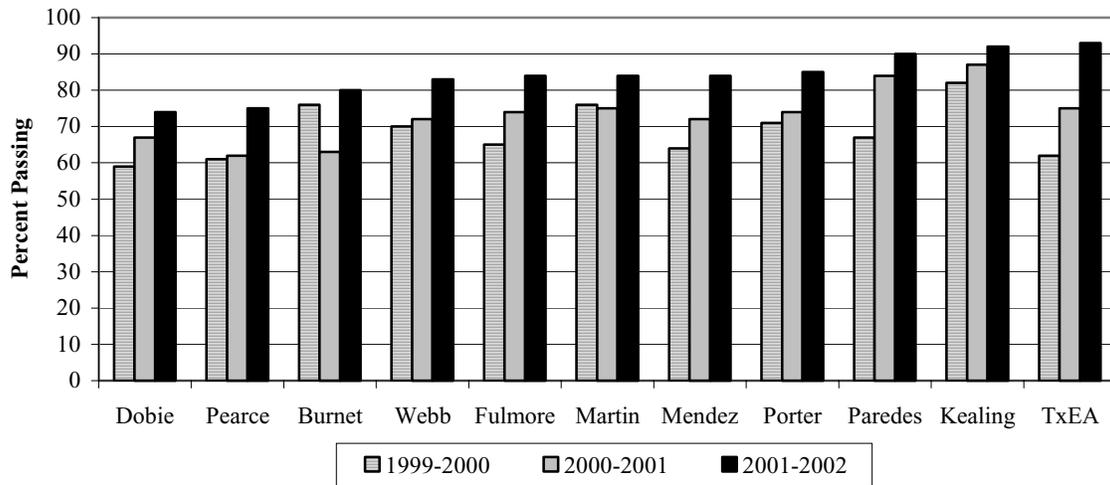
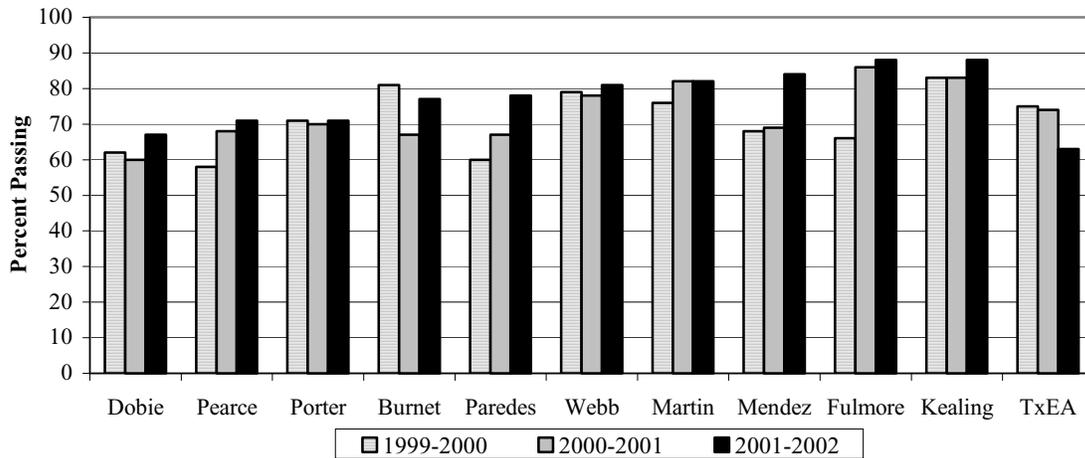


Figure 6: TAAS Math Results for GEAR UP Cohort, 2000, 2001, and 2002.



While the TAAS scores of GEAR UP students have improved overall, GEAR UP campuses continue to have lower overall passing percentages than do non-GEAR UP middle schools in the district. Figures 7 and 8 shows the 2002 passing percentages for GEAR UP and Non-GEAR UP students in reading and math.

Figure 7: Passing Percentages for GEAR UP And Non-GEAR UP Students on Reading, 2001-2002

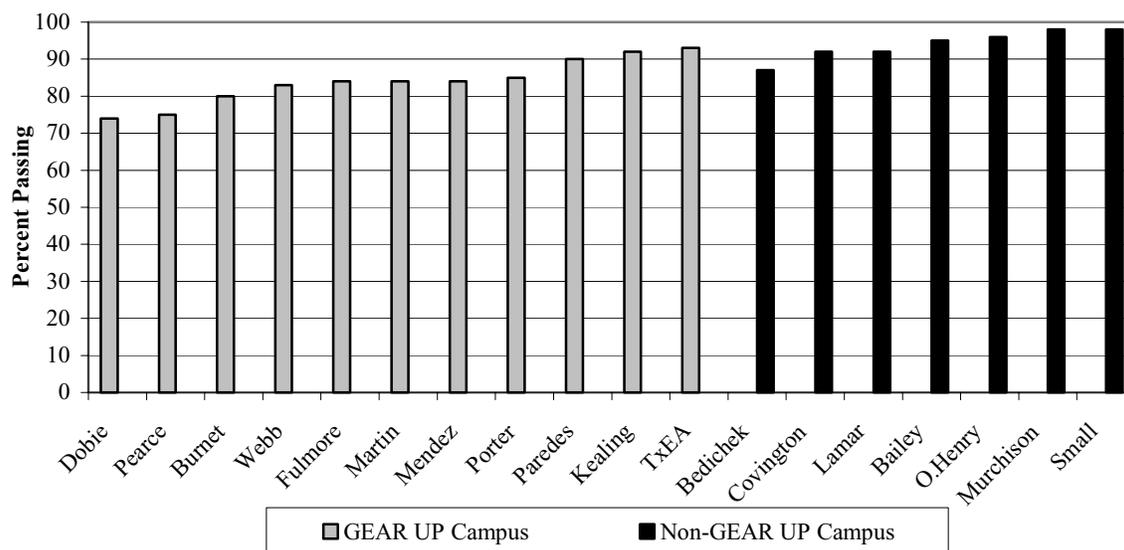
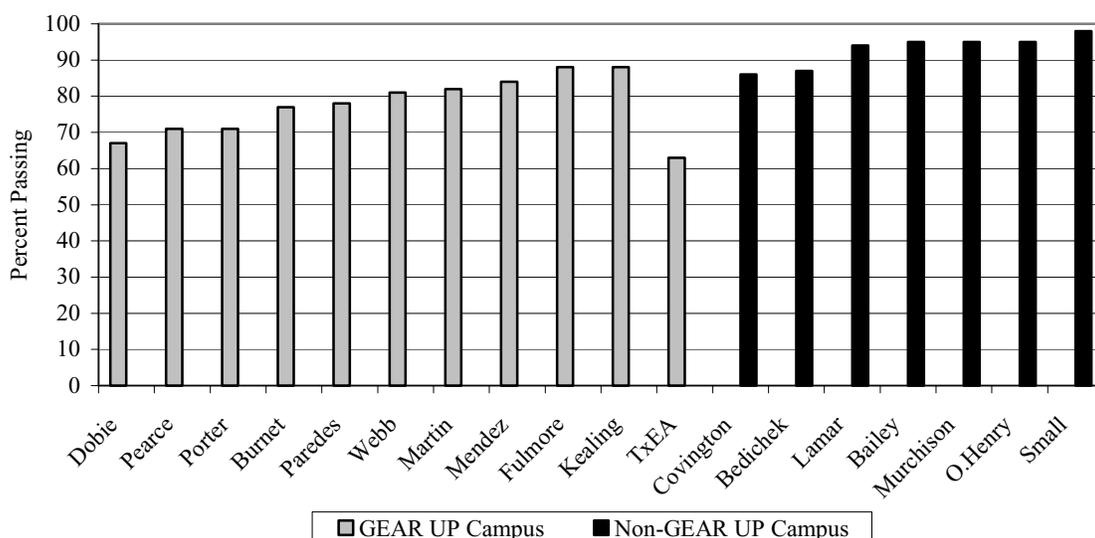


Figure 8: Passing Percentages for GEAR UP And Non-GEAR UP Students on Math, 2001-2002



Further inspection of the TAAS scores revealed that there continues to be gaps in achievement between GEAR UP student subgroups. White students consistently outperformed their African-American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged student peers. Six schools had fewer than 70% of their African-American students passing the math portion of the TAAS test. In math, fewer than 70% of the economically disadvantaged students at Dobie, Porter and the Texas Empowerment Academy passed and fewer than 70% of the Hispanic students attending Dobie and Porter passed. Figures 9 and 10 summarize the TAAS performance for GEAR UP student subgroups.

Figure 9: Passing Percentages on TAAS Reading for GEAR UP Student Subgroups, Spring 2002

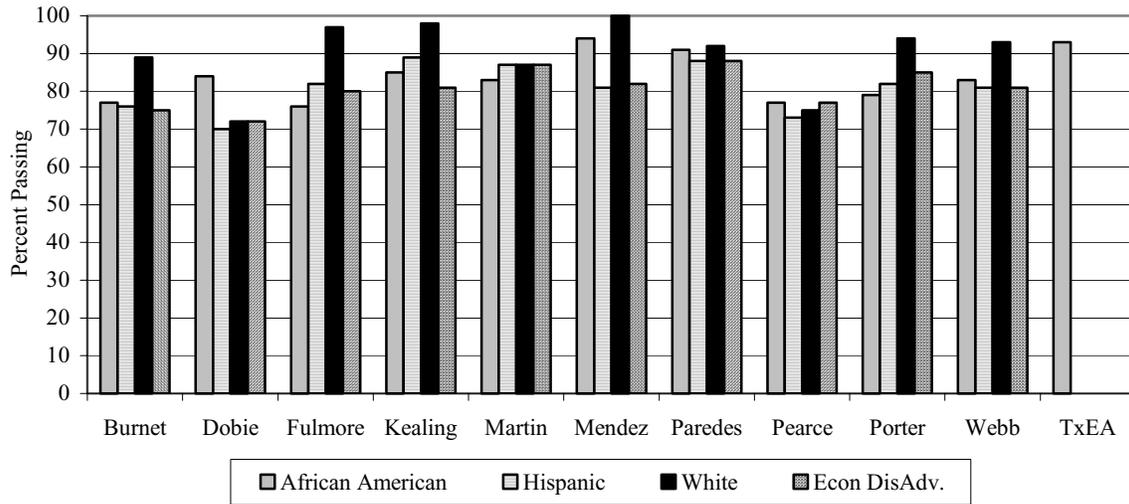
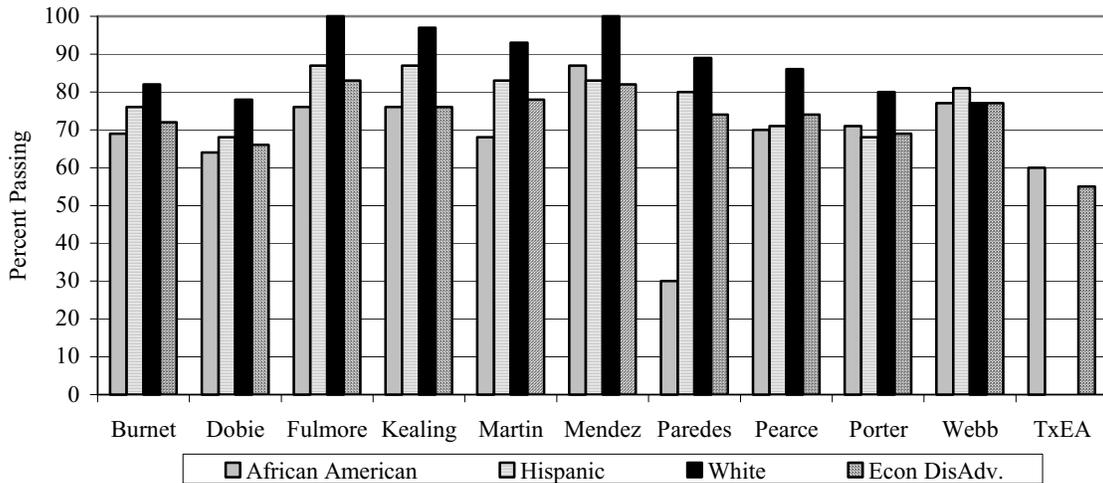


Figure 10: Passing Percentages on TAAS Math for GEAR UP Student Subgroups, Spring 2002



Supporting the need for continued academic improvement indicated by grade reports and TAAS data, GEAR UP staff identified areas where the tutoring program could be improved. All staff reported that they continued to have difficulty in obtaining the attendance information and grade reports necessary to identify failing students and to provide those students with tutoring services in a consistent or timely manner. Few had direct access to the district's student information database system (SASI) or had completed the training necessary to utilize the database. Many of them reported that they were dependent on other campus staff to provide information related to student academic needs and frequently experienced a delay in getting the information in a timely manner.

Once students were identified for tutoring, GEAR UP staff reported that the quality of the tutoring service was variable. The primary obstacle to effective tutoring identified by the GEAR UP staff and tutors was the lack of commitment from and communication with teachers. Some teachers used the tutors as “teaching assistants” to help manage the students in the classroom rather than using the tutor to provide ongoing, intensive assistance for a core group of students. Further, GEAR UP staff observations and tutor self-reports indicated that many of the tutors needed additional and ongoing training in order to use effective tutoring methods. The tutors often had difficulty identifying and using appropriate teaching strategies. Finally, GEAR UP staff and tutors reported that they often did not have appropriate curriculum resources and materials to offer quality tutoring experiences for students.

Summer Programs

To further support student academic growth (Objectives IA-E, Appendix D), GEAR UP continued to sponsor summer learning experiences to meet the needs of a variety of learners. During the second project year, summer program offerings increased. The PSAT/SAT Preparation camp was expanded, and GEAR UP offered a newly developed literature seminar. GEAR UP worked with Southwest Texas University to provide preparation for students getting ready to enroll in high school algebra. Other partners, Huston Tillotson College and St Edwards University, worked with GEAR UP to extend the Camp College experience. Finally, GEAR UP collaborated with other AISD summer school programs to offer intensive academic support for those students at-risk of failing. The following section of this report will describe these summer programs.

PSAT Preparation

The GEAR UP staff and project partner, Learning Systems, expanded summer camp offerings designed to prepare students for the PSAT and SAT tests. GEAR UP provided two sessions of “mini camps” for 157 students who had not previously participated in the first PSAT preparation course (Level I) offered in Summer 2001. Further, GEAR UP enrolled 99 students who had previously completed the PSAT Preparation camp last summer for Level II PSAT/SAT Preparation.

An evaluation of the SAT/ACT preparation camps was completed by 121, or 77%, of Level I and by 48, or 48%, of Level II camp students. Once again, the responses to the course evaluations were overwhelmingly positive as students rated the course content, instruction and applicability. Eighty-five percent of Level I and ninety-four percent of Level II students evaluation reported that they would like to attend a similar camp again to continue learning test-taking skills. Their reasons included the following:



“It was fun and interesting. My teacher is cool!”

“It was challenging and made you really think.”

“It helped me learn more about the PSAT/SAT tests and the strategies to help me answer the questions.”

“I want high SAT scores to get out of high school and into college!”

-- GEAR UP Summer Camp Students

Overall, students reported that they were able to begin understanding the importance of college entrance exams and the role of those exams in the students' future. Of the 8% Level I and 2% of the Level II students who were undecided about continuing with SAT preparation, most of them reported that they already had enough information. However, a few said that they may be persuaded to return if the camp continued to have "cool, fun" teachers. The remaining Level I and Level II students who did not plan to return indicated that they had all the information that they needed. Camp evaluation results are provided in Appendix G.

GEAR UP also implemented two literary seminars held over a two week period. Each seminar was an intensive program focused on literary analysis and critical writing skills. The program was designed to help students transition to the more rigorous coursework expectations of 9th grade Honors or Pre-AP English classes.

The enrollment for this course was small, with only 26 students participating in two classes. Twenty-one of these students completed a course evaluation. Students responded positively to questions concerning the content, instruction, and applicability of the course. Eighty percent indicated that they would take another literary analysis course for the following reasons:



"It was great, and I had lots of fun."
 "I increased my reading skills, and it helped me spend my time in something productive."
 "It prepared me for high school courses. Thanks!"

-- *GEAR UP Literary Seminar Students*

Ten percent said that they "might" return for a similar course that explored additional reading selections. The remaining 10% indicated that they could apply their skills to other reading selections, therefore, they would not need to enroll in a similar camp again. Detailed results of these course evaluations can be found in Appendix H.

Algebra Readiness

Knowing that student proficiency in Algebra is a critical factor in college success (Adelman, 1999), GEAR UP staff implemented an algebra readiness camp designed by Dr. Max Warshauer of Southwest Texas State University. This camp was attended by 185 GEAR UP students and provided an interactive, hands-on environment where students were to develop a solid understanding of algebraic concepts and improve their math skills. The camp employed specially trained 9th grade teachers assigned to GEAR UP high schools. More information concerning the teacher training can be found in the professional development section of this report.

A total of 73 students completed the Orleans-Hanna Algebra Prognosis pre-test and post-test. Although the students began well below grade-level expectation, analysis of these tests indicates that there were statistically significant gains in student math competence. On a grade-level scale, these students' improvement could be compared to just over an entire year's worth of growth.

In addition to the test outcomes, GEAR UP staff and students indicated that they found the math camp experience valuable primarily due to the personalities of the teaching staff. During a program-debriefing meeting, staff discussed the initial difficulty that they had in recruiting teachers that were high-energy and who could develop a strong rapport with students. They acknowledged that when an engaging teacher was present, the students were highly engaged and appeared to be having fun. They believed that the relationships built between the teachers and students would help the students' transition into the 9th grade. On course evaluation forms, students liked the "cool" teachers, enjoyed the interactive learning format, and felt prepared for the expectations of a 9th grade Algebra course.



"The Algebra Readiness Camp was such a surprise. The teacher was great! She was very energetic and dramatic. The recruiting for this camp was difficult. But once the kids got there, they had a good time learning!"

"The Algebra camp was very hands-on. It was attention grabbing. The kids didn't necessarily want to be here to do Algebra, but they worked hard and kept coming back!"

--GEAR UP Project Staff

Camp College

Based on data from the first project year, the GEAR UP project expanded the Camp College experience from 16 students the first year to 62 the second year. The Camp College experience provided students with opportunities for intensive academic support while living in college dormitories for a week. The camps were held at Huston Tillotson College and St Edwards University and provided PSAT/SAT and Algebra readiness preparation along with interdisciplinary content instruction. Examples of daily learning agendas for each Camp College site can be found in Appendix I.

The project evaluator observed camp classroom sessions at both camps and found evidence of high quality teaching and learning. The instructors were enthusiastic and encouraged the students to explore concepts. Students were attentive and actively participated in the classroom activities. They asked many questions as they discussed new concepts.

"It was good for the kids to get to know their peers that were interested in going to college as well. Hopefully, we can continue to foster this idea of support between the students: that doing well in school is cool!"



--GEAR UP Project Staff

Data gathered during a summer program debriefing meeting showed that Camp College was highly valued by all project staff and higher education partners. Staff members perceived that the experience was the most valuable for students as they were able to receive rigorous academic instruction in a real college setting. The camp prepared students for the college lifestyle as they had to work hard in addition to setting their own priorities and demonstrating individual responsibility. Both Huston Tillotson and St. Edwards staff agreed

that the experience was valuable for students and have indicated that they would like to continue providing Camp College in the third project year.

Summer Program Collaboration

In order to efficiently and effectively serve students needing intensive academic remediation, GEAR UP project staff collaborated with two other AISD summer program providers, *Bridges for Success* and the *Reading Acceleration Program (RAP)*. Making phone calls and home visits, project staff contacted GEAR UP students failing between one and four of their core academic courses. As a result, 286 GEAR UP students completed the *Bridges* program designed to help students recover course credits needed for promotion to the next grade level (AISD Summer School Enrollment Records, July 2002).

The *RAP* program was designed to improve the reading skills of students reading significantly below grade level and to provide professional development for teachers wanting to develop their ability to teach reading skills. GEAR UP project staff collaborated with district staff implementing the *RAP* program by identifying and recruiting students for the program and funding three teaching positions to serve the GEAR UP students. A total of thirty-three GEAR UP students completed the program earning a reading elective credit. Three assessments, The Reading Level Indicator by AGS, a timed reading fluency exercise, and the Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE) were used to determine instructional levels and subsequent student outcomes. Twenty-nine students completed pre- and post-testing and showed variable gains in their reading achievement and/or fluency. For detailed information regarding the *RAP* program outcomes, contact Marty Houghen, AISD Department of Curriculum.

Results: Enhanced Guidance and Counseling Service Component

The enhanced guidance and counseling component is designed to develop student awareness of college and career opportunities and the processes involved in taking advantage of those opportunities. The following section of this report describes the project's work towards college preparation and includes information regarding college visits, college and career centers, individual academic and career planning, and annual student and parent surveys. GEAR UP project objectives (Appendix D) articulate the objectives related to this component.

College Visits

In order to begin preparing students to identify post-secondary institutions for enrollment (Objective IIIC, Appendix D), GEAR UP project staff organized college visits for all cohort students. Learning from the college visits of the first project year, the GEAR UP staff increased the communication with staff from colleges and universities that were responsible for planning and conducting the college visit events. Focused dialogues addressed the competencies that students were expected to learn through the experience. Strategies for communicating the information to the students in a developmentally appropriate manner were developed. In addition to the original university partners, the University of Texas, Austin Community College, St. Edward's University, Huston-Tillotson College, and Southwest Texas State University, seven additional higher education institutions provided college visit experiences for GEAR UP students. These institutions include Baylor, Trinity, Our Lady of the Lake, UT at San Antonio, Rice, St. Phillips, and Prairie View Universities. Opportunities for college visits were made available to all GEAR UP students. Some students were able to participate in multiple college visits.

Two visits to Trinity University went beyond the basic college visit model. Top minority students from all eleven middle schools visited this campus where they attended classes in theatre, web design, education, and computer science. Students interacted with a panel of college students who taught them about admissions processes, financial aid, and overcoming obstacles to college enrollment. GEAR UP students participated in a scavenger hunt designed to help them explore the campus.

At the end of the Spring 2002 semester, a debriefing meeting was held to discuss the outcomes of the college visits. Representatives from the higher education partners and GEAR UP staff were in attendance. Field notes and meeting documents showed that the higher education partners continued to find the experience valuable and agreed to support future college visits. All partners and staff agreed that the visits would become more age appropriate at the high school level and would change from providing a general level of exposure and knowledge to an opportunity to obtain specific information that would enable students to work towards post-secondary enrollment. College visits during the third year will focus on the following information: the importance of AP courses and overall course selection, individual academic achievement, SAT performance, and financial aid opportunities.

During interviews, project staff discussed the value and significance of the college visit experience. Project staff reported that the college visits were a mechanism that enabled the students to begin building a vision for their future. They were pleased with the efforts that the college partners had put into the experience and perceived the visits to be more substantive in the second year as students were learning more about college entrance requirements and financial aid packages. They recognized the need to appropriately match the student to a particular college institution depending on student academic achievement, career interests, and personality.



“Kids need to be able to see themselves walking around those campuses, participating in class, eating in college cafeterias, and sleeping in dorm rooms. They need to see that there is a place waiting there just for them. And, they need to start preparing for that future right now.”

-- *GEAR UP Project Staff*

There was also discussion of how the college visit experience served as professional development for teachers. Teachers were becoming more aware of the importance of early college preparation and college entrance requirements. Project staff reported that it may have been the first time that the teachers heard their students' articulate dreams for their future. They described many instances where the college visits seemed improve student and teacher relationships as it was an opportunity for both to engage in dialogue concerning educational goals. After the college visit experience, some teachers were observed incorporating the college preparation information into their “regular” classroom discussions.

Student Leadership Seminar

The college visits helped GEAR UP staff identify student leaders and encourage them to further develop their leadership skills. A total of 55 students, 5 students from each GEAR UP middle school, attended a workshop using Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. The workshop focused on how students could become leaders in their schools, avoid negative peer pressure, and set goals for themselves. A teacher from each of the

middle schools committed to sponsor these students on the individual school campus to support student leadership building after the completion of the workshop. Strategies for building teen leadership on each campus were discussed.

IACP Process

The college visit experiences enabled students to use their learning as they worked their way through the 8th grade level of the IACP curriculum in the second year of the project (Objective IIIA, Appendix D). GEAR UP College and Career Technology Centers provided the space and opportunity for students to engage in individual academic career planning. Students spent time in the centers using software programs, *Oscar* and *Texas Cares* provided through Career Development Resources to explore their interests and learn about careers that align with those interests. Subsequently, students identified the supporting coursework needed to prepare for their identified careers and created an academic plan for grades 8-12 and beyond. (For more information concerning the IACP process, please refer to the 2000-2001 GEAR UP performance report.)

College and Career Centers

Each GEAR UP campus began the school year with a fully functioning College and Career Technology Center (Objectives IIIA and C, Appendix D). The centers were complete with 16-20 computers, LCD projectors, instructional software including Understanding Math, Lexia, and Oscar, college and career awareness software, and print resources that complement the postsecondary search process. GEAR UP staff, parent support specialists, campus teachers, and GEAR UP students utilized the lab in a variety of ways such as classroom academic instruction using the technology resources, tutoring, and individual Internet research to support the completion of homework. The table below provides a summary of the lab use for the Fall and Spring semesters. Note that there were 208 teachers documented as using the centers during the Fall semester. Teachers using the centers during the Spring semester are a subset of the total number of teachers.

Table 6: GEAR UP College and Career Center Use Summary, 2001-2002

	Number of Teachers Using Labs for Classroom Instruction	Average Number of Hours Labs Were Used for Classroom Instruction per Week	Average Number of Hours per Week Labs Used by Project Staff for College and Career Exploration Activities	Average Number of Hours GEAR UP Technology Labs Were in Use Per Week
Fall 2001	208	22.7	4.6	27.3
Spring 2002	106	16.4	2.25	18.65

Source: GEAR UP Lab Use Logs, 2001-2002

Project objectives state that every GEAR UP student will be issued an e-mail address and be paired with an e-mail mentor (Objective IIIA, Appendix D). Due to the

size of the cohort and concern for quality programming, this objective will be implemented incrementally throughout the course of the project. Three GEAR UP schools, Martin, Mendez, Paredes, and Porter began e-mentor programs during this school year. The e-mail mentor initiative was designed to:

- enable students to develop technology skills related to e-mail that will be of use in the higher education setting, ie., sending and receiving assignments and tests, communication with instructors, etc.; and,
- enhance the reading and writing fluency of some of AISD's most academically at-risk students.

In order to manage this task, GEAR UP worked collaboratively with LULAC, Today's Solutions, and URS Radian to recruit, train, and/or provide mentors. Students in developmental reading and keyboarding classes were identified, issued e-mail addresses, and paired with mentors. Training for all mentors was provided. The e-mail mentoring project served 107 students at Martin, Mendez, Paredes, and Porter middle schools.

Project staff interviews revealed that the e-mail mentoring program experienced a less than optimal start. Because of the technical preparation and training needs, the program was not begun until the Spring 2002 semester. Once the students were paired with their mentors, there were some technical difficulties that impacted initial mentoring communication. Once the technical problems were solved, there was a mixed bag of results. Some mentees and mentors were able to communicate regularly while others had more limited exchanges. A number of students were very limited in keyboarding experiences and writing skills. The writing task was very time-consuming for them and impacted the content of their discussions. Other students were not able to access a computer regularly enough to communicate consistently. Project staff felt that additional assistance with monitoring mentoring communication would help to identify difficulties and allow staff to take steps to improve the context of the communications.

Both GEAR UP mentors and mentees completed an e-mail mentor program evaluation form. Thirty-four (32%) mentors and 49 (46%) mentees responded to the evaluation survey. The results of the surveys were generally positive. However, there was some disagreement between the mentors and the mentees on outcomes of the program. In contrast to their mentors, most students felt that the experience helped them to develop academic skills and begin to prepare for their future. The following charts summarize the differences in opinion.

Figure 11: Students Are Able To Use The Experience To Develop Academic Skills.

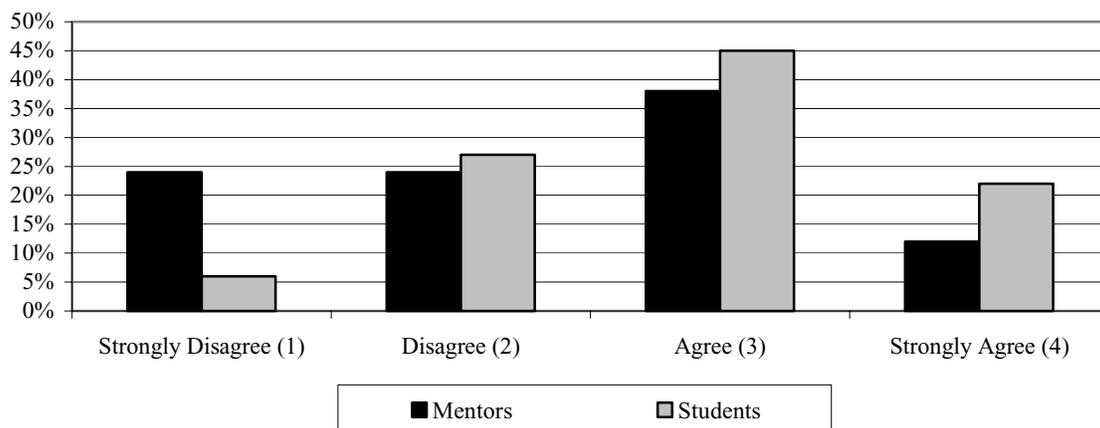
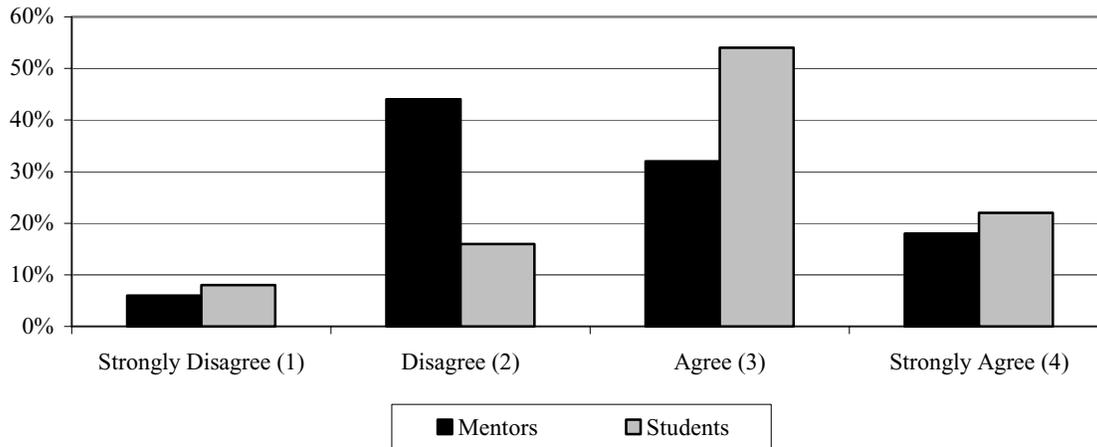


Figure 12: Experience Enabled Students To Prepare For The Future.

On the open ended portion of the survey, 82% of the mentors said that in spite of some technical difficulties and the questionable impact on improved student academic achievement, they were willing to continue mentoring as they believe it to have “great potential” for a positive impact on students. Many liked being able to volunteer their time through the flexibility of e-mail communication. Eighty percent of students completing program evaluation surveys wanted to continue having access to a mentor. They reported it as being “fun” as they simply enjoyed having computer time and e-mail addressed to them, liked having an additional adult to confide in, and enjoyed learning about various careers and educational paths towards them.

While noting the aforementioned needs for improvements, project staff also valued the e-mentoring program. Project staff discussed the potential for the program to motivate students to stay in school and improve self-esteem through connections with adult role models. They reported instances where students were able to connect with mentors causing the students to evaluate their performance in school and begin to set goals for their future. The project staff indicated they felt the “initial piloting” of the program was largely a positive experience and suggested that that the program be extended though all GEAR UP schools at the high school level.

“I would like to be an e-mail mentor again next year. I felt connected to my student and really got a good look at what junior high students face. I was able to see how they associate with their family, peers, and the outside world. It made me realize they face much more peer pressure, harder decisions, and more adult situations than I did at that age.”

-- GEAR UP E-mail Mentor



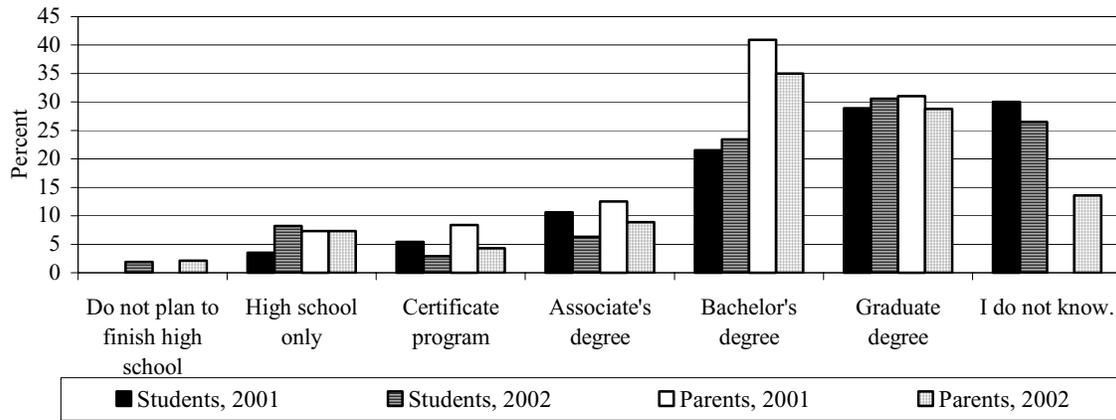
GEAR UP Project Surveys

Each year, the GEAR UP students and parents complete a survey intended to obtain information regarding student college preparation needs. Last year, the data served as baseline information regarding their initial understanding of college preparation. Project services were designed accordingly. At the end of the second project year, the survey helped project staff to set priorities for the transition to high school and modify Spring 2002 project service implementation as necessary. The results of the parent and student surveys are reported in entirety in Appendix E. However, there were a few items on the

survey that were of particular interest to project management and staff as they modified student and parent services. These items are reported below.

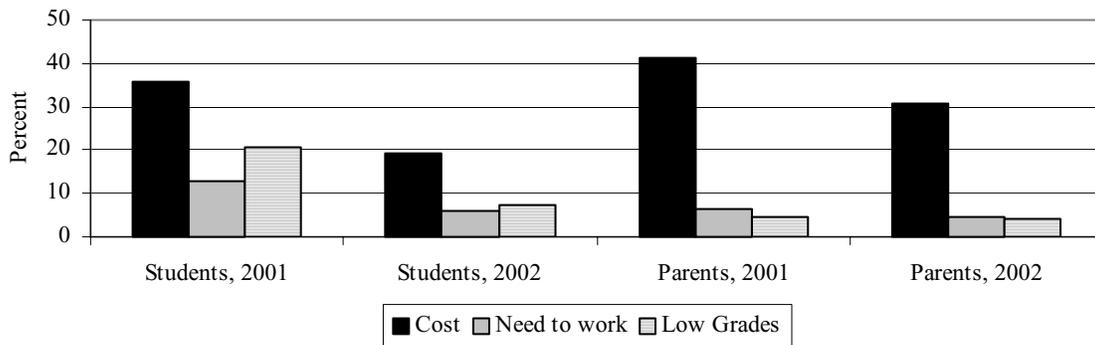
On the survey, students and parents were asked to indicate their expected level of educational attainment. This year, more students anticipated completing a bachelor's or graduate level degree. However, there were still 26% of students still undecided about the level of schooling that they planned to complete. Parents seemed to have slightly lower expectations than they did last year. Since the parent surveys were anonymous both years, it cannot be determined whether parents responding this year are the same persons who responded last year. The following figure shows expectations for educational attainment.

Figure 13: Level of Schooling Expected by GEAR UP Students and Their Parents, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002



To identify obstacles to postsecondary enrollment, the survey asked students and parents to indicate reasons that might prevent student postsecondary enrollment. Both students and their parents continue to report the cost of college as the primary obstacle to post-secondary enrollment. In contrast to the information collected during the first project year, low grades seemed to be less of a concern for the students. The following figure shows the three primary obstacles to college as reported by students and their parents.

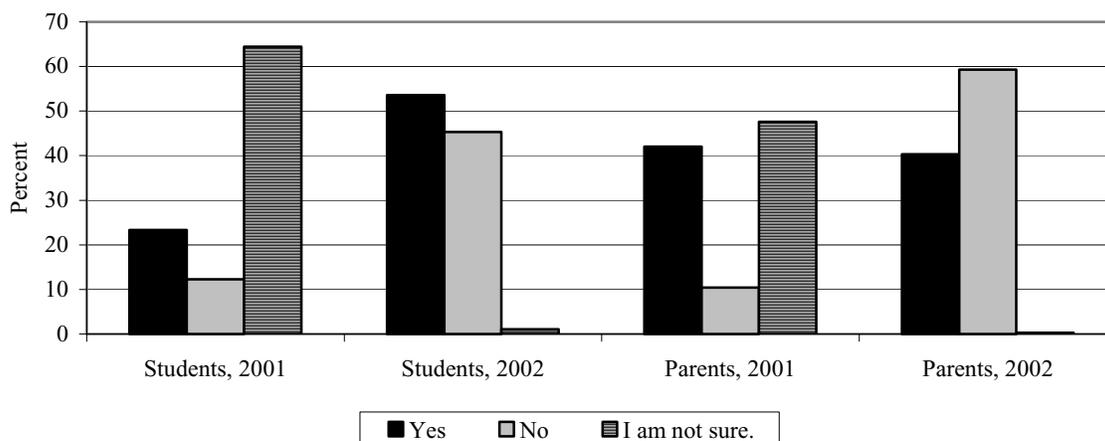
Figure 14: Reasons for Not Enrolling in a Post Secondary Institution Reported by GEAR UP Students and Their Parents, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002



While acknowledging that the costs for college are high, parents and students reported that they are also lacking in the knowledge of exactly how much college will cost them. Thirty percent of students and 32 percent of their parents report having no information about college costs. On the surveys, only 33% of the students and 31% of their parents could estimate the average annual cost of tuition and fees at a four-year public institution in Texas within \$500 with the remainder of the respondents over-estimating those costs.

This lack of knowledge seemed to play out differently when the students and their parents reported whether or not they could “afford” college. This year, more students stated that they could “afford” college as opposed to last year when 64% of the students were undecided. Meanwhile, the percentage of parents reporting that they could afford college remains about the same. However, 48% more parents reported that they could not afford college. The following figure illustrates their responses.

Figure 15: I Can Afford College as Reported by GEAR UP Students and Their Parents, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002



As subsequent survey questions were analyzed, it was found that more students and parents were planning to obtain financial aid. Seventy-six percent of the students this year as opposed to only 21% last year reported that they are planning to obtain financial aid. And, 95% of the parents planned to obtain financial aid. However, their plans did not seem to hinge on their understanding of the processes in securing financial support for college as only 9% of the students and 11.5% of the parents reported that they knew how to go about applying for the financial assistance.

Figure 16: I am Planning to Obtain Financial Aid as Reported by GEAR UP Students and Their Parents, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

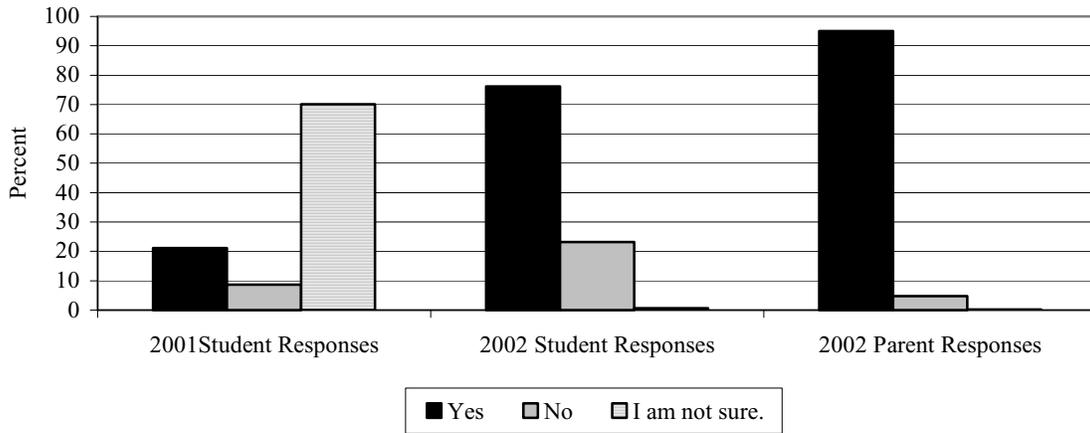
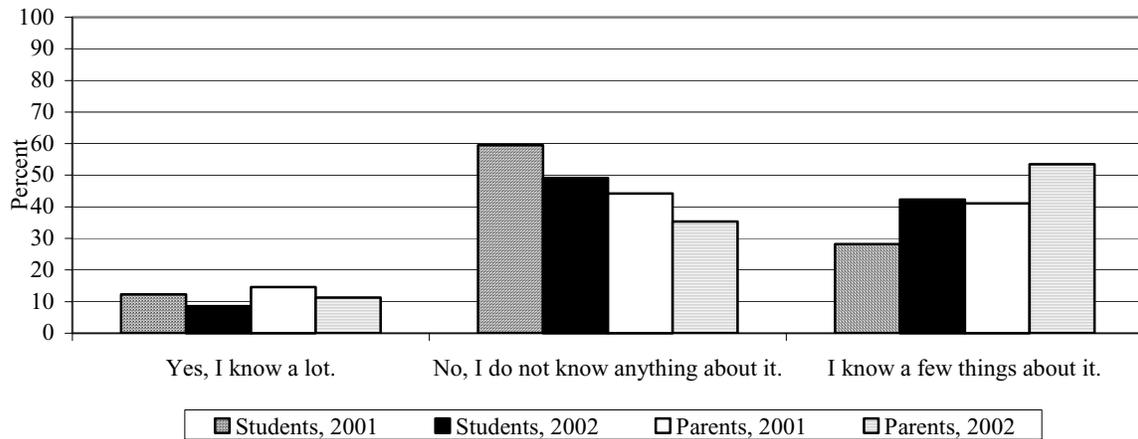


Figure 17: I Know How to Obtain Financial Aid as Reported by GEAR UP Students and Their Parents, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002



Notably, the GEAR UP project management and staff used the data from the parent and student surveys to modify project services before the end of the second project year. They focused on the following interventions and

- increased tutor and mentorship programming designed to improve students’ academic achievement and positive perceptions of school;
- tailored college visit experiences to help students begin setting goals for post-secondary education; and
- continued to provide information concerning educational financial aid resources available to students upon high school graduation.

Results: Professional Development Component

Knowing that program staff and teachers are on the front line in educational program implementation, GEAR UP has been committed to providing them with quality professional development support needed to improve practice, thereby improving the educational experiences for students (Refer to Objectives in Appendix D). The following section of this report describes the project's efforts to provide professional development and the level of participation in GEAR UP supported continuing education opportunities.

Development for GEAR UP Staff

All GEAR UP staff continued to participate in a series of professional development opportunities that supported program implementation efforts. A brief description of their professional development follows.

- *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.
- *Solution Focused Counseling*: These meetings featured sessions on "Solution-Focused Counseling" facilitated by Dr. Linda Metcalf. The purpose of this training was to enable project staff to guide students and their families through a solution-focused problem solving process.
- *Biblioteca Workshop*: Facilitated by DAAMARS, a project partner, GEAR UP Parent Support Specialists and other campus support personnel were trained to use the *Bibliotecas para Padres* (Library for Parents). This library consists of 150+ books published in Spanish covering a variety of topics including gang involvement, homework assistance, learning disabilities, women's issues, and general medical information. DAAMARS also provided information on running effective parent meetings and involving parents in the educational process.
- *Student Achievement Workshop*: Teachers from each middle school and GEAR UP staff completed training provided by Premier Planners. This workshop provided strategies for encouraging students to develop leadership skills, avoid negative peer pressure, and set goals.
- *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.
- *District Counselor's Workshop, Spring 2002*: This opportunity was created between the AISD Counseling Department and GEAR UP project management. The purpose of this workshop was to build relationships between the GEAR UP staff and high school counselors and begin the strategic planning process in preparation for the transition to the high school level.

GEAR UP Teacher Professional Development Overview

During the second project year, GEAR UP project staff continued to identify and recommend existing AISD professional development courses for GEAR UP teachers who were to complete 20 hours of development above what was required by the district (Objective IIA, Appendix D). The overall teacher participation in professional development increased during the second year. However, only 50% of the teachers that participated in GEAR UP supported professional development met the 20 hour

expectation. The following tables provide a summary of GEAR UP teacher completion of recommended professional development offerings provided by AISD professional development academy.

Table 7: Comparison of GEAR UP Teachers Completing Courses from AISD Professional Development Academy (PDA), 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

School Year	Number of GEAR UP Teachers	Number of GEAR UP Teachers Completing AISD PDA Courses	Average Number of Hours	Median Number of Hours
2000-2001	245 (100%)	127 (52%)	23.4	10.5
2001-2002	251 (100%)	192 (76%)	30.8	21.25

Source: Teacher CPE hours reported by AISD Professional Development Academy, August 2002

Table 8: GEAR UP Teachers Completing Professional Development Courses from AISD Professional Development Academy (PDA), 2001-2002

School Name	Number of GEAR UP Teachers	Number of GEAR UP Teachers Completing AISD PDA Courses N / % of Teachers	Average Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Hours	Median Continuing Professional Education (CPE) Hours
Burnet	25	22 (88%)	59	48
Dobie	21	11 (52%)	33.3	22
Fulmore	30	21 (70%)	14.1	8
Kealing	47	37 (79%)	26.7	24
Martin	17	13 (76%)	25.4	18
Mendez	20	18 (90%)	24.8	22
Paredes	26	19 (73%)	29.8	25.5
Pearce	21	16 (76%)	15	10.5
Porter	19	13 (68%)	40.5	27
Webb	25	22 (88%)	39	31
TOTAL	251	192 (76%)	30.8	21.25

Source: Teacher CPE hours reported by AISD Professional Development Academy, August 2002

Furthermore, the GEAR UP project continued to support teachers as they participated in a variety of professional development opportunities outside of the Professional Development Academy offerings. Teachers participated in professional conferences, workshops, and engaged in curriculum development activities. GEAR UP covered the cost of substitutes for the classroom and supplied teachers with stipends and/or registration fees as they engaged in professional development opportunities focused on core curriculum or test preparation skills.

Using GEAR UP budget records and professional development certificates, project staff documented professional development taking place outside the AISD Professional Development Academy. These professional development activities included teacher participation in content-focused regional and national conferences or workshops, curriculum development, and graduate coursework. For these, GEAR UP provided teachers with financial compensation to cover registration fees, travel expenses, classroom substitutes, and stipends. During the second project year, overall AISD GEAR UP campus expenditures on teacher professional development was down by 11%. Three of the ten GEAR UP schools decreased their spending on professional development by 42%-45% while the rest of the schools increased their spending anywhere from 3%-68%. Continuing hours of education were not calculated for professional development taking place outside of PDA due to the variability in the ways course credits were given. The following table shows GEAR UP campus professional development expenditures for the first and second project years.

Table 9: Summary of GEAR UP Professional Development Expenditures, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

Campus Name	2000-2001	2001-2002	% of Increase or Decrease
Burnet	\$11,975	\$6,784.02	- 44%
Dobie	\$ 7,350	\$5,774.34	- 21%
Fulmore	\$ 3,137	\$3,779.00	+ 17%
Kealing	\$8,375	\$12,156.50	+ 31%
Martin	\$5,975	\$7,210.22	+ 17%
Mendez	\$11,400	\$6,639.68	- 42%
Paredes	\$13,735	\$7,498.08	- 45%
Pearce	\$2,250	\$4,560.00	+ 51%
Porter	\$3,700	\$11,715.20	+ 68%
Webb	\$9,307	\$9,518.85	+ 37%
Subtotal	\$77,204	\$68,935.89	- 11%
Texas Empowerment Academy	\$2,470	***	
TOTAL	\$79,674	\$68,935.89	

Source: Professional development expenditures documented within GEAR UP budget report for the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 project years. ***Expenditure summary unavailable at the time of this report due to differentiated financial structures.

During interviews, project staff provided information concerning outcomes of GEAR UP professional development support. Project staff believed that these opportunities were of high quality as they had been identified and approved by GEAR UP professional development specialist and other district curriculum staff. They reported that

both campus administrators and teachers expressed their appreciation for the professional development support provided by GEAR UP. However, they could not estimate the effect that professional development may have had on improving teaching practices or student achievement.

Further, GEAR UP staff continued to report a variety of obstacles that prevented teachers from participating in professional development opportunities. They reported that there are often no substitutes to cover classrooms for teachers that want to participate in professional development taking place during the school day. Further, teachers had difficulty finding the time for professional development, because they had too many other teaching responsibilities that took up their time. Most importantly, teachers reported that they did not feel that professional development opportunities outside of the school was relevant to their needs.

GEAR UP Professional Development Initiatives

Learning Systems consultants, a GEAR UP partner, conducted a three-day training course for 7th and 8th grade teachers teaching two levels of PSAT/SAT preparation camps for GEAR UP students. Sixteen teachers completed the Level I and thirteen more completed the Level II training focused on teaching PSAT/SAT format and scoring, strategies for analyzing test items, and creative ways for implementing the curriculum. At the end of this training, all participants completed a course evaluation. Overall, teachers rated highly the SAT/ACT mini-camp training that they received. 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. Refer to Appendix F for a complete summary.

A de-briefing session was held September 12, 2002 to discuss the PSAT/SAT

“The session was excellent despite the fact that it came on the heels of the school year! I found it fascinating and engrossing. I can’t wait to share the info!”



-- *GEAR UP Summer Camp Teacher*

training and summer camp outcomes. Teachers attributed the success of the camps to an intensive professional development experience, a well-designed curriculum, and the recruitment of dedicated students. They shared specific experiences and discussed adjusting the course to meet the scheduling needs of high school students. Many agreed to continue teaching the PSAT/SAT preparation curriculum to students preparing for the test during Fall 2002.

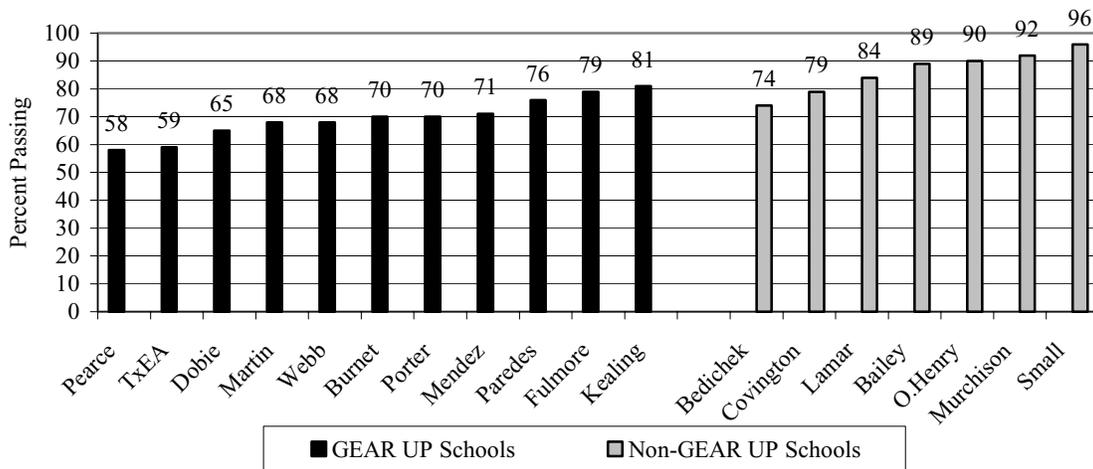
GEAR UP also provided two weeks of intensive summer training for nine 9th grade algebra teachers implementing the SWT Mathworks camp. The purpose of this training was to enable the teachers to effectively implement an interactive algebra curriculum during the summer and support continued improvement in their overall teaching practice. Each morning of this training, teachers would observe sessions of the Mathworks camp being implemented in San Marcos, Texas. Their afternoons were spent studying the theoretical framework and methodologies to be employed during the camp. Follow-up training sessions will be provided during the 2002-2003 school year for these teachers.

Eight of the teachers who were trained followed through with the implementation of the GEAR UP Algebra Readiness camps. During this time, a SWT Mathworks professional development instructor observed the teachers as they implemented the camps at Akins, Crockett, Lanier, LBJ, McCallum, and Reagan high schools. The classroom

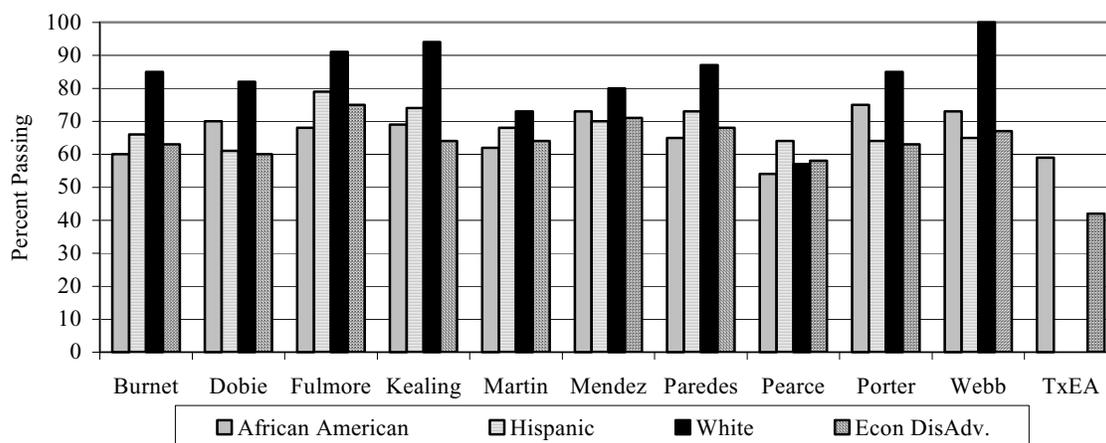
observations were rated using a performance scale based on the tenets of instruction endorsed during their training. With exception of one teacher with a “fair” rating, the analysis of the observations showed that the teachers were rated as either “good” or “excellent” in their knowledge of content, use of methodology, classroom management, and assessment practice.

The GEAR UP project continued to address student academic needs by offering related professional development support. For example, TAAS scores for the 2001-2002 school year continued to show the need for student academic improvement in the area of writing. GEAR UP schools generally had lower passing percentages than non-GEAR UP schools. The following figures compares GEAR UP and Non-GEAR UP student TAAS writing test results.

Figure 18: 8th Grade GEAR UP Student And Non GEAR UP Students TAAS Writing Test Results, Spring 2002.



Further, analysis of TAAS writing scores show that there are still gaps in achievement between the student subgroups at each GEAR UP campus. With exception of Pearce Middle School, white students consistently outperformed their African American, Hispanic, and economically disadvantaged peers with at least 70% of the students passing the TAAS writing test. Only four GEAR UP campuses (Dobie, Mendez, Porter, and Webb) had at least 70% of African American students passing the TAAS writing test. Fulmore, Kealing, Mendez, and Paredes were the only campuses that had at least 70% of Hispanic students passing the TAAS writing test. Fulmore and Mendez were the only campuses that had at least 70% of their economically disadvantaged students pass the TAAS writing test. The following figure shows the passing percentages for all GEAR UP student subsets.

Figure 19: TAAS Writing Test Results for GEAR UP Student Subsets, Spring 2002

In response, GEAR UP continued to work towards the goal of having all GEAR UP cohort teachers trained through the Capital City Writes Institute. This 3-week summer training immersed teachers in their own writing experience while learning writing process theory and instructional methodology. This year, eight teachers completed the training, at a cost of \$1,125 per teacher for a total of \$9,000.

Results: Parental Involvement Component

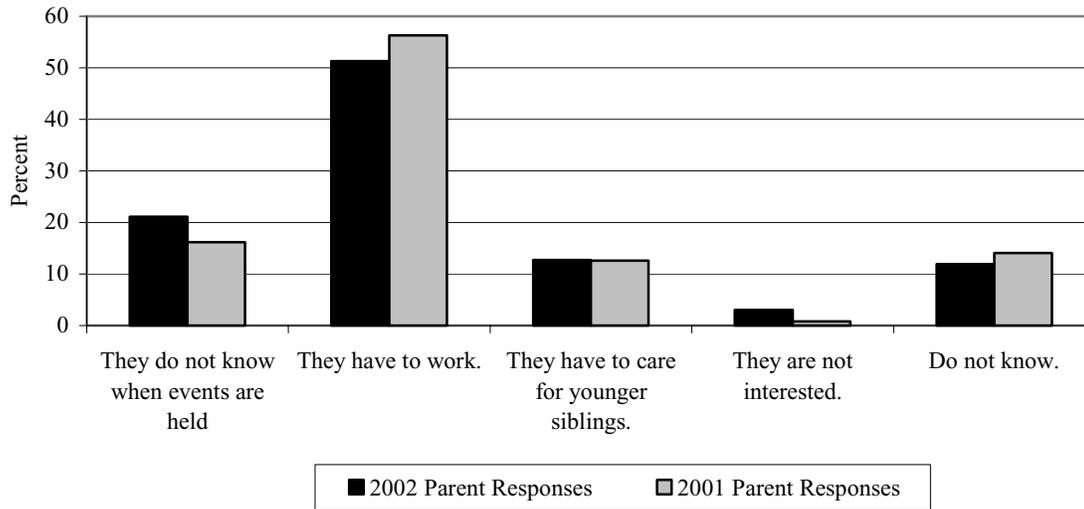
A distinctive feature of GEAR UP project is the role of the full-time parent support specialist on each campus. The primary responsibility for the specialist is to maintain consistent and frequent communication with parents of the GEAR UP student cohort. Using information from the first year's GEAR UP Parent Survey and other parent meetings, GEAR UP staff worked to address parent concerns related to student academic success and overall college preparation.

During Year 2, steps were taken to increase communication with parents and offer meaningful parent support programs. GEAR UP staff connected with parents via phone calls, home visits, small, on-going "coffees" held to address special interest topics such as the newly purchased Biblioteca, homework assistance, and recommended course enrollment; large group information sessions; and community collaborations. The following portion of this report describes parent services (Objectives IVA-E in Appendix D) that were developed in response to articulated parent needs.

Home Visits

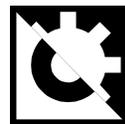
GEAR UP staff continued to focus on barriers to parent involvement. The surveys for both project years indicated that work hours continued to be an obstacle to parent participation in school events. The following figure summarizes survey responses for the first two project years.

Figure 20: Reasons for Not Attending School Events as Reported by GEAR UP Students and Their Parents, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002



Because participation in school events is often difficult for parents (Objective IVC and D, Appendix D), home visits became a priority for the GEAR UP Parent Support Specialists. During the second year, they committed to making at least 8-10 home visits each week to discuss upcoming GEAR UP events, academic preparation, attendance, discipline issues, and financial aid options. This allowed them to communicate directly with parents who did not have phones or transportation to the school and enabled them to address individual needs within an environment that was “safe” or “more comfortable” for parents. Project staff considered this parent service to be the most important intervention within the parent involvement component of the project.

Interviews revealed that the time spent making home visits yielded positive outcomes for the students, families, and school personnel. Staff obtained information from the parents during home visits that helped them identify additional services that would further assist families to promote academic success. They reported that home visits enabled them to begin building personal relationships with students and their families. These relationships helped to increase the frequency and quality of subsequent parent communication. Project staff reported that parents often began to take more active roles in supporting their child’s education.



“The home visit is probably the most important service that we offer. The trust that between the school and the family helps us meet student needs. We can all work together.” -- *GEAR UP staff*

“Home visits were a major success. The parents are more comfortable in their own environment. The information that we gathered during our visits was essential in providing other student and parent services.”

-- *GEAR UP staff*

Focus on Our Youth Seminars

In conjunction with the St. David’s Foundation (a non-profit organization interested in community health issues), GEAR UP sponsored the 4th Annual *Focus on Our Youth*

meeting series titled “Are you Talking to Me?.” These meetings featured motivational speaker, Lt. Colonel (Ret.) Consuelo Castillo Kickbush and addressed issues related to parent and teen communication. Project records show that 531 parents from Burnet, Dobie, and Fulmore middle schools were in attendance.

Of the GEAR UP parents who attended “Are you Talking to Me?,” 171 completed program questionnaires distributed by the St. David’s Foundation. On these questionnaires, parents identified communication problems that they have with their children and ways that they can improve communication with their children. Parents also identified the following areas for which they needed more information: addressing teen issues such as drugs or teen pregnancy, discipline, parent/teacher relationships, anger management, and student academic achievement. Project staff used this information from parents to provide appropriate parent support services. For complete results of the *Focus on Our Youth* evaluation published in May 2002, contact the St. David’s Foundation in Austin, Texas.

Parent Education Meetings

The GEAR UP staff held a number of parent meetings throughout the school year to focus on issues related to student academic success and college preparation with the expectation that 50% of GEAR UP parents would participate in some type of parent meeting during the year (Objective IV, C). These meetings took place on and off school campuses using a variety of formats for large and small groups. GEAR UP parent service records show that parents representing 942 separate households or approximately 30% of



“Attendance has increased. I used to have only 1 or 2 parents come. Now, I can expect 20-25 parents to attend. I know that doesn’t seem like many, but it’s an improvement. I can hardly wait to see how it will continue to grow.”

--GEAR UP staff

the cohort have attended GEAR UP parent workshops/seminars as of April 10, 2002. Many of these parents attended multiple meetings throughout the year.

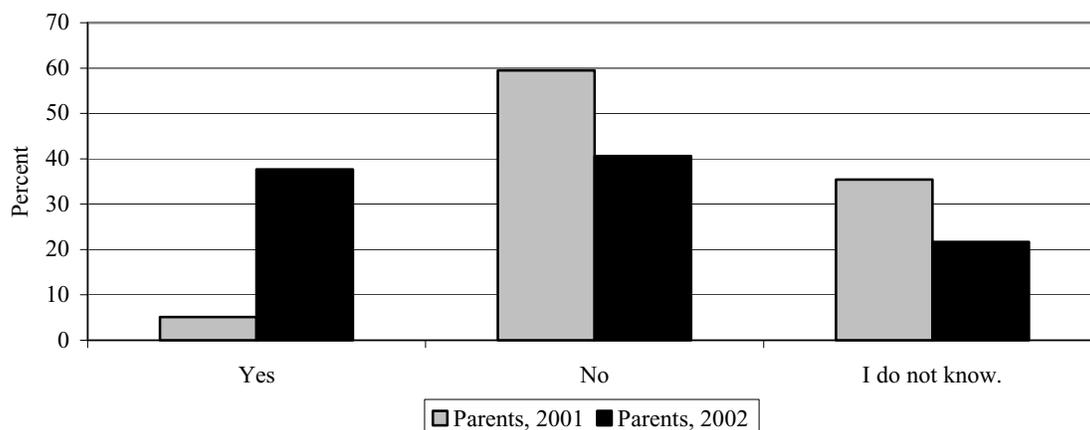
Most of the GEAR UP parent meetings were personalized for small groups. These groups met on the school campus and in private homes. Many times, the parent support specialists used the *Bibliotecas para Padres* (Library for Parents) to facilitate parent learning. Topics for learning included how to recognize gang involvement, help with homework, and recognize learning disabilities in children.

All GEAR UP schools hosted Recommended High School Plan nights during the spring semester to communicate student academic plan information and assist parents in making sure that their children are prepared for post secondary enrollment. These evening programs addressed the Recommended High School Program, the District’s new graduation requirement, along with the TEXAS Grant Program that pays tuition and fees for 150 college hours, or 6 years, for financially eligible students. GEAR UP campuses reported that approximately 573 parents attended these meetings. At the end of this process, all students completed a course selection sheet for high school.

While parent involvement has fallen short of project expectation, data indicate that more parents are participating in events designed to prepare students for college during the second project year. Smaller parent workshops only attended by 2-5 parents in the first year are now average between 10-20 parents each time. Parent meeting sign-in sheets indicate that the number of Spanish-speaking parents attending GEAR UP meetings has

increased. Many of these meetings were presented exclusively in Spanish. The parent surveys showed that more parents reported being assisted with college preparation issues.

Figure 21: Someone Has Helped Me Learn About Preparing My Child for College as Reported by GEAR UP Parents, 2001-2002



The GEAR UP project staff attributed the increased parent participation to several factors. While time consuming, phone calls and home visits to individual homes seemed to personalize GEAR UP services and encourage parent participation. GEAR UP encouraged participation from the Spanish-speaking parent population by having all meetings translated or holding separate meetings in Spanish. Project staff also reported that parents are beginning to “spread the word” about GEAR UP support services within their own social networks and invite their own friends to attend meetings.

The consistent work with parents appears to be a factor for an improved climate between the school and the home. Staff consistently reported that the ability to work with the same group of parents each school year has enabled them to know the families more intimately and develop relationships with those families. As a result, services were personalized to specifically meet needs as identified by the parents. They also reported that more parents were initiating contact in search of student academic information, social service references, and college preparation information.

Consistent communication with parents also was reported to improve student academic support. GEAR UP staff participated on IMPACT (solution-focused dropout prevention) teams and in teacher-parent conferences to assist in providing parent and student support services. GEAR UP staff worked throughout the year to provide timely information to parents regarding student attendance, grades, and discipline enabling the parent to provide the student with support from the home before it was too late to improve student outcomes at school. Staff and parents both reported that information about college preparation enabled



“Their (parents) expectation for their child’s performance seems to be changing. They are beginning to see that their child is capable of making good grades and has the chance to go to college. Parents that initially told me that college wasn’t for them are now beginning to say otherwise.”

--GEAR UP Staff

the parent to more effectively assist the student in making choices related to course enrollment and other school activities. Staff directly attributed the increased student summer program enrollment to the communication with parents and their subsequent support.

In addition to specific benefits, staff experienced several challenges as they worked to support parents. Project staff interviews revealed that parent perceptions of college and GEAR UP services are difficult to change. They reported an overwhelming number of parents have not been inclined to participate in meetings related to college preparation and financial aid, as they assume that it is too early to begin this preparation. As indicated by the survey and in parent conferences, they report many of the parents still believe that the cost of college is too burdensome for their family. Finally, project staff described their struggle with communicating GEAR UP project services as “tools for empowerment” rather than a social service “handouts”. They searched for ways to better communicate the information to parents without seeming condescending.

To overcome some of the challenges, project staff sought proactive and consistent communication with parents. Rather than depending on phone calls and home visits to address special events, staff suggested more reliable and timely communication methods be utilized. This communication does not supplant the individualized contact, but it supplies a regular source of information to parents and enables them to plan for participation well in advance. Both parents and staff suggested that GEAR UP provide a project-wide newsletter containing a calendar of major events across the district. Additionally, they suggested that GEAR UP events be included on campus calendars. They expressed a desire for a “GEAR UP hotline” that families could call for homework assistance or information on upcoming events.

DISCUSSION

Project Highlights

The GEAR UP project staff worked diligently towards meeting project goals in all four components of the project. Steadily data-driven, GEAR UP project staff provided valuable support interventions for students, teachers, and parents. A summary of project highlights is provided in the following section of this report.

Academic Program Collaboration

At the end of the second project year, TAAS passing rates in reading and math had improved overall. While the GEAR UP Project cannot take all of the credit, numerous reports indicated that the tutoring offered by GEAR UP was a major factor in student success on TAAS. The staff often described how the relationship between the various school personnel and community partners provided the expertise and resources necessary for providing extra academic assistance for a large number of students. GEAR UP staff credited student improvement on TAAS to having an expanded tutoring staff and flexibility offered by the various tutoring formats. Students had opportunities to participate in both ongoing tutoring services and special study sessions focused on their specific learning needs.

Notably, the GEAR UP project staff did not work in isolation towards achieving their own project goals, but worked collaboratively with other district programs in order to support student academic achievement. The collaboration provided the information necessary to determine project priorities, reduce overlap of assistance provided between projects, and develop services for continuing needs not currently being met. The collaboration between GEAR UP and other student support networks led to an increase of students participating in summer programs as many of them were able to participate in programs that would not have been available to them without partnership development. Examples of this collaboration can be found in the collaboration between the *Bridges to Ninth Grade Success* and *AVID* programs.

The *Bridges to Ninth Grade Success* program offers extended learning time for 9th grade students, course credit recovery, and individualized, ongoing student assessment. In order to ensure that GEAR UP cohort students who were at-risk for failing 8th grade could be promoted into the 9th grade, GEAR UP staff contacted families and assisted them in enrolling their child for the *Bridges* summer school program to make-up lacking course requirements needed for promotion. *Bridges* served 286 GEAR UP students last summer. In Year 3, GEAR UP and *Bridges* will work together on 9th grade student case management to ensure that their respective services are not duplicated and that students are served more efficiently.

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) is a college preparatory program serving predominantly first generation college attendees. AVID provided intensive academic support to GEAR UP students who elected to complete this course. In AVID classes, GEAR UP students received tutoring, learned critical study skills, and participated in college visits thereby developing the skills necessary to be successful in rigorous coursework. In turn, GEAR UP supported AVID financially by providing tutors to work with the GEAR UP students, assisting with costs associated with college visits, and contributing to their library of supplies and materials.

Guidance and Counseling Service Partnerships

The GEAR UP staff and school counselors engaged in ongoing program planning and collaboration to address project sustainability issues. GEAR UP management hosted two all-day strategic planning workshops during which best practices from counselors and the GEAR UP staff were identified and shared. Additionally, recent legislation passed by the Texas Legislature regarding early college awareness was discussed. Plans for the utilization of tools developed by the state GEAR UP Project were put into place, and ideas for future collaborations were developed.

Also, the GEAR UP staff and the AISD Guidance and Counseling Department began to work cooperatively to provide services for students and their families. Joint planning and information meetings were held throughout the year. *Solution-Focused Counseling* training was provided for all personnel to develop the skills and consistency in problem-solving methods used by all staff working with GEAR UP students. GEAR UP staff supported the school-counseling program as they communicated consistently with parents on a wide variety of topics. Finally, GEAR UP staff assisted the counseling staff in implementing the *Individualized Academic Career Planning* process for 8th grade students in the classroom and hosting the Recommended High School Plan Nights.

Higher Education Partnerships

One of the major strengths of the GEAR UP project is the partner-relationships that have been built with institutions of higher education. These partnerships enabled GEAR UP staff to begin tailoring the college visits according to continuing student and parent information needs. In addition to working with the five original higher education partners, GEAR UP collaborated with eight additional post-secondary institutions. This enabled GEAR UP staff to take all of the campuses on a large-group visit and smaller groups of students on college visits specific to student interests and aptitudes. As a result, students recognized the importance of the field trips and reported them to be the most helpful strategy in assisting them to prepare for college. Further, more students report that they are planning to attend college and obtain financial aid in order to make that dream a reality.

Parent Support Services

The GEAR UP parent support specialists consistently utilized best-practices as identified in the current research literature (Tinkler, 2002). They serve as a consistent school-contact for parents as the GEAR UP cohort progresses through both the middle and high schools. This seems exceptionally helpful at the secondary level where parents often struggle to find out whom to contact in matters regarding their children's progress. The top priority of the parent support specialists has clearly been to create an environment that encourages parents to address issues of their concern as indicated by the numerous hours they have spent making personalized phone calls to parents and conducting home visits. Additionally, the project staff has ensured that non-English speaking parents were able to actively participate in all parent events as they used translators and translation headsets or conducted Spanish-only meetings. As a result, the project staff reports that they feel that they are beginning to "know" the families that they work with and to develop relationships with those families. This relationship building shows promise for increasing the level of parent involvement in their child's education.

Sustaining Services at the Middle School Level

Recognizing the positive outcomes of GEAR UP's early college preparation interventions, several GEAR UP middle schools have committed to sustaining selected GEAR UP support services in their schools for following classes of students. Principals from Burnet, Mendez, Fulmore, Paredes, Pearce, and Webb middle schools reported plans to maintain a teaching assistant position for 2002-2003 to manage the tutoring program and use of the College and Career Centers. They plan to continue employing federal work-study students to tutor 6th, 7th, and 8th graders attending their schools. GEAR UP project staff agreed to assist their former principals in training staff at the middle school to handle the logistics of tutoring program and to include the middle school tutors in training that will be offered to GEAR UP high school tutors. Further, the Guidance and Counseling Department is planning to incorporate a required college campus visit as a standard of service at the 8th grade for all AISD Middle Schools beginning 2002-2003.

Capacity Building

The GEAR UP project has undoubtedly provided a number of intensive, memorable learning opportunities for the students, parents, and a variety of school personnel that will lead towards continuing this concentrated college preparation for additional groups of students. These project supported events will be unforgettable for all as many have been involved in a series of "firsts": the first time that they have communicated regularly with school staff about college opportunities, been intimately involved in activities on college campuses, spent time with someone in college or in a unique career field, made personalized plans for future education and careers, or have received information about financial aid availability. As these series of firsts become a standard way of thinking and acting for students, parents, and school personnel, the capacity for continuing college preparation will be built. This capacity building may be as simple as increasing the number of focused conversations about the importance of college preparation and enrollment among families, neighbors, and friends and institutionalizing the way that all members of the school system communicate expectations of post-secondary enrollment for all students.

Challenges

Challenges to implementation continued to surface during the second year. The following section of the report describes a few of the major challenges that were experienced during the second project year.

Student Information Access and Service Documentation

Identifying students eligible for services was a difficult process for GEAR UP staff. The student cohort was highly mobile (Table 2) causing constant fluctuations in enrollment. Not all GEAR UP staff had access to the most current student enrollment information and often relied on other campus staff members to inform them of student enrollment changes. The delayed access to enrollment information often meant that GEAR UP staff were not able to identify students for academic support or provide their families with services in a timely manner. To further complicate the situation, GEAR UP staff often experienced delay in accessing current student grade information, impacting referrals for tutoring services.

To document student and parent service provision, all campus sites utilized GEAR UP student services reporting software provided by the Department of Education. Training to use the software program and enter student and parent service data took place at the beginning of the school year. Follow-up training was provided as necessary. Although the data entry proved to be time-consuming and there continued to be variability in the interpretation of how services should be titled or entered, this software appeared initially to work well at the campus level.

When merging and analysis of the student service data was attempted, it became apparent that the software would not properly aggregate the campus data due to the complexity in calculating the mean and median for 470 available participant service combinations offered to the students and their parents. The existing data files were also structured in such a way that the typical database and spreadsheet programs could not hold the data, much less perform simple statistics. Thus, project management had to obtain alternative systems late in the second project year for the documentation and analysis of student and parent services.

Tutoring Consistency and Effectiveness

GEAR UP provided flexibly structured tutoring services to meet the needs of thousands of students. However, this flexibility also meant that consistency in and effectiveness of tutoring services was variable both between classrooms and across campuses. Many times, tutors were assigned to teachers to work with students in the classroom. They were instructed to circulate throughout the room and assist any student who was in need of help. While this model provided “just in time” assistance for students, many of those needing more intensive help were served sporadically. For tutoring taking place outside of the classroom, teachers did not always refer students for help on a consistent basis. Students were often times randomly chosen to work with a tutor simply based on the opportunity rather than real need. Further, student participation in tutoring after school hours was voluntary. Students were not held accountable for consistent attendance. Finally, tutors often lacked curriculum related materials and often requested assistance in determining appropriate strategies when working with students as many of the tutors were not familiar with grade level or content learning expectations. Thus, the overall program effectiveness and outcomes for students was difficult to determine.

Professional Development Issues

Data showed that the GEAR UP project supported the professional development of project staff and teachers by continuing to identify opportunities for participation, providing funding, and offering a few specialized courses supporting specific project objectives. However, there were still approximately 25% of the GEAR UP teachers not completing any hours of professional development outside of the district minimum requirements for the 2001-2002 school year. Further, 50% of the teachers that did participate in GEAR UP supported professional development failed to complete 20 hours above basic district expectations.

Data revealed that a lack of teacher participation in professional development has continued for several reasons. GEAR UP staff discussed the pressures related to the improvement of student learning and overall achievement. When teachers are out of the classroom, even for professional development purposes, student learning may be compromised. In some cases, the campus administrators would not grant permission for the teachers to participate in continued professional development that took place during the

school day, as they were not willing to sacrifice the teacher/student contact time. In other cases, substitutes simply were not available to cover classes while teachers were away. Further, teachers often did not perceive the relevance of the professional development to their day-to-day job responsibilities making it difficult for project staff to encourage their participation in ongoing professional development. GEAR UP staff also reported that teachers were often reluctant to commit to activities outside of their assigned teaching responsibilities for reasons such as “low morale” or being “overwhelmed with other tasks.”

Parent Involvement

Repeatedly, project staff reported an increase in the number of parents participating in GEAR UP sponsored meetings during the second year as compared to the first year of operation. Parent participation in the *Focus on Our Youth* program series and the *Recommended High School Plan Nights* were the highest ever recorded for several campuses. The GEAR UP staff attributed these successes to their commitment to building relationships between the home and the school. However, they also reported that the improved level of parent participation was not consistent across the school year or campuses.

All staff reported the continuing challenge of encouraging increased parent participation. Project Objective IV-C states that 50% of parents will attend a parent meeting each year. This year, records showed that only 30% of parents had been to at least one parent meeting. Additionally, project service records show that regardless of the time that GEAR UP staff spent contacting parents about GEAR UP events, it was often the same parents who chose to participate in school events over and over. In addition to the often low participation numbers, GEAR UP staff were concerned about addressing the diminishing parent participation levels as students move on to the high school level. They called for ongoing inquiry into creative and effective intervention strategies.

Recommendations

The results of this evaluation continue to show the enormous amount of work completed by the *GEAR UP Austin* project staff. As a direct result of formative data use, services were modified and enhanced during the second year. In review of predominantly positive results, the following recommendations have been identified for further consideration during the next stages of project implementation at the high school level:

Use the most accurate student information for tracking the academic progress of a highly mobile student population and implementing effective program services.

Time after time, project staff described the challenges related to providing effective student and parent services without access to timely student enrollment and academic information. Thus, it is recommended that GEAR UP staff decrease their dependence on other school personnel to provide the information and increase their utilization of the district student information system. This would enable them to implement program services more efficiently and effectively. In order to do so, project management will need to obtain security authorization and access to the student information system for all GEAR UP staff, require staff to complete higher levels of training, and communicate expectations for consistent student information use across the project sites.

Moreover, outcomes for the project participants were often difficult to determine due to technical problems related to the database software provided by the Department of

Education and the variability in the way that services were reported across the campuses. It is recommended that project management choose a reliable method for documenting project services and determine standards for reporting those services, so that data can be formatively thereby increasing the chances that project services can be adjusted and improved throughout the year.

Directly align all project support services with district goals and initiatives in order to increase project effectiveness.

The GEAR UP project staff continues to be challenged as they work towards increasing levels of student achievement and encouraging teachers to participate in professional development. A laundry list of reasons can explain the many challenges, but they all point to the fact that there is still a disconnect between student and teacher performance expectations, current instructional practices, and the support services offered by GEAR UP.

GEAR UP academic support for students has been quite comprehensive, however the project evaluation data showed that the tutoring program effectiveness should be increased to make a significant improvement in the levels of student academic achievement. Whether tutoring took place within or outside of the classroom, the students needed to receive tutoring services more consistently in order to make real gains in their academic achievement. Most importantly, tutoring should be aligned with curriculum and student achievement expectations. The data showed that the tutoring staff did not always utilize effective tutoring methods. Many times, the tutors were assisting with subjects outside their area of expertise. Constantly, tutors requested more information related to course curriculum and age-appropriate strategies for communicating concepts to students. To address these challenges, it is recommended that the project should provide training for tutors in core content areas that are aligned with district curriculum and state accountability tests. The tutor training should be offered throughout the year to accommodate ongoing training needs for current and incoming tutoring staff.

Supporting the recommendation for increased alignment between project services and district goals, it is recommended that the GEARUP project offer ongoing, campus-based professional development for teachers directly linked to content areas and specific school improvement goals. Data revealed that time availability and the perception of relevance continued to be obstacles that kept many teachers from participating in professional development to the degree that could improve their practice and student learning. To address these issues, experts continuously emphasize the importance of aligning professional development with the responsibilities of teachers as they relate to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and external mandates (Flowers et al., 2002; Hirsh, 2000; and Guskey 2000). This may be accomplished by supporting teacher collaboration on curriculum related tasks, facilitating structured discussions related to school improvement and best practices, and providing ongoing content-based instruction. Research also shows that collective participation of groups of teachers from the same school contributes to the improvement in teacher knowledge and skills and classroom practice (Garet et al., 2001).

To appropriately reflect project alignment and current expectations for student academic achievement, select project objectives should be re-articulated. A few of the project objectives, articulated three years ago, are no longer valid for determining desired outcomes as they use measures that are no longer appropriate. For example, the TAAS test will no longer be used to measure student academic performance in core content areas. The

Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS), a new state accountability test with changed passing standards, will be used for the remainder of the project period to describe student academic achievement. Also, some of the original project activities that were originally proposed have been modified as the program has been implemented and can no longer be accurately measured using the original objective statements. Therefore, it is recommended that the project objectives be reviewed and in some cases re-articulated to show the expected levels of achievement and measure those outcomes fittingly. This process can be completed without changing the scope of the program or levels of expected student achievement, and it would enable the project to continue making substantial progress towards attaining project goals and ultimately meeting student needs.

Increase collaborative relationships with district personnel in order to serve students progressively well and develop structures for sustaining those improved services for additional groups of students after federal funding ceases.

Project evaluation data identified specific program implementation challenges that were compounded by limited communication and collaboration between all levels of district personnel. The inadequate communication and collaboration often resulted in reduced program offerings, duplication of services between educational programs, and inefficient use of resources. While the GEAR UP project has successfully coordinated its services with selected programs, these relationships have a relatively narrow impact on a finite group of students. Therefore, it is imperative that individuals across all levels of the district place priority on creating systems for working together more efficiently and effectively to sustain services designed to significantly improve student learning. This concerted effort will not only require increased communication and coordination between all levels of district personnel, but it will require changes in the ways that all think about the nature of college preparation and their individual roles in that process.

Conclusion

In summary, the *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* is well on its way to ensuring that all students can realize dreams for college. Academic success for all students is clearly the primary concern of the project staff. The expansion of academic services and increased collaboration with a variety of community partners deserves recognition and holds promise for facilitating a continuing increase in student achievement. Along that academic preparation path, the project staff understands the affective needs of the students. They work conscientiously with individuals and their families to identify and create a personalized purpose for their academic pursuits in hopes that all may reach their full potential. With increasing use of accurate student data, alignment of services, and collaborative relationships, there is no doubt that the project can prepare students for post-secondary success.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: GEAR UP AUSTIN PROJECT DESCRIPTION, 2001-2002

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a nationally funded initiative encouraging young, low income, at-risk students to have high expectations, stay in school, and complete the required courses to enter college. GEAR UP awards multi-year grants to partnerships seeking to increase the enrollment of at-risk students in post-secondary institutions. The partnerships must:

- Start with a 7th grade cohort of students and continue provision of comprehensive support services through high school graduation;
- Inform students and parents about college opportunities and financial aid; and
- Promote rigorous academic coursework.

More information about the National GEAR UP Initiative may be found at <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/gearup/index.html>.

The *GEAR UP Austin: Impacting Lives Project* is structured around four major components:

- The academic intervention component is focused on developing and implementing intensive academic support services for students through the use of mentoring/tutoring and a variety of summer camp experiences for GEAR UP students.
- Using College and Career Center labs and resources established on each campus, the GEAR UP college and career component provides guidance and counseling services for cohort students that include the Individual Academic Career Plan (IACP) process, college visits, career exploration days, and job shadowing events.
- The GEAR UP professional development component identifies, develops, and implements professional development opportunities for staff working with the GEAR UP cohort. Additionally, the GEAR UP project supports professional development activities as it provides substitutes, stipends, and/or registration fees to attend professional development sessions focused on core curriculum and test preparation skills.
- The parental involvement component of the project provides information and services to cohort parents that are focused on developing parenting skills, increasing college preparation awareness, and assisting families to apply for financial aid.

APPENDIX B: GEAR UP MIDDLE SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY, 2001-2002

CAMPUS	ETHNICITY							ECO DISADV	LEP	AT-RISK	SP.ED
	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	BLACK	HISPANIC	WHITE						
Burnet MS (46)	3.5%	0	19.6%	59%	17.9%			69.2%	26.7%	63.7%	16.1%
Dobie MS (55)	3.2%	0	37.2%	53.9%	5.8%			76.7%	29.6%	66.4%	18.1%
Fulmore MS (43)	1.9%	.2%	12.7%	67.3%	17.9%			53.2%	14%	58.9%	17.9%
Kealing JH (44)	.1%	6%	27.3%	36.1%	30.6%			43.9%	6.4%	50.6%	7.3%
Martin JH (51)	0	.3%	9.8%	86%	3.9%			76.7%	19.8%	65.9%	21.9%
Mendez MS (58)	.1%	.1%	14.1%	82%	3.7%			85.9%	31.8%	67.6%	16.3%
Paredes MS (61)	2%	.1%	10.6%	60.9%	26.4%			49.9%	10.7%	52.1%	15%
Pearce MS (48)	0	0	48.9%	48.5%	2.6%			78.4%	23.7%	68.2%	17.3%
Porter MS (49)	1.1%	.6%	7.2%	67.5%	23.7%			65.9%	16.8%	62%	14.7%
Webb MS (53)	.9%	.1%	15.1%	79.4%	4.4%			85%	46.7%	73%	14.5%
Texas Empowerment Academy	0	0	70.7%	21.3%	8.7%			68%	0	47%	18.7%
DISTRICT	2.69%	.31%	9.6%	35.17%	52.23%			36.75%	10.04%	34.2%	12.5%

* Source: AISD PEIMS Student Data, Fall Collection, Resubmission, 2001-2002

APPENDIX C: GEAR UP PROJECT PARTNERS: 2000-2001

Higher Education Partners

1. University of Texas at Austin
2. St. Edward's University
3. Huston Tillotson University
4. Austin Community College
5. Southwest Texas State University

Business and Community Partners

1. Educational Resources Consulting
2. Communities in Schools- Central Texas, Inc.
3. Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce
4. ACT. Inc.
5. Avance
6. Capital Area Training Foundation
7. Southwestern Regional Office of the College Board
8. Career Development Resources (formerly the Texas State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee)
9. Junior Achievement of Central Texas
10. Learning Systems
11. DAAMARS International
12. Girlstart
13. Premier Planners
14. LULAC

APPENDIX D: GEAR UP 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.

I. ACADEMIC INTERVENTION: Performance Objectives	OUTCOME
A. 80% of cohort students pass the reading, writing, and math section of the TAAS.	An analysis of TAAS results provided on pages 10-13 of this report.
B. 100% of failing cohort students participate weekly in mentoring/tutoring activities.	Over 140 tutors were hired and Mentoring/Tutoring services began in September 2001 for cohort students. Refer to on pages 7 and 8 of this report for details.
C. 18% of cohort students are enrolled in advanced courses.	This year, 24% of cohort students were enrolled in advanced English, 29% were enrolled in advanced Math, 26% were enrolled in advanced Science courses. Recommendations were made for Pre-AP and honors course placement for the 2002-2003 school year.
D. 63% of cohort students complete the SAT and/or ACT test	Summer 2002, 257 cohort students completed a PSAT/SAT preparation course. Refer to on page 14 of this report for details.
E. 27% of cohort students score at or above criterion on SAT/ACT tests.	Student cohort just completed 8 th grade. A PSAT/SAT test-prep camp was offered during Summer 2002 for cohort students. Refer to on page 14 of this report for details.
F. 50% of cohort students enroll in post-secondary education.	All 8 th grade GEAR UP students had the opportunity to participate in college campus experiences during the 2001-2002 school year. Refer to on pages 15-18 of this report for details. GEAR UP staff plans to assist GEAR UP students with college and financial aid applications when students reach high school.

II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: Performance Objectives	OUTCOME
A. 100% of project staff and cohort teachers will complete 20 hours of staff development per year.	76 % teachers serving the GEAR UP cohort completed an average of 31 hours in GEAR UP recommended professional development.
B. 80% of project partners will attend annual GEAR UP planning conference.	All partners were represented at one or both project planning conferences held June 2001 and/or September 2001.
C. 95% of Advisory Council members will annually evaluate project indicating satisfaction with collaborative and intervention strategies.	Advisory Council was formed and met in March 2002. A parent work session was held in May 2002 to discuss high school transition issues.
D. 100% of project support staff and core team of teachers at each campus will complete IMPACT/GAIT team training.	100% project support staff and core team of teachers at each campus have completed IMPACT/GAIT team training.

III. CAREER COUNSELING OUTREACH: Performance Objectives	OUTCOME
<p>A. 100% of cohort students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - complete the Individual Academic Career Plan (IACP). - complete an aptitude survey; - create a portfolio; - attend Centex College Fair; and - attend a Career Exploration Day. 	<p>The IACP process completed on each campus. All students have submitted their high school course plans.</p> <p>Using Oscar/Texas Cares software, 1,907 students completed an aptitude test or interest inventory.</p> <p>100% of cohort students have portfolios containing IACP, Kick-Off, and college visit information.</p> <p>Project staff attended the Centex College Fair, October 2001. Students will attend Fall 2002.</p> <p>328 cohort students have participated in career exploration days or job shadowing experiences.</p>

III. CAREER COUNSELING OUTREACH: Performance Objectives, Continued	OUTCOME
<p>A. 100% of cohort students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - receive an e-mail address, - visit college internet site, and - have an e-mail or one-on-one mentor. 	<p>125 GEAR UP students received an e-mail address.</p> <p>100% of cohort students explored college Internet sites during College & Career Centers (CCC's) visits. Refer to on pages 18-19 of this report for details.</p> <p>107 GEAR UP students attending 4 GEAR UP schools had an e-mail mentor. Refer to on pages 19-20 of this report for details.</p>
<p>B. 100% of cohort students will receive a 21st Century Scholars certificate.</p>	<p>21st Century scholars certificate were distributed to all cohort students during Project Year I. Additional certificates were given to the newly enrolled GEAR UP students during the second project year.</p>
<p>C. 100% of cohort students will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visit a CCC twice per year, - complete the PSAT/PLAN, - complete the SAT/ACT; and - identify 2 post-sec institutions for enrollment. 	<p>CCC's on every GEAR UP campus were fully operational at the beginning of the 2001-2002 school year. Student level data on the number of visits was unavailable due to software limitations.</p> <p>Student cohort is currently in 8th grade. On the GEAR UP survey, 1078 students reported that they plan to take the SAT, 543 students reported that they plan to take the ACT, and 1190 students were undecided about taking the tests. Completion of the PSAT/SAT/ post-sec enrollment and SAT/ACT will be completed at the high school level.</p> <p>All 8th grade GEAR UP students have had the opportunity to participate in college campus visits and explore college websites in the CCC's in order to begin building their awareness of post-secondary opportunities. Identifications for college enrollment will be completed at the high school level.</p>
<p>D. 90% of cohort students will complete financial aid applications.</p>	<p>Student cohort is in the 8th grade. Spring 2002, all GEAR UP campuses hosted programs covering the Recommended High School Plan, the Texas Grant, and other financial aid information. Financial aid applications will be completed at the high school level.</p>

IV. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT: Performance Objectives	OUTCOME
<p>A. 100% of cohort parents will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - receive a GU brochure and - attend a parent orientation. 	<p>Project staff distributed GEAR UP the brochures published in English and Spanish during the first project year. Brochures continue to be distributed during home visits and parent conferences held at the school.</p> <p>All GEAR UP campuses hosted parent orientation programs concerning high school graduation plans and the Texas Grant program. 573 parents attended these meetings.</p>
<p>B. 100% of cohort parents will sign a GU participation contract.</p>	<p>Parent participation contracts were distributed and signed by parents during Project Year I.</p>
<p>C. 50% of cohort parents will complete parent training sessions each year.</p>	<p>942 parents or 30% attended GEAR UP parent workshops/seminars as of April 10, 2002.</p>
<p>D. 10 parents will complete the “train the trainer” parental support program annually.</p>	<p>A parent work session was held in May 2002 to discuss high school transition issues. Train-the-Trainer Model will be developed during Year 3.</p>
<p>E. 100% of homeless and at-risk students will receive case management support services.</p>	<p>GEAR UP partner, Project HELP, continues to assist project staff in the identification of the homeless cohort students. Campus IMPACT teams provide case management for all GEAR UP students.</p>

APPENDIX E: STUDENT AND PARENT SURVEY SUMMARY, 2001-2002

Cohort students and their parents completed an updated survey adapted from the previous year's survey and a template provided by the Department of Education. 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 2002 with 2,573 (80%) students and 1188 (38%) parents responding. The 2000-2001 survey was also conducted in February through March with 2,488 (74%) students and 1,098 (33%) parents responding.

The following table provides the results of the 2001-2001 surveys and compares them to the previous year's responses. The survey was revised for the second year with some items being re-worded and new items added. Therefore, some of the questions could not be compared unequivocally. These items are indicated by an "*" in the table.

SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q1: I like school.				
Always	13.2	16.5	30	41.5
Most of the Time	43.5	32.8	51.2	40.3
Sometimes	38.8	39.5	17.5	16.7
Never	4.5	11.2	1.2	1.4
Q2: I am a good student.				
Always	21.3	23.9	31.4	39.7
Most of the Time	54.3	44.2	51.2	45.7
Sometimes	23	29.4	17.2	14.1
Never	1.4	2.5	0.3	0.5
Q3: I work very hard on my school assignments.				
Always	23.2	28.9	28.3	34.6
Most of the Time	49	43.4	45.9	42.2
Sometimes	25.9	25.9	24.1	22.8
Never	1.9	1.8	1.6	0.4
Q4: I participate in tutoring provided by the GEAR UP Project.				
Always	7.9	*	9.8	*
Most of the Time	15	*	24.9	*
Sometimes	31.6	*	29.1	*
Never	45.4	*	36.2	*

SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q5: GEAR UP tutors help me with the following subjects.				
Reading	15.1	35.8	13.8	*
Math	33.3	49.8	23	*
Science	14.2	44.7	15.9	*
Social Studies	16.8	*	12.3	*
TAAS	11	*	9.3	*
SAT/ACT	6.7	24.7	3.9	*
I do not receive tutoring.	2.9	*	21.7	*
Q6: Has anyone helped you learn about preparing for college?				
Yes	72.2	*	37.7	5.1
No	14.1	*	40.6	59.5
I do not know.	13.7	*	21.7	35.4
Q7: Who has helped you learn the most about preparing for college?				
Family member	30.1	*	31.9	*
GEAR UP teacher	38	*	12.7	*
Classroom teacher	11.1	*	10.3	*
GEAR UP mentor/tutor	7.5	*	4.7	*
Classmate/friend	2.8	*	2.5	*
No one has helped.	10.5	*	38	*
Q8: Do you know what courses you should take to prepare for college?				
Yes	44	40.6	42.6	*
No	28.5	25.1	32.6	*
I do not know.	27.5	34.3	24.8	*
Q9: I have chosen to complete the Recommended High School Graduation Plan.				
Yes	60.9	*	57.1	*
No	11.2	*	8.1	*
I do not know.	27.9	*	34.8	*

SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q10: Does your school offer Advanced Placement courses?				
Yes	47.8	48.7	52	43
No	11.5	5.6	10.6	4.9
I do not know.	40.7	45.7	37.4	52.1
Q11: Are you enrolled in Advanced Placement courses?				
Yes	30.5	*	29.6	*
No	40.9	*	46	*
I do not know.	28.6	*	24.4	*
Q12: Due to GEAR UP, my academic performance is				
Better	34.6	20.4	56.1	67.5
About the same	37.9	4.8	22.6	2.2
Worse or no help at all.	2.2	41	2	13.1
I do not know.	25.3	33.8	19.3	17.2
Q13: What level of school do you plan to complete?				
Do not plan to finish high school	1.9	*	2.1	*
High school only	8.2	3.5	7.3	7.3
Certificate program	2.9	5.4	4.3	8.4
Associate's degree	6.3	10.6	8.9	12.5
Bachelor's degree	23.4	21.5	35	40.9
Graduate degree	30.6	28.9	28.8	31
I do not know.	26.5	30	13.6	0
Q14: What is the main reason you would not continue your education after high school?				
Cost	19.4	35.8	30.7	41.5
Need to work	6	13	4.4	6.5
Low Grades	7.4	20.7	4.2	4.7
Military Service	5.9	8	1.7	0
Family needs	2.4	7	1	1.4
Job training provided	2.8	9	1	3.9
Not Interested	4.1	6.6	2.6	3
I am going to college.	52.1	*	54.5	39.1

SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q15: I am planning to take the following tests:				
PSAT/SAT	36.8	*	18.2	*
ACT	18.5	*	37.8	*
None	4	*	15.8	*
I do not know.	40.6	*	25	*
Q16: I have talked to my parent(s) or guardian(s) about going to college				
Frequently	33.5	*	47.3	55.1
Occasionally	52.5	*	43.5	40.6
Never	14	*	9.3	4.4
Q17: Someone in my family has a college degree.				
Yes	51.2	*	53.3	*
No	27.4	*	39.2	*
I do not know.	21.4	*	7.4	*
Q18: I use the GEAR UP College and Career Center to learn more about college.				
Frequently	18.8	10.9	10.3	*
Occasionally	69.5	43.2	41.6	*
Never	11.8	45.9	26	*
Q19: I have visited a college.				
Frequently	18.8	13.7	14.2	*
Occasionally	69.5	48.4	67.7	*
Never	11.8	37.9	12.9	*
Do not know			5.2	*
Q20: The GEAR UP college visits helped me learn more about college.				
Yes	46.3	*	28.9	*
No	14.2	*	20.9	*
Somewhat	30.2	*	31.3	*
I do not know.	9.3	*	18.9	*

SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q21: Do you know about different types of colleges?				
Yes	37.5	19.2	*	*
No	17.2	24.3	*	*
A little	45.3	56.5	*	*
Q22: I have talked to someone about getting college financial assistance.				
Frequently	8.4	*	5.3	6
Occasionally	34.2	*	35.7	43.7
Never	57.4	*	59	50.3
Q23: How much is the average cost of tuition and fees at a four-year public college for one year in Texas?				
\$500 or less	5.9	9.3	3.4	5.9
\$1,000	7.5	14.4	4.6	4.8
\$1,500	8.2	10.7	9.6	6.6
\$2,000	8.5	10.6	5.9	5.7
\$2,500	12.2	11.1	9.6	5.9
\$3,000	14.5	12	19.8	21.7
\$5,000 or more	43.2	31.8	47.1	49.5
Q24: Do you know how to get financial aid for college?				
Yes, I know a lot.	8.6	12.3	11.3	14.6
No, I do not know anything about it.	49.1	59.5	35.3	44.2
I know a few things about it.	42.3	28.2	53.5	41.1
Q25: Do you know about Pell grants?				
Yes, I know a lot.	3.3	5.1	12.6	13.8
No, I do not know anything about it.	81.8	79	42.6	58.7
I know a few things about it.	14.9	15.9	44.8	27.5

SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q26: Do you know about federal work-study programs?				
Yes, I know a lot.	6.7	6.8	10.3	8.6
No, I do not know anything about it.	69.3	69.4	45.9	63.6
I know a few things about it.	24	23.8	43.8	27.8
Q27: I will be able to afford 4 years of college.				
Yes	53.6	23.3	40.3	42
No	45.3	12.3	59.3	10.4
I am not sure.	1.1	64.4	0.3	47.6
Q28: I am planning to get financial aid.				
Yes	76.2	21.1	95	*
No	23.2	8.7	4.8	*
I am not sure.	0.6	70.1	0.2	*
Q29: The 21st Century Certificate has helped me to change my plans about attending college.				
Yes	19.9	24	66.3	37.5
No	44.2	17.9	33.7	18
I am not sure.	55.8	58.1	0	44.4
Q30: My participation in the GEAR UP project has changed my plans about attending college.				
Yes	34.5	31.4	41.2	*
No	33.1	33.2	27.9	*
I am not sure.	32.4	35.4	30.9	*
Q31: I have participated in GEAR UP activities with my family.				
Frequently	7.5	7.6	8.9	8.9
Occasionally	30.3	27.5	45	22.6
Never	62.1	64.9	46	68.5

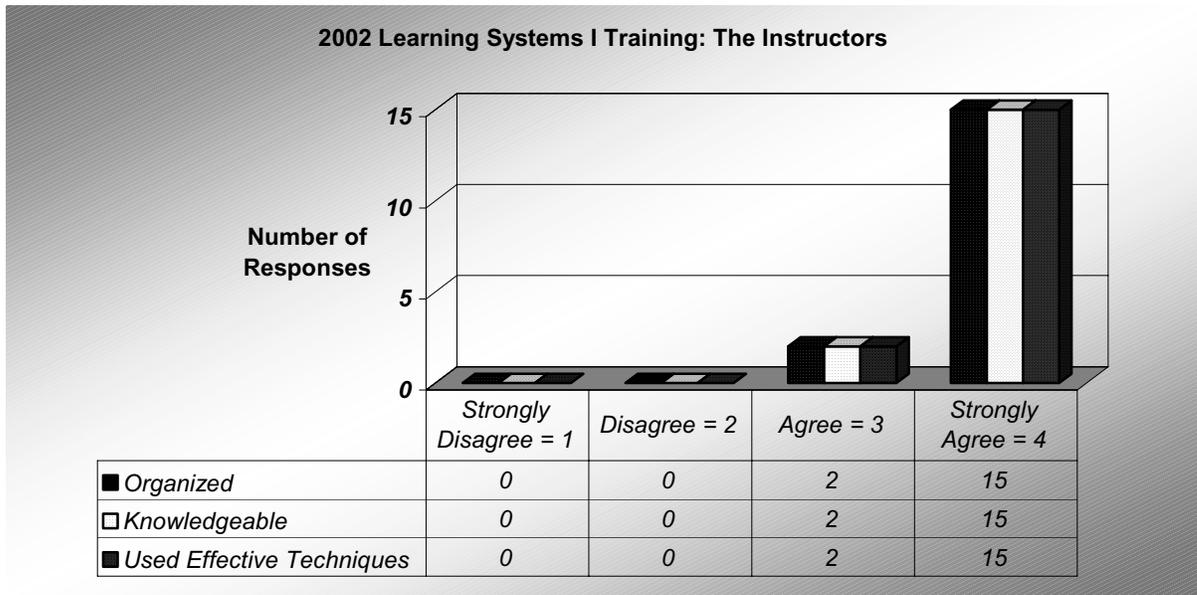
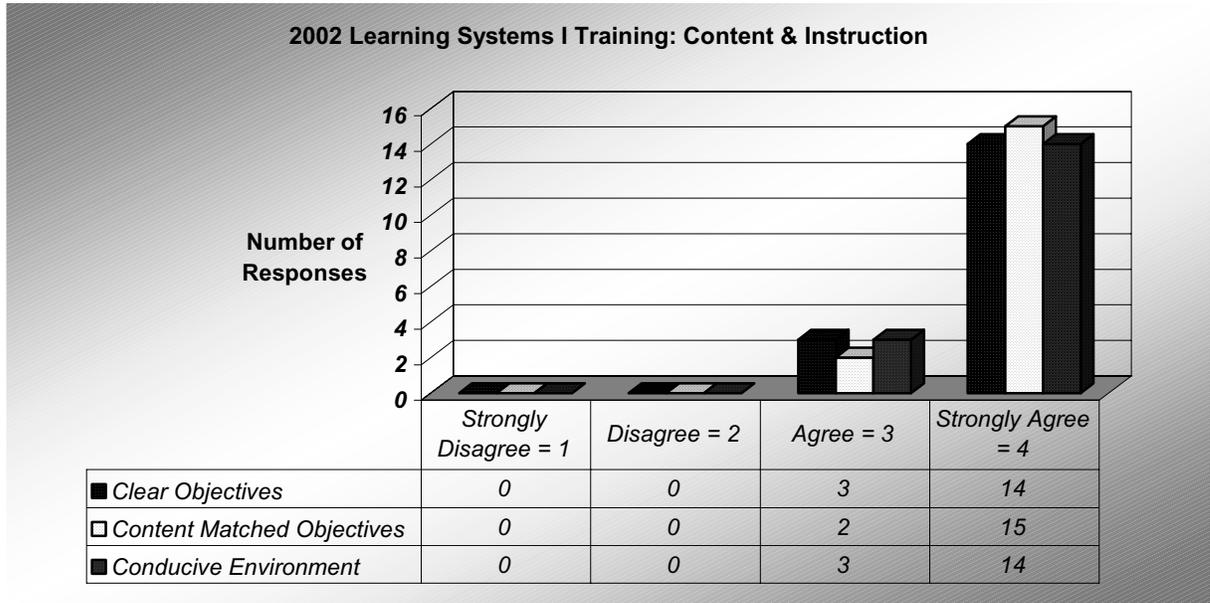
SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q32: What is the main reason your parent(s) or guardian(s) might not attend school events in which you are involved?				
They do not know when events are held	11	9.8	21.1	16.2
They have to work.	48.7	56.3	51.3	56.3
They have to care for younger siblings.	11.4	13	12.7	12.6
They are not interested.	5.3	5	3	0.8
Do not know.	23.6	16	11.9	14.1
Q33: Which of the following GEAR UP activities have helped you a lot to prepare for college? (Student Only)				
Tutoring	21.7	*	*	*
College Visits	42.4	*	*	*
Career Exploration	13.3	*	*	*
SAT camp	6	*	*	*
Job Shadowing	2.8	*	*	*
E-mail Mentoring	4	*	*	*
Girlstart	9	*	*	*
Technology classes	0.6	*	*	*
Q34: What kinds of help do you still need in order to be prepared for college? (Student Only)				
Tutoring	11.4	*	*	*
Advanced coursework	11.3	*	*	*
Career Exploration Activities	9.9	*	*	*
Test Prep	12.1	*	*	*
College Info	17.8	*	*	*
Financial Assistance	13	*	*	*
Mentoring	6.4	*	*	*
Personal Guidance Counseling	6	*	*	*
Technology Classes	7.9	*	*	*
No help is needed.	4.1	*	*	*

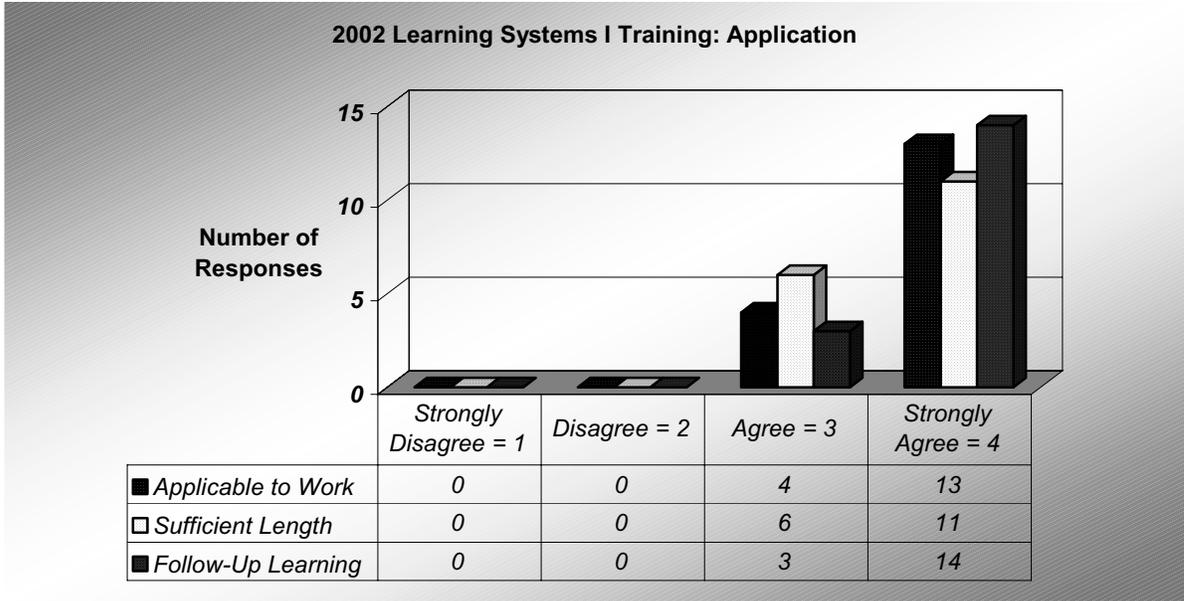
SURVEY QUESTIONS	Percent of 2002 Student Responses	Percent of 2001 Student Responses	Percent of 2002 Parent Responses	Percent of 2001 Parent Responses
Q21: I know and understand the requirements for a 2-year college.				
Yes	*	*	25.9	14.4
No	*	*	35.9	51.5
Some, need more information.	*	*	38.2	34.1
Q 22: I know and understand the requirements for a 4-year college.				
Yes	*	*	24.3	12.5
No	*	*	48.1	53
Some, need more information.	*	*	30.3	34.5
Q(P23): I know and understand the requirements for a vocational, trade, or business school.				
Yes	*	*	21.6	14.8
No	*	*	48.1	58.5
Some, need more information.	*	*	30.3	26.7
Q 37: I would like more information on the following subjects:				
Effective Parenting	*	*	6.6	61.2
Homework Assistance	*	*	10.2	81.3
TAAS/TAKS	*	*	10.4	
College/Career Opportunities	*	*	19.2	80.5
Recommended High School Plan	*	*	15.7	*
SAT/ACT Tests	*	*	13.7	*
College Financial Aid	*	*	20.6	77.8
Other	*	*	3.7	*
Q38: I know the costs of attending the different types of colleges.				
Yes	*	*	18.7	19.7
No	*	*	29.6	32.1
A few things.	*	*	51.8	48.2

APPENDIX F: LEARNING SYSTEMS TRAINING EVALUATION, SUMMER 2002

Learning Systems I:

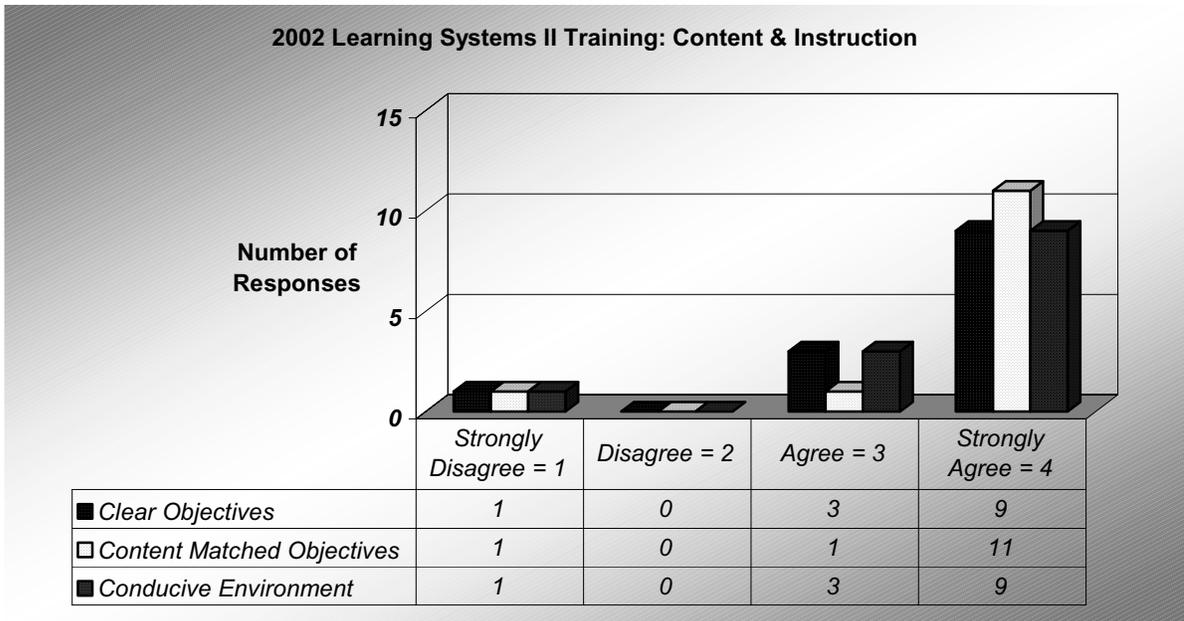
Seventeen participants completed course evaluations. The following charts show the results for each category.

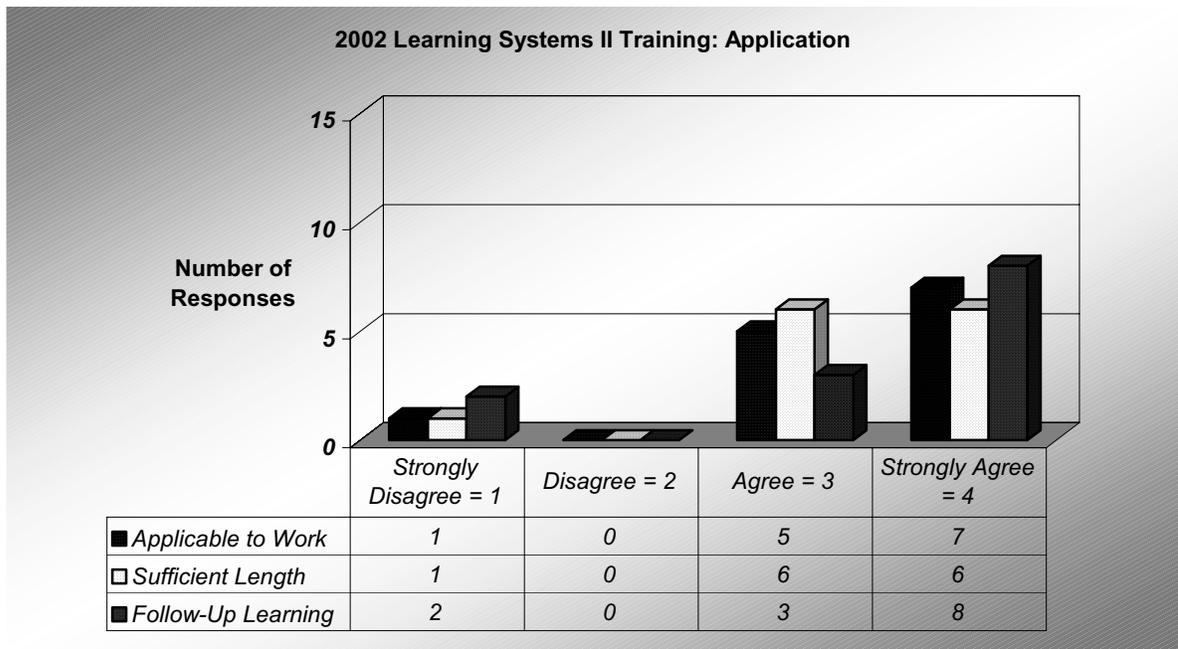
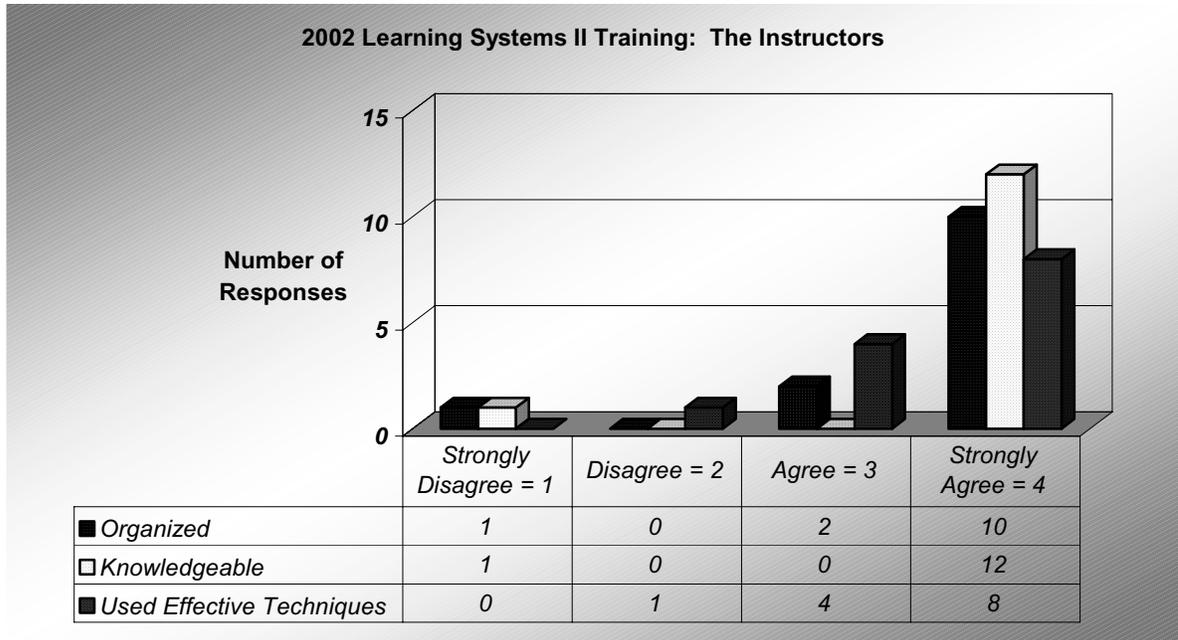




Learning Systems II Training:

Thirteen participants completed course evaluations. The following charts show the results for each category.





APPENDIX G: LEARNING SYSTEMS STUDENT EVALUATION, SUMMER 2002

Description:

The GEAR UP project conducted summer SAT/ACT Preparation mini-camps for cohort students. The two-week camps were offered at two levels and focused PSAT/SAT format and scoring, strategies for analyzing test items, and suggestions for implementing the course. A total of 256 students attended the camps at campuses across the district. Of those that completed the camps, 121 Level I students and 48 Level II students rated the content and instruction, the instructors, and the applicability of the content on a four point Likert-type scale: Strongly Agree =4, Agree =3, Disagree= 2, and Strongly Disagree=1.

Results:

	PSAT 1 (N=121)					PSAT 2 (N= 48)				
Content & Instruction	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I understood what the camp was about.		1%	34%	65%	3.6			12%	88%	3.9
Camp activities were connected to objectives.	1%	1%	50%	48%	3.4			21%	79%	3.8
The camp environment helped me learn.		5%	37%	58%	3.5			31%	69%	3.7
	PSAT 1					PSAT 2				
The Instructor (s)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
The teachers were prepared.		6%	38%	56%	3.5			25%	75%	3.7
The teachers were knowledgeable.		1%	40%	59%	3.6			19%	81%	3.8
The teachers used effective teaching techniques.	2%	3%	31%	64%	3.5			23%	77%	3.7
	PSAT 1					PSAT 2				
Application	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I will use what I have learned.		1%	26%	73%	3.7			15%	85%	3.8
I had enough time to learn what was expected.	1%	4%	47%	48%	3.4		4%	38%	58%	3.5
I would attend a camp like this again.	1%	10%	36%	52%	3.4			12%	88%	3.9

APPENDIX H: GEAR UP LITERARY SEMINAR SURVEY RESULTS, SUMMER 2002

The following figure shows the percent student responses for each question on an end-of-course evaluation completed by 21 students that completed the GEAR UP Literary Seminar.

	Literary Seminar (N=21)				
Content & Instruction	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I understood what the camp was about.		5%	43%	52%	3.5
Camp activities were connected to objectives.		5%	71%	24%	3.2
The camp environment helped me learn.		5%	66%	29%	3.3
	Literary Seminar				
The Instructor (s)	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
The teachers were prepared.			38%	62%	3.6
The teachers were knowledgeable.			14%	86%	3.9
The teachers used effective teaching techniques.			24%	76%	3.8
	Literary Seminar				
Application	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
I will use what I have learned.			28%	72%	3.7
I had enough time to learn what was expected.		5%	43%	52%	3.5

APPENDIX I: GEAR UP CAMP COLLEGE AGENDAS, SUMMER 2002

Camp College Daily Agenda: Huston-Tillotson College, Summer 2002

8:00-8:30	Breakfast
8:30-9:15	7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens
9:15-10:45	Learning Systems: PSAT Preparation
10:45-11:00	Brain Break
11:00-12:00	Learning Systems: PSAT Preparation
12:00-1:00	Lunch
1:00-1:50	Recreation
2:00-3:20	Afternoon Enrichment: Social Studies & Science
3:30-5:00	Afternoon Enrichment: Web Design
5:00-6:00	Dinner
6:00-8:00	Arts of Expression
8:00-9:00	Journaling Reflection
9:00-10:00	Ready for bed

Camp College Daily Agenda: St. Edwards University, Summer 2002

7:30	Lights on - Wake Up!
8:30	Breakfast
9:00-11:30	Learning Systems: PSAT Preparation
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-2:00	Effective Ad Design, Schools in Uganda, Working with Clay, Manipulating Mathematics, Evening Ceremony Preparation
2:15-4:45	Learning Systems: PSAT Preparation
4:45-5:30	Break (board games)
5:30-6:15	Dinner
6:15-6:45	Journal/Reflective Time
6:45-8:00	Community Service Workshop
8:00-9:30	Brain Breaks/Game Time
9:30-10:30	Shower & ready for bed
10:30	Lights Out

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