Year 5 Annual Implementation Report

Texas GEAR UP State Grant Evaluation

October 2018

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ICF evaluation team would like to acknowledge the many members of the Texas Education Agency (TEA), site/campus staff, and collaborative organizations for their support of this evaluation. They provided valuable information and feedback to ensure that the evaluation team had a full understanding of the goals/objectives and implementation of the Texas GEAR UP State Grant across participating sites and campuses. The evaluation team looks forward to the continued collaboration with TEA staff, site/campus staff, and other collaborators to provide a high-quality evaluation that can inform policy and practice for schools, nationally and in Texas.

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Evaluation funded by the Texas Education Agency through funds provided by the U.S. Department of Education for the Texas GEAR UP State Grant.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEIS	Academic Excellence Indicator System
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AP	Advanced Placement
APR	Annual Performance Report
ASPR	Annual Strategic Planning Report
CIS	Communities In Schools
CTE	Career and Technical Education
CTK	Community TechKnowledge
DAP	Distinguished Achievement Program
DGB	Data Governance Board
ECHS	Early College High School
ECLA	Early College Leadership Academy
ED	U.S. Department of Education
ELA	English Language Arts
ELL	English Language Learners
EOC	End-of-Course
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
FSA	Federal Student Aid
FY	Fiscal Year
GEAR UP	Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs
GPA	Grade Point Average
GUIDES	GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System
HB	House Bill
IGC	Individual Graduation Committee
IRB	Institutional Review Board
IRS	Internal Revenue Service
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
NOGA	Notification of Grant Award
PBL	Project-based Learning
PLC	Professional Learning Community
PD	Professional Development
PEIMS	Public Education Information Management System
PSAT	Preliminary SAT
PSM	Propensity Score Matching
QED	Quasi-Experimental Design
RHSP	Recommended High School Program
SB	Senate Bill
SG	State Grant
STAAR®	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness
STAAR® EOC	State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness End-of-Course
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TAPR	Texas Academic Performance Report
TAFSA	Texas Application for State Financial Aid
TEA	Texas Education Agency
TELPAS	Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System
TG	Texas Guaranteed
THECB	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
TOLTech	Touch of Life Technology

TSIA	Texas Success Initiative Assessment
T-STEM Centers	Texas Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Centers
UT	The University of Texas
UT-Austin	The University of Texas at Austin
UT-IPSI	The University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Public School Initiatives

Highlights

Year 5 of the evaluation focused on evaluating the implementation of the Texas Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) State Grant (SG) program when participating students were in Grade 11. The evaluation also compared Year 5 implementation to that of Years 1–4—with a focus on two key time points for comparison, Year 2 (Grade 8 and the end of middle school) and Year 4 (Grade 10, the previous year and the halfway point through high school). The Texas GEAR UP SG was designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education through state and local partnership grants.

Implementation

- As a group, Texas GEAR UP schools met Project Objective 4.1 (75% of students involved in student support services) with 94% of Grade 11 students participating. The level of student participation in support services (i.e., tutoring, mentoring, counseling/advising) in Year 5 was the same as in Year 4, which was an increase from Year 2 (78%). The level of student participation in any Texas GEAR UP SG activity remained high in Year 5 as in previous years (97%). In each year, there were differences across participating schools in these levels of implementation.
- In Year 5, 46% of students participated in Texas GEAR UP SG activities in summer 2016, exceeding the Project Objective 4.2 goal of having 30% of students participate in summer programs. Types of activities included workshops, college tours, job shadowing, job/site visits, parent/family workshops, family events, and science/educational trips.
- Overall, parent engagement in at least one event decreased in Year 5 with 21% of parents attending at least one event versus 28% in Year 4. Schools remained unable to meet Project Objective 7.3 (50% of parents attend at least three Texas GEAR UP SG events) with only 17% of parents having this level of participation in Year 5. This was up from Year 4 when 9% of parents attended at least three events.
- In Year 5, 92% of student survey respondents reported that they were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their Texas GEAR UP SG College Preparation Advisor. On average, student respondents perceived their experiences with Texas GEAR UP SG activities (e.g., staff, events) to be mostly effective. Student respondents who attended summer programs also perceived them as effective.
- A similar percentage of student survey respondents in Year 5 (57%) as Year 4 (61%) reported that participating in Texas GEAR UP SG activities in Year 5 helped them make the decision to go to college.
- Overall, 92% of student survey respondents reported in spring 2017 that they plan to go to college. The most commonly reported reason in Year 5 for not expecting to pursue postsecondary education was *I want to work after high school*, which is what was most often reported in Year 4.
- The percentage of students enrolled in four or more advanced courses in Year 5 (14%) decreased from Year 4 (27%), which was much higher than in Year 2 (10%).
- Students continued to have higher educational aspirations than educational expectations. In Year 5, 70% of students aspired to complete a four-year degree or higher, but only 57%

actually expect to complete that level of education. The 13 percentage-point gap between aspirations and expectations in Year 5 is similar to that in Year 4 (12 percentage-point difference).

- Overall 87% of student survey respondents reported that they took or planned to take the SAT or ACT in Grade 11, which suggests that the cohort was not on track to meet Project Objective 5.1 (by the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT).
- In Year 5, the percentage of students' knowledge about the SAT (70%) and ACT (56%) increased from Year 4 by 14 and 10 percentage points, respectively.
- Texas GEAR UP SG schools reported that of the students who remained at the same school through the end of the school year, 82% of Grade 10 students were eligible for on-time promotion to Grade 11, which represents a decrease from the previous year when 94% of Grade 9 students were eligible for on-time promotion to Grade 10. As such, Texas GEAR UP SG schools overall were not on track to meet the project objective (exceed the state average for on-time promotion rate) by the end of Year 4, though there was some variance across schools.

Key Facilitators and Barriers

- When describing successes related to parent engagement in Year 5, it was reported that engaging and dependable parent liaisons were an important component of developing quality relationships with cohort parents and initiating engagement with other parents.
- Findings related to students' postsecondary education plans may provide insight into another potential facilitator—student knowledge of postsecondary information. Student participation in college visits and college student shadowing was positively correlated with knowledge of the importance and benefit of college as well as plans to take advanced courses (Table 4.3).
- An additional potential facilitator identified for successful implementation was "local voices" (i.e., school and district administrators) who are bought into the grant and who are embedded within the schools. District Coordinators who reported engaging school and district administrators said that the administrators were familiar with grant goals as well as the strategies put in place to work towards those goals.
- Teachers who participated in site visits continued to report that they perceived some students to lack the motivation to succeed in high school. Teachers also reported that some students were only motivated to receive grades that will lead to a transcript desirable for higher education, not to learn the material or self-satisfaction for producing high quality work. Further, some teachers were worried about frequent missed class times for Texas GEAR UP SG meetings and events as they perceived some students to lack the motivation to make up missed work.
- Though parent engagement documented in GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System (GUIDES) improved in some aspects, parental engagement continued to be a concern in Year 5 as no school met Project Objective 7.3. Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff also expressed that they were concerned that the limited interactions Texas GEAR UP SG staff have with many parents did not lead to "authentic" relationships that would facilitate higher quality engagement.

- Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff also reported on site visits that they were frustrated by limited buy-in for the grant from administrators and school staff. The current level of buy-in, they reported, negatively affected implementation in Year 5 and will also likely affect sustainability of Texas GEAR UP SG initiatives.

Potential Promising Practices

- Parent and family events that allow attendees to rotate sessions and hear information about a variety of topics in short periods of time were cited as successful by Texas GEAR UP SG staff. This format allowed parents to interact with Texas GEAR UP SG staff in small, less intimidating settings and to have time to break up information-heavy sessions.
- The extended professional development (PD) provided by the Support Center's Educator Outreach Coach provided schools with the opportunity to tailor the trainings and resources for teacher PD based on the needs of the teachers and school.
- Finally, utilizing dedicated Texas GEAR UP SG staff for parent engagement and data entry were cited as helpful for streamlining efforts for successful implementation.

Executive Summary

Overview

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) awarded the Texas Education Agency (TEA) a $33 million federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant in federal fiscal year (FY) 2012. The broad purpose of the federal GEAR UP program is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education through state and local partnership grants. The GEAR UP program addresses the challenges faced by low-income students in attaining postsecondary success in an early and ongoing manner, providing services, activities, and resources to students from Grade 7 through the first year of college to accomplish the following three goals (1) increasing postsecondary awareness and aspirations; (2) strengthening academic preparation and achievement; and (3) raising postsecondary participation. Through the Texas GEAR UP State Grant (SG), four participating districts are providing services to a cohort of students and their parents from Grade 7 (the 2012–13 school year) through their first year of postsecondary education (the 2018–19 school year). This report focuses on implementation in Year 5 of the Texas GEAR UP SG (the 2016–17 school year), the cohort's fifth year in high school (Grade 11).

In order to meet the federal purpose of the grant, the Texas GEAR UP SG program includes nine project goals and 26 corresponding objectives, provided in Appendix A of the report. Three goals are related to advanced coursework, student support services, and summer programs. Other goals intend to increase data-driven instruction (through teacher professional development [PD]), community collaboration, and access to postsecondary information. Outcome goals include on-time promotion, improved high school completion at a college-ready level, college attendance, and college retention. In addition to meeting goals at campuses selected to participate in the program, there are objectives to provide statewide information and professional learning for educators in order to promote college readiness across the state.

Participating schools and their districts are listed in Table ES.1; throughout this report, schools are identified by letter (e.g., High School H, High School I) in order to protect confidentiality.[1] In these districts, program staff, including Texas GEAR UP SG Coordinators and College Preparation Advisors, facilitate and provide Texas GEAR UP SG services, with support from TEA, statewide collaborators (including the Support Center, which serves as the technical assistance provider), and local stakeholders.[2] Texas GEAR UP SG services are intended to impact teachers through the provision of PD and schools/districts through changes in academic rigor (paired with student support services). Finally, the Texas GEAR UP SG program is intended to make a statewide impact, primarily through the provision of the website (i.e.,

[1] Texas GEAR UP High Schools are labeled High Schools H through M. The seven Texas GEAR UP Middle Schools were identified as Schools A through G.

[2] The term Texas GEAR UP SG staff is used throughout this report and includes the Texas GEAR UP SG Coordinators, College Preparation Advisors, facilitators, tutors, parent liaisons, and data clerks. These are staff located in the districts or at the schools who have key responsibilities to the project either for the district or at the school.

http://www.texasgearup.com), where coordinated information and resources regarding postsecondary opportunities for students and their parents throughout Texas are made available.

Table ES.1. Profile of Texas GEAR UP Schools

District	Middle School (2012–13; 2013–14)	High School (2014–15; 2015–16; 2016–17)
Edgewood Independent School District	Brentwood, Garcia, Wrenn	Memorial, Kennedy
Lubbock Independent School District	Dunbar	Estacado
Manor Independent School District	Decker, Manor	Manor, Manor New Tech
Somerset Independent School District	Somerset	Somerset

Evaluation of Texas GEAR UP State Grant

The evaluation of the program examines implementation and outcomes (including the relationship between the two) and identifies potential best practices over the seven-year grant period. Evaluation objectives include the following:

- Provide ongoing formative evaluation of implementation of Texas GEAR UP SG (facilitators and barriers, promising practices, and recommended corrections).
- Explore implementation status, mix of implementation, and relationships between implementation and student outcomes.
- Determine the impact on parents, schools, and community alliances.
- Examine access to and use of statewide resources.
- Examine student outcomes.
- Understand cost and sustainability.

The external evaluation is a longitudinal design that spans seven years and follows a cohort model. Table ES.2 illustrates the timeline and grade level associated with the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort that the evaluation focuses on primarily (primary cohort). Appendix B includes additional details about the evaluation design, including the cohort approach.

Table ES.2. Evaluation Timeline

	Grade in School by Grant Year						
	Grant Year 1 2012–13	Grant Year 2 2013–14	Grant Year 3 2014–15	Grant Year 4 2015–16	Grant Year 5 2016–17	Grant Year 6 2017–18	Grant Year 7 2018–19
Primary Cohort	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	First Year of College

This fifth implementation report focuses on formative feedback regarding Year 5 implementation, and also provides relevant comparisons to implementation in prior years (primarily Year 4, the previous year and halfway point in high school, but also Year 2, the end of middle school, as relevant). Each of the annual implementation reports was informed by analysis of student- and campus-level data from statewide databases, interviews with TEA and

its collaborators, review of grantee annual strategic planning reports (ASPR), data reported through the GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System (GUIDES), student and parent surveys, and qualitative site visit data.[3]

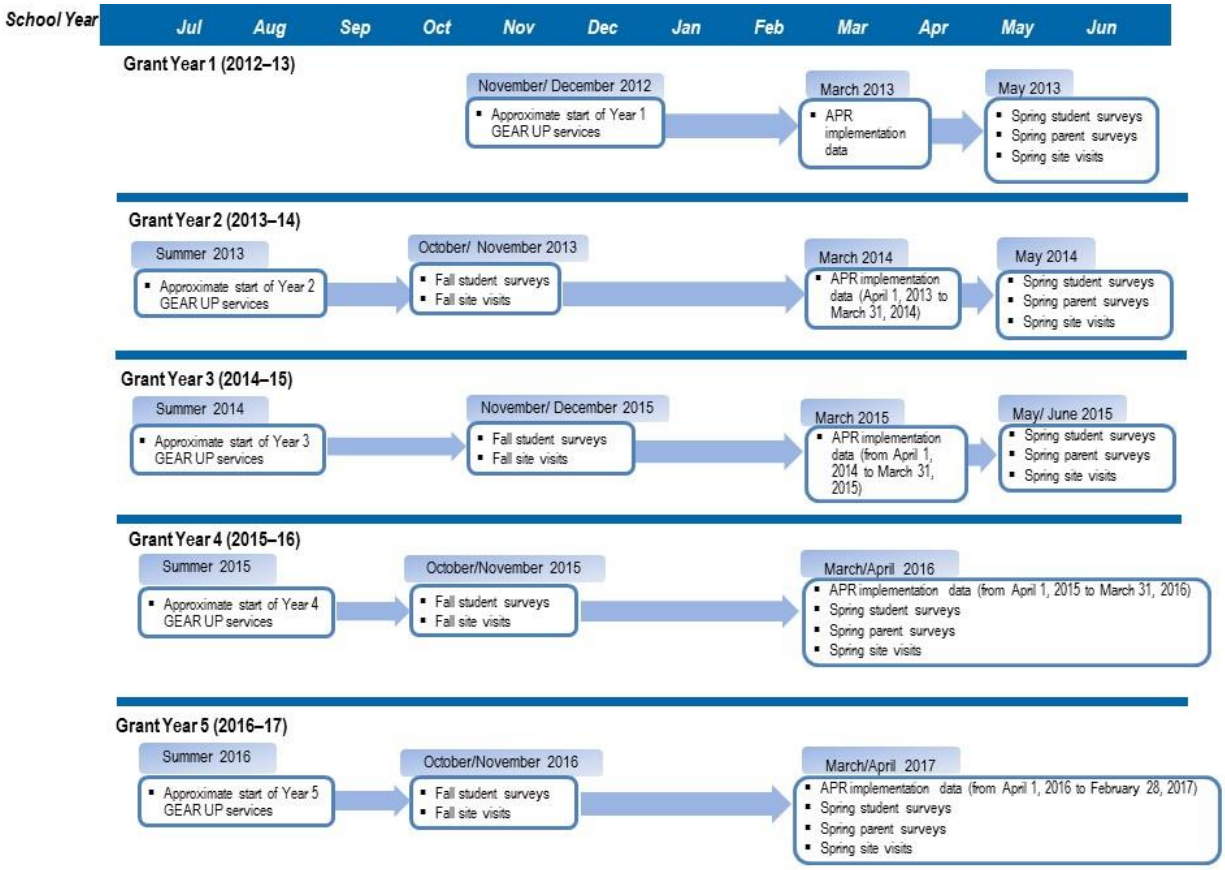
Districts submitted implementation data in line with federal annual performance report (APR) reporting requirements in GUIDES. Therefore, GUIDES data reflected implementation from the date of each district's notification of grant award (NOGA) through March 31, 2013 in Year 1, from April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014 in Year 2, from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015 in Year 3, from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 in Year 4, and from March 1, 2016 to February 28, 2017 in Year 5.[4] Texas GEAR UP SG Year 5 implementation activities that occurred through summer 2017 are not discussed in this report in order to keep the time periods comparable. Participation in summer 2016 programs as reported on during Year 5 are discussed in this report. While forming ideas about the program, readers should keep in mind when data were collected because this report does not capture the entire school year of activities. Additionally, the length of time for program implementation for Years 2–5 were similar; however, Year 1 length of implementation was shorter therefore comparisons to Year 1 should be made with caution. Finally, readers need to be aware that comparisons of differences from Year 2, which reflects implementation at the seven participating middle schools, relative to implementation in Year 4 and Year 5, which reflect implementation in the six participating high schools, may in part be interpreted as due to middle school versus high school differences.[5] Figure ES.1 provides an overview of the timing of implementation data collection in each grant year.

[3] TEA's collaborators on the Texas GEAR UP SG during Year 5 include the Support Center staffed by personnel from the University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Public School Initiatives (UT-IPSI), AMS Pictures, Texas Guaranteed (TG), GeoFORCE (all of which were collaborators in Year 2) as well as Raise Achievement, which was added in Year 3. Signal Vine and FOCUS Training were added for the first time in Year 5.

[4] Annual Performance Report (APR) data used in the Year 5 report are from summer 2016 and the 2016–17 school year, but only through February 28, 2017. The evaluation team made the decision to align annual performance data to the federal reporting requirements. Other data (such as surveys and site visits) are collected in the late spring, but still do not capture all activities occurring in the remainder of the school year or summer 2017.

[5] See prior implementation reports for Year 1 (O'Donnel et al., 2013), Year 2 (Briggs et al., 2015), Year 3 (Briggs et al., 2016), and Year 4 (Spinney et al., 2018) for additional information.

Figure ES.1. Implementation Timeline and Evaluation Implementation Data Collections: Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, and Year 5



Key Findings

This section provides an overview of relevant project objectives, evaluation questions, and key findings. Findings were considered key if they were aligned to the project goals and objectives set by TEA (see Appendix A).

Selected Project Objectives

Relevant project objectives emphasized in this report include the following:

- Project Objective 1.1: By the end of the project's second year, 30% of cohort students will have completed Algebra I in the 8th grade. By the end of the project's third year, 85% of students will have completed Algebra I.
- Project Objective 1.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement, will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 2.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all participating high schools will make opportunities available for each student to complete 18 hours of college credit

(through AP, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment) by the time he or she graduates from high school.[6]

- Projective Objective 2.2: By the end of the project's fifth year, 60% of the cohort, including limited English proficient (LEP) students, will complete a pre-Advanced Placement (AP) or AP course.
- Project Objective 2.3: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 50% of cohort students will be eligible to earn college credit by AP exam or through dual credit.
- Project Objective 3.1: All core content teachers will have the opportunity to participate in training regarding differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, and project-based learning (PBL).
- Project Objective 3.2: Teams of teachers at the middle and high schools will complete at least five days of vertical team preparation and implementation each year.
- Project Objective 4.1: By the end of the second year, at least 75% of the 8th grade students will be involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program based on results of teacher/counselor input and diagnostic data.[7]
- Project Objective 4.2: Beginning in the second year, at least 30% of the students will be involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level, ease transitions, and increase college awareness.
- Project Objective 4.3: By the end of the project's third year, the on-time promotion rate of cohort students will exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, the necessary academic preparation for college.
- Project Objective 5.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all cohort students will complete the ACT Aspire or the Preliminary SAT.[8] By the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT.
- Project Objective 5.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of students meeting criterion on the ACT/SAT will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 5.3: The number of students who graduate college ready in mathematics and English will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 7.1: By the end of the first year, the state office will make information regarding college options, preparation, and financing available to students, parents, and educators throughout the state.
- Project Objective 7.2: By the end of the first year, information and workshops aimed at linking college attendance to career success will be available to 100% of cohort students and their parents.

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[6] AP refers to advanced placement courses.

[7] While Project Objective 4.1 emphasizes student support services in Grade 8, the evaluation will continue to examine the level of implementation during each high school year. Similarly, data associated with Project Objectives 7.1 and 7.2 are examined each year, not only in the first year. Vertical teaming (also referred to as vertical alignment) refers to teachers from a given subject area participating in collaborative meetings in which they coordinate instruction and learning objectives across grade levels.

[8] Texas GEAR UP SG initially indicated a goal aligned with students taking ACT PLAN by the end of project's fourth year. However, ACT has replaced PLAN with ACT Aspire. Similarly, the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) has been replaced by the PSAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) and PSAT 10.

- Project Objective 7.3: Each year, at least 50% of cohort parents, including parents of current and former limited English proficient (LEP) students, will attend at least three college awareness activities.
- Project Objective 7.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, teachers and counselors will complete training in the college admissions and financial aid process.
- Project Objective 8.1: All participating districts will form business alliances that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.
- Project Objective 8.2: Participating campuses will form alliances with governmental entities and community groups to enhance the information available to students regarding scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness.
- Project Objective 9.1: Annually increase the number of educators participating in GEAR UP professional learning, including through Texas Gateway and face-to-face trainings.[9]
- Project Objective 9.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 40% of Texas school districts will have used at least one Texas GEAR UP statewide resource, such as materials or PD.

Selected Evaluation Questions

Interested readers should view the full report for additional information on all key findings. Select evaluation questions relevant to Year 5 implementation—addressed in the report—include the following:

- How was Texas GEAR UP SG implemented overall and at each of the six participating schools?
- What are student, parent, teacher, and school staff perceptions of Texas GEAR UP SG student support service implementation strategies?
- What facilitators and barriers were associated with implementation of the strategies?
- What practices implemented by districts are perceived by grantees (students, parents, and staff) to be effective, and therefore a potential best practice?
- What were students' and parents' levels of understanding regarding postsecondary focus and readiness (e.g., college aspirations/expectations, college options, financing college)?
- What were student perceptions of student support services implementation strategies?
- What information or opportunities did students perceive to have been most relevant in informing them regarding postsecondary education and career readiness?
- What practices implemented by grantees are perceived by students to be effective, and therefore potential best practices?
- What types of information did grantees make available to students?
- What facilitators and barriers were reported regarding participation in postsecondary education readiness activities?
- To what extent were demographics, time spent in Texas GEAR UP SG, and perceptions of services and activities associated with educational aspirations and expectations of attaining a college degree?

[9] Texas Gateway (formerly Project Share) provides an online, interactive learning environment for Texas teachers. See https://www.texasgateway.org/ for additional information.

- For what services and activities do grantees use grant funds each year and over the entire time period of the grant?
- To what extent were grantees able to secure matching funds?
- For what services and activities do grantees use matching funds each year and over the entire time period of the grant?
- In what ways were trained teachers implementing data-driven strategies? Differentiated instruction? PBL?
- How many collaborations have schools formed with business alliances, government entities, and community groups? What were perceptions of those collaborations?
- In what ways and how often did collaborating organizations offer opportunities for career exploration to students or information about scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness and readiness?
- What types of information regarding college readiness were made available through the state? What steps, if any, did the state office take to communicate to schools and families about the information available?

Level and Mix of Implementation

The federal GEAR UP program encourages grantees, including the Texas GEAR UP SG, to engage in a wide range of implementation practices (referred to here as the "mix of implementation") in order to support project objectives. Table ES.3 provides a high-level overview of the range of implementation strategies engaged in to any extent by the six high schools in Year 5. All six high schools implemented the core Texas GEAR UP SG strategy types in Year 5: advanced course enrollment, student support services (e.g., tutoring, comprehensive mentoring, counseling/advising), college visits, parent events, teacher PD, and community alliances. Schools K and L continued to not implement all strategies (not implementing two in both Year 4 and Year 5). Schools H and I increased the number of strategies implemented in Year 5 (compared to only completing 17 of 19 strategies in Year 4). Schools J and M continued to implement all tracked strategies.

Table ES.3. Overview of Texas GEAR UP SG Implementation Strategies by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M
Implementation Strategies						
Advanced Course Enrollment	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pre-AP/AP Course Enrollment	X	X	X	X	X	X
PSAT Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X
SAT/ ACT Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X
TSIA Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dual Credit Enrollment	X	X	X	X	X	X
Summer Programs	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Support Services: Tutoring	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Support Services: Mentoring	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Support Services: Counseling/Advising	X	X	X	X	X	X
College Visits	X	X	X	X	X	X
Job Site Visits/Job Shadowing	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational Field Trips	X	X	X	X		X
Student Workshops/Events	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent Events	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent Counseling/ Advising	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent Event on College Preparation/Financial Aid	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent College Visit	X	X	X			X
Teacher Professional Development	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vertical Teaming Events	X	X	X			X
Community Alliances	X	X	X	X	X	X
Use of Statewide Services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total Number of Strategies Implemented (Out of 22)						
	22	22	22	20	19	22

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017; fall 2016 and spring 2017 site visit data; Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: An "X" indicates that a school reported implementing the strategy, although it does not capture the level of implementation (such as the number of students served) for each strategy. AP = advanced placement.

In addition, Table ES.3 includes indicators regarding whether each school has met or is on track to meet relevant project objectives. That is, based on available data is it likely that the school will meet the given project objective within the expected timeframe given their current progress. Overall, Texas GEAR UP SG is on track to meet most objectives, with a few exceptions. No school met Project Objective 2.3, regarding college credits earned; Project Objective 5.1, regarding 100% student participation on the PSAT in Year 4; Project Objective 7.3, regarding 50% parental involvement in at least three Texas GEAR UP SG events; or Project Objective 7.4, regarding teacher and counselor training in college admissions and financial aid processes. In addition, some, but not all schools were on track to meet Project Objective 1.2, regarding

students graduating on the Foundation High School Program; Project Objective 2.2, regarding pre-AP or AP course completion; Project Objective 3.1, regarding teacher PD; Project Objective 3.2, regarding at least five days of vertical teaming; Projective Objective 4.3, regarding the on-time promotion rate exceeding the state average; Project Objective 4.4, regarding student preparation for college; and Project Objective 5.2, regarding meeting ACT/SAT criterion. For all other project objectives, all schools were on track to meet the objectives. Table ES.4 displays how specific schools are doing regarding each objective.

Table ES.4. School Progress Toward Meeting Project Objectives, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Project Objectives	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M
1.2 - By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement, will meet or exceed the state average.	X	X		X	X	X
2.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all participating high schools will make opportunities available for each student to complete 18 hours of college credit (through AP, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment) by the time he or she graduates from high school.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.2. By the end of the project's fifth year, 60% of the cohort, including limited English proficient (LEP) students, will complete a pre-AP or AP course.	X			X	X	X
2.3: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 50% of cohort students will graduate with college credit earned by AP exam or through dual credit.						
3.1: All core content teachers will have the opportunity to participate in training with regard to differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, and PBL.	X	X	X	X		
3.2: Teams of teachers at the middle and high schools will complete at least five days of vertical teams preparation and implementation each year.	X	X	X			X
4.1: By the end of the second year, at least 75% of the 8th grade students will be involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program based on results of teacher/counselor input and diagnostic data.	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.2: Beginning in the second year, at least 30% of the students will be involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level, ease transitions, and increase college awareness.	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.3: By the end of the project's third year, the on-time promotion rate of cohort students will exceed the state average.					X	
4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, the necessary academic preparation for college. [a]			X			
5.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all cohort students will complete the ACT Aspire or the Preliminary SAT. By the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT.						
5.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of students meeting criterion on the ACT/SAT will meet or exceed the state average.					X	
5.3: The number of students who graduate college ready in mathematics and English will meet or exceed the state average. [b]	X		X		X	X
7.2: By the end of the first year, information and workshops aimed at linking college attendance to career success will be available to 100% of cohort students and their parents.	X	X	X	X	X	X
7.3: 50% of parents will participate in at least three Texas GEAR UP SG events each year.						
7.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, teachers and counselors will complete training in the college admissions and financial aid process.						
8.1: All participating districts will form business alliances that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.	X	X	X	X	X	X
8.2: Participating campuses will form alliances with governmental entities and community groups to enhance the information available to students regarding scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness.	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017; fall 2016 and spring 2017 site visit data.

Note: An "X" indicates that a school is making reasonable progress toward an objective, although it does not capture the completion or attainment of an objective.

[a] High schools were marked as making progress toward Project Objective 4.4 if students participated in at least on in-person college visit and one of the following: met or exceeded the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) in both English Language Arts (ELA) (>=351) and Mathematics (>=350), completed one or more Mathematics courses beyond Algebra II, enrolled in a coherent sequence of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses as part of a four-year plan of study, or at the of the fifth year students' personal graduation plan includes the Foundation High School Program with a Multidisciplinary endorsement.

[b] The state average of students who will graduate college ready as indicated by the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) in 2015–16, was 22.6% for ELA and 18.1% for mathematics.

Advanced Course, AP, and Dual Credit Enrollment

Cohort student enrollment in and completion of advanced courses (including AP and dual credit courses) is an important benchmark toward accomplishing Project Objectives 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3. The goal of these project objectives is to increase academic preparedness as well as the number of opportunities to earn college credit while in high school. School L had the highest AP or pre-AP course completion rate prior to the end of Year 5 (99%) while School J had the lowest completion rate (59%). In Year 5, 11% of cohort students were enrolled in dual credit courses and by February 28, 2017, 2% of the cohort had completed a dual credit course. The highest enrollment rate was at High School L, with 43% of the cohort currently enrolled in a dual credit course. The lowest enrollment rate was a High School J, with just 1% of cohort students enrolled in a dual credit course. This variance may be a result of several variables such as opportunities to learn about these courses, availability of courses, interaction with students and their College Preparation Advisors, or school culture.

Student Support Services: Tutoring, Mentoring, and Counseling

Each of the schools met or exceeded Project Objective 4.1, to have at least 75% of students participating in tutoring, mentoring, or counseling. The percentage of Grade 11 students who participated in student support services overall was 94%, above the project objective goal. Nearly all (93%) cohort students participated in counseling services during Year 5. The percentage of students who participated in mentoring increased six percentage points from Year 4 to Year 5 (32% to 38% respectively). Almost half (44%) of students participated in tutoring services in Year 5.

Student Participation in College Visits and Job Site Visits

In addition to student support services, college visits and job site visits represent other successful activities offered to the Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort students in Year 5. All six high schools engaged in college visits in Year 5 and site visit data revealed that college visits included campus tours, speaking with students or alumni, discussions with professors, and class observations. Across all six schools, 32 job site visits or job shadowing opportunities were available for students to participate in with 40% of students participating. Year 5 survey data indicated that students continued to find these activities to be, on average, *mostly effective*.

Parental Engagement with Texas GEAR UP SG

As was the case in prior years, no school met Project Objective 7.3 of having 50% of parents attend at least three Texas GEAR UP SG events annually, though schools made more progress on this goal in Year 5 (17%) than they did in Year 4 (9%). In Year 5, Texas GEAR UP SG high schools implemented 59 parent activities, compared to 90 in Year 4. Texas GEAR UP SG staff at each district also reported that they began working with the Family Engagement Trainer hired by the Support Center in Year 5. Site visit participants who reported working with her in Districts 1 and 3 claimed that the Family Engagement Trainer offered engaging and fresh content topics and provided letter, email, and marketing material templates for reaching out to parents. Despite the increase in number of events and percentage of those attending events, Coordinators in

Districts 3 and 4 reported concerns about the authenticity of parent relationships with Texas GEAR UP SG staff.

Teacher Professional Development and Vertical Teaming

Overall, PD opportunities supported by Texas GEAR UP SG totaled 181 opportunities across all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools. Texas GEAR UP SG schools are required to offer teacher PD each program year on the topics of advanced instructional strategies, vertical teaming, PBL, differentiated instruction, and college access/preparation. All schools offered PD on advanced instructional strategies and GEAR UP-specific opportunities. However, only five schools offered PD on differentiated instruction and PBL, one school offered financial literacy PD, and four schools offered vertical teaming opportunities.

Educational Aspirations and Expectations

Students' aspirations to obtain a 4-year degree or higher decreased slightly by two percentage points in Year 5 (to 70%); however, only 57% of student survey respondents reported that they expected to obtain a 4-year degree or higher. Of students who do not plan to go to college, the greatest percentage selected *I want to work* as a main reason for not continuing onto postsecondary education (58% across schools), which is consistent with Year 4.

Knowledge about College

Evaluation survey data indicated that the Texas GEAR UP SG served schools where the students generally understood the importance/benefit of college (67% of students rated themselves as *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable*) more than the requirements to get accepted (56% of students rated themselves as *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable*). Students also reported that they continued to need information on specific aspects of college requirements, as only 70% indicated they were *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the SAT (56% for the ACT). Students' average perceived knowledge of each of the relevant items differed significantly across schools. Only 40% of students selected GEAR UP staff or events as a source for college information (compared to 38% in Year 4 and 46% in Year 2). This implies that Texas GEAR UP SG may need to provide more information to a higher portion of students (and perhaps with greater frequency) in order to get students the information they need about college requirements.

Financial Understanding of College

Nearly half (44%) of student survey respondents reported feeling *extremely knowledgeable* or *knowledgeable* about financial aid and the costs and benefits of pursuing postsecondary education (see Table 3.11). The percentage of students who reported that they had conversations with someone from GEAR UP or their school about financial aid increased in Year 5 (72%, compared to 69% in Year 4). Of the five financial aid terms students were asked about on the survey, they were overall most knowledgeable about scholarships (73% were *extremely knowledgeable or knowledgeable*) while they reported that they felt least knowledgeable about Federal Pell grants (49% reported that they had *no knowledge*).

Continuing efforts to increase students' knowledge of the financial aspects of college (through conversations with students, events, and other activities) remain an important area of focus, especially as students become closer to postsecondary education enrollment; this should include information about specific types of financial aid available to them, how to obtain financial aid, and the actual costs of attending.

Perceptions of Texas GEAR UP SG Activities

On average, students found each type of activity that they participated in to be *mostly effective*. In Year 5, 37% of students reported on the survey that they were *strongly satisfied* with their College Preparation Advisor and an additional 55% reported that they were *satisfied.* A small percentage of students reported using the GEAR UP website in Year 5 (25%), although this was a slight increase from Year 4 (22%). When asked about Texas GEAR UP SG activities' effectiveness in preparing students for success in high school and preparing them for college, Texas GEAR UP SG summer programs were rated the highest, with an overall mean of 3.12 on a four-point scale.

Summary of Implementation: Year 1 through Year 5

In the report, differences in implementation from across time points are highlighted. Table ES.5 summarizes some of the key implementation data comparisons across Years 2, 4, and 5 of Texas GEAR UP SG.

Table ES.5. Summary Comparison of Year 2 (Grade 8), Year 4 (Grade 10), and Year 5 (Grade 11) Implementation Data

Implementation Area	Year 2	Year 4	Year 5
Level and Mix of Implementation	Variability remained; however, overall, implementation was higher. Two middle schools (Districts 1 and 3) implemented a wide range of activities.	District 3 continued to implement and engage students in the broadest range of services, but the overall level and mix of services across districts was successful.	Districts 1, 3, and 4 implemented and engaged students in the broadest range of services, but the overall level and mix of services across districts continued to be successful.
Student Participation in Texas GEAR UP SG Student Support Services	78% of students participated.	91% of students participated.	94% of students participated.
Student Participation in Any Texas GEAR UP SG Activities	99% of students participated.	98% of students participated.	97% of students participated.
Number of Advanced Courses	10% of students were enrolled in four or more advanced courses.	27% of students were enrolled in four or more advanced courses.	14% of students were enrolled in four or more advanced courses.
Enrollment in an Advanced Mathematics Course	43% of students were enrolled in advanced mathematics, including Algebra I.	43% of students were enrolled in advanced mathematics, including courses that were taken at the honors, pre-AP or AP level (e.g., pre-AP Algebra II) or courses that were taken ahead of schedule (e.g., pre-Calculus),	37% of students were enrolled in advanced mathematics, including courses that were taken at the honors, pre-AP or AP level (e.g., pre-AP Algebra II) or courses that were taken ahead of schedule (e.g., Calculus),
Enrollment in Other Advanced Courses[a]	21% of students were enrolled in advanced ELA/writing; 21% of students were enrolled in advanced science; 20% of students were enrolled in advanced social studies. Two middle schools had 0-1% of students in advanced ELA, science, or social studies courses.	45% of students were enrolled in advanced ELA/writing; 41% of students were enrolled in advanced science; 36% of students were enrolled in advanced social studies. All high schools had at least 16% enrollment in each content area.	38% of students were enrolled in advanced ELA/writing; 39% of students were enrolled in advanced science; 30% of students were enrolled in advanced social studies. All high schools had at least 9% enrollment in each content area.
Student Knowledge of and Academic Preparation for College	N/A	86% of surveyed students plan to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement.	55% of surveyed students reported that they plan to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement.
Endorsement Selection	N/A	93% of students had chosen an endorsement and 83% of surveyed students understand how their endorsement will help them prepare for college.	96% of students reported pursuing an endorsement and 62% reported that they are on track to graduate with an endorsement.
Parental Attendance at Three or More Texas GEAR UP SG Events[b]	7% of parents attended three or more events; 38% of parents attended at least one event.	9% of parents attended three or more events; 28% of parents attended at least one event.	17% of parents attended three or more events; 21% of parents attended in one to two events.
Teacher Professional Development and Vertical Teaming	Two middle schools held five days of vertical teaming events.	Three high schools held five days of vertical teaming events.	One high school held at least five days of vertical teaming events.

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017; Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017.

Note: Texas GEAR UP SG implementation in Year 2 occurred in seven middle schools. In Year 4 and Year 5, implementation occurred in six high schools within the same four districts. N/A reflects areas that the evaluation did not specifically focus on but are topics of interest for Year 4 or Year 5 implementation.

[a] ELA refers to English Language Arts.

[b] Parental attendance is defined as any adult household member attending an event associated with the given student.

Key Facilitators and Barriers: Implementation

For implementation to be successful, it is important to understand any potential facilitators and barriers to participation. Key facilitators identified in year 5 included the following listed below.

- When describing successes related to parent engagement in Year 5, it was reported that engaging and dependable parent liaisons were an important component of developing quality relationships with cohort parents and initiating engagement with other parents. As the primary person designated to provide parents with information and resources, parent liaisons may be more likely to build relationships with parents that facilitate trust between parents and the program by being engaging and dependable.
- Student participation in college visits and college student shadowing was positively correlated with knowledge of the importance and benefit of college as well as plans to take advanced courses (Table 4.3). This finding may provide insight to a facilitator of increased student knowledge of postsecondary information.
- An additional potential facilitator identified for successful implementation was “local voices” (i.e., school and district administrators) who are bought into the grant and who are embedded within the schools. District Coordinators who reported that their school and district administrators were highly engaged in grant implementation said that the administrators were familiar with grant goals as well as the strategies put in place to work towards those goals. This familiarity led to these administrators’ commitment to ensuring that the grant was successful in their respective districts.

Key barriers identified in Year 5 included the following listed below.

- Teachers who participated in site visits continued to report that they perceived some students to lack the motivation to succeed in high school. Teachers also reported that some students were only motivated to receive grades that will lead to a transcript desirable for higher education, not to learn the material or self-satisfaction for producing high quality work. Further, the perceived lack of motivation to make up missed work due to Texas GEAR UP SG meetings and events was worrisome for some teachers given the high frequency of missed class time for these meetings and events.
- Though parent engagement documented in GUIDES improved in some aspects, parental engagement continued to be a concern in Year 5 as no school met Project Objective 7.3. Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff also expressed that they were concerned that the limited interactions Texas GEAR UP SG staff have with many parents did not lead to “authentic” relationships that would facilitate higher quality engagement.
- Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff also reported on site visits that they were frustrated by limited buy-in for the grant from administrators and school staff. The current level of buy-in, they reported, negatively affected implementation in Year 5 and will also likely affect sustainability of Texas GEAR UP SG initiatives.

Potential Promising Practices

Three Texas GEAR UP SG activities/initiatives implemented during Year 5 were identified as potential promising practices worthy of continued follow-up in the future. Parent and family events that allow attendees to rotate sessions and hear information about a variety of topics in

short periods of time were cited as successful by Texas GEAR UP SG staff. This format allowed parents to interact with Texas GEAR UP SG staff in small, less intimidating settings and to have time to break up information-heavy sessions. The extended PD provided by the Support Center's Educator Outreach Coach provided schools with the opportunity to tailor the trainings and resources for teacher PD based on the needs of the teachers and school. Finally, utilizing dedicated Texas GEAR UP SG staff for parent engagement and data entry were cited as helpful for streamlining efforts for successful implementation.

Recommendations

Based on the range of data analyzed to date, three key recommendations or next steps with regard to program implementation in Year 5 are presented here. Collectively, these include the following:

- Provide targeted services for students. Texas GEAR UP SG staff should consider targeting students based on interest and academic fit when recruiting students and parents for activities such as college visits, educational field trips, and summer programming. The interests of students may be best determined through individual discussions between Texas GEAR UP SG staff or other school staff and students as well as feedback on participation in previous activities. Academic fit may be best determined by grades, teacher and counselor feedback and Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) pass rates or SAT scores.
- Develop guidance on collaboration between Texas GEAR UP SG staff and staff from other college access programs. Guidance from TEA and the Support Center on how to ensure that efforts between Texas GEAR UP SG and other college access programs are not duplicated and the non-GEAR UP resources and services are of a high quality may be helpful for Texas GEAR UP SG staff. Effective communication and collaboration between Texas GEAR UP SG staff and the staff of other programs may facilitate higher quality services to prepare cohort students to be successful in postsecondary education and sustain initiatives and practices implemented by Texas GEAR UP SG.
- Encourage more frequent vertical teaming activities. Vertical teaming to align instructional strategies may be one strategy for increasing the academic readiness of students, thus increasing the rigor of advanced courses. Consistent vertical teaming activities may also help districts sustain academic rigor throughout students' secondary education.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

1. Overview of Texas GEAR UP

In April 2012, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was awarded a federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The broad purpose of the federal GEAR UP program is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Through the Texas GEAR UP State Grant (SG), participating schools provide services to a primary cohort of students from Grade 7 (the 2012–13 school year) through their first year of postsecondary education (the 2018–19 school year).[10] Texas GEAR UP SG services are intended to serve individual students and their parents, as well as to support teachers through the provision of professional development (PD) and schools/districts through changes in academic rigor. In addition, the Texas GEAR UP SG is intended to make a statewide impact through the widespread provision of coordinated information and resources for students and their parents regarding postsecondary opportunities. TEA contracted with ICF to provide an external, third-party evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP SG, including the annual implementation reports.

Previous annual implementation reports described implementation during each year of the grant (2012–13, 2013–14, 2014–15, and 2015–16). This fifth annual implementation report focuses on implementation events that occurred in summer 2016 and during the 2016–17 school year. These annual reports provide a snapshot of how the six Texas GEAR UP SG participating high schools located in four districts, TEA, and TEA's Texas GEAR UP SG collaborators are implementing the program. In order to maintain confidentiality, as in prior implementation reports, the report references districts by number (District 1 through District 4), and high schools by letter (High Schools H through M). In the first two implementation reports, middle schools were also referenced by letter designations (Schools A through G). A separate, forthcoming comprehensive report examines outcomes and the relationship between implementation and outcomes in the first two years.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the relevant research literature on student success and college readiness, along with an understanding of these issues in the context of the state of Texas. The GEAR UP program, in general, and the Texas GEAR UP SG are described. Next, a summary of key findings from previous implementation reports is provided as a point of comparison for the Year 5 implementation data presented in this report. Specific prior year findings will be presented throughout the report where comparisons are appropriate. Finally, this chapter provides an overview of the Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation. Appendix B provides more detailed information regarding the evaluation methodology.

[10] Additional information about the cohort evaluation design of Texas GEAR UP SG is included in Appendix B.

1.1 College Readiness Challenge

1.1.1 The National and Texas College Readiness Challenge

The federal GEAR UP program is focused on supporting college readiness for low-income students and students who may not otherwise pursue postsecondary educational opportunities. While it is estimated that by 2020, 62% of Texas jobs will require postsecondary education (Carnevale, Smith, & Strohl, 2014), only 30.2% of Texans between ages 25 and 34 had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2016 (Census Bureau, 2017). In addition, college completion rates in Texas continue to reflect wide gaps based on students' family income. In 2016, the estimated educational attainment rate for a bachelor's degree or higher for individuals 25 years or older living above the poverty level in Texas was 27.6%, which was more than six times higher than the 4.4% of individuals the same age living below the poverty level who attained a bachelor's degree or higher (Census Bureau, 2017). This trend aligns with college enrollment and completion trends found at the national level, as well. Specifically, in 2016, the estimated educational attainment rate for a bachelor's degree or higher for individuals 25 years or older living above the poverty level in the U.S. was 29.9%, which was also more than six times higher than the 4.4% of individuals the same age living below the poverty level who attained a bachelor's degree or higher (Census Bureau, 2017).

College enrollment and completion rates in Texas also reflect gaps according to race and ethnicity. In Texas, 36.4% of Whites, 36.0% of Hispanics, and 13.2% of African-Americans were enrolled in higher education in 2016 (Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board [THECB], 2017). Additionally, in Texas, of the total Hispanic population in 2016, 14.2% earned a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 23.1% of African-American and 37.6% of White, non-Hispanic populations (Census Bureau, 2017). College enrollment gaps according to race and ethnicity at the national level differ from Texas. Specifically, the immediate college enrollment rate for White high school graduates throughout the U.S. was 70% in 2015, higher than the rates for African-American (63%) and Hispanic (67%) high school completers (McFarland et al., 2017). According to Krogstad (2016), 35% of Hispanics ages 18 to 24 were enrolled in a two- or four-year college.

While 54% of Texas eighth graders in 2005 had enrolled in a postsecondary institution following their high school graduation, only 21% of the same group earned a postsecondary credential (THECB, 2017). These data suggest that many of those students did not enter college-ready, decreasing the likelihood that they earned a credential.[11] Although improving enrollment is a critical first step in increasing college attainment, students must also be prepared at a level that will move them from enrollment to graduation. Despite the improvements made in recent years regarding college and career readiness in Texas high schools, a large portion of students continue to rely on developmental education to prepare them for college-level material.[12] In fall 2015, 17.7% of Texas students who attended a four-year public institution required

[11] Conley (2007) defines college readiness as "the level of preparation a student needs in order to enroll and succeed—without remediation—in a credit-bearing general education course at a postsecondary institution that offers a baccalaureate degree or transfer to a baccalaureate program" (p. 5).
[12] Developmental education refers to remedial classes/interventions that college students need to be eligible for credit-bearing courses.

developmental education, which is an increase from 2014 (THECB, 2017).[13] Community and technical colleges are particularly likely to encounter students with a need for developmental education courses. Of all public community and technical college students, 60.2% required developmental education, a 12.3% percentage point increase from 2014 (THECB, 2017). The impact on students in terms of time, money, and outcomes is significant when students have not achieved college readiness standards and require developmental education. Specifically, only 36% of two-year college students who are below the state readiness standard when they enter college are still enrolled in higher education after three years, compared to 57% of students who enter college ready (THECB, 2017).

The Texas GEAR UP SG, which began in 2012, provides an opportunity to support schools serving high percentages of low-income students in new approaches to college readiness—including motivation. According to a study based on students' motivation to attend postsecondary education, the needs of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in the form of interacting with others, once achieved, nurture motivation for an individual (Abel, Guiffrida, Lynch, & Wall, 2013). ED suggests that GEAR UP programs, including the Texas GEAR UP SG, engage in a range of implementation activities that encourage and build on students' motivations to set postsecondary education as a goal, provide academic and social support to students, educate students about postsecondary enrollment, and prepare them for the financial costs associated with postsecondary attendance.

Understanding high school graduation in Texas is important because it is a necessary milestone toward college enrollment. The Texas high school Grade 9 four-year longitudinal graduation rate slightly increased from 89.0% for the Class of 2015 to 89.1% for the Class of 2016 (TEA, 2017a). The graduation rate for students in the Class of 2016 identified as being economically disadvantaged (86.0%) increased from the graduation rates of students in the Class of 2015 identified as being economically disadvantaged (85.6%) (TEA, 2017a). These trends reinforce the need for Texas GEAR UP SG to support schools with high percentages of students identified as being economically disadvantaged. English language learners (ELL), Hispanic, and African-American youth are also targeted by the Texas GEAR UP SG. TEA data indicate concerns with the graduation rates for these student populations; rates are improving over time but are still below state rates. In other words, progress for various groups continues to lag amidst overall progress. For example, students identified as ELL at any point between Grades 9 and 12 in the Class of 2016 had a much lower high school graduation rate (73.7%) than the state (89.1%) for the Class of 2016. Both Hispanic and African-American groups continued to lag behind White, non-Hispanic youth in the state as well, with a Class of 2016 graduation rate of 86.9% and 85.4%, respectively (compared to 93.4% for White, non-Hispanic).[14]

In addition to high school graduation, another way for students to prepare for enrollment in higher education is to earn college credit while in high school through dual credit (college and high school) courses and gain exposure to the rigorous content in advanced placement (AP) classes. Ideally, academic rigor in AP courses exposes students to the typical demands of a

[13] Fall 2014 cohort reported 10.4%, fall 2015 cohort reported 17.7%.
[14] Hispanic (Class of 2016: 86.9%, Class of 2011: 81.8%) and African-American (Class of 2016: 85.4%, Class of 2011: 80.9%) youth in the Class of 2016 had improved graduation rates compared to the Class of 2011. Both Hispanic and African-American groups continued to lag behind Asian-American (Class of 2016: 95.7%, Class of 2011: 95.0%) youth in the state as well.

college course. Participation in AP courses is another area where various student groups continue to lag in Texas, although progress has also been made (TEA, 2016). Specifically, 38.7% of Texas high school students who graduated in 2016 took at least one AP exam during high school, a 1.8 percentage point decrease from the previous school year (40.5% in 2015; TEA, 2016); this is 2.5 percentage points higher than the national average (36.2%; TEA, 2017b). As in previous years, Texas continued to reach close to equitable participation in AP exams for low income students in the class of 2016; 48.8% of all students were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch while half (50.3%) of the AP examinees in the Class of 2016 were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (TEA, 2018; TEA, 2017b). Although participation is equitable, performance for some student groups is low. According to a 2016 College Board data release, the student groups with the lowest mean AP scores in Texas were African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native Americans, with the average scores on a five-point scale at 1.90, 2.12, and 2.37, respectively; this is compared to 2.87 for White students and 2.51 overall in Texas (College Board, 2016).[15] Texas GEAR UP SG, which stresses academic rigor and student engagement in AP courses, has the potential to be part of the effort to help reduce achievement gaps between student groups on AP exams.

1.1.2 Texas House Bill 5 and the Texas GEAR UP State Grant Grade 9 Class of 2014–15

The Texas Legislature passed and the governor signed House Bill (HB) 5, 83rd Legislature, Regular Session, in June 2013 (LegiScan, 2013). The passage of HB 5 initiated substantial changes to the assessment and graduation requirements in the state, including the establishment of a new high school program—the Foundation High School Program—to create a rigorous, but flexible, educational program for students that promotes both college access and career readiness.[16] The Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort, students who began high school in 2014–15, were the first cohort of Grade 9 students who were required to graduate under the requirements of the Foundation High School Program. Both TEA and districts statewide worked to address the practicalities associated with the purpose and goal of the HB 5 legislation from June 2013 to the start of the 2014–15 school year. One challenge faced by TEA and the districts related to the Foundation High School Program was ensuring that students received clear information about graduation requirements, including understanding endorsement requirements and how to earn Algebra II credit which is required for admission at most Texas public universities and colleges.

Prior to the Foundation High School Program, in order to graduate from high school under either the 26-credit Recommended High School Program (RHSP) or the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP), students were required to successfully complete four courses in each of four content subject areas: English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies. These course requirements were in line with college entrance requirements. The Foundation High School Program, however, requires a minimum of 22-credits including four credits in ELA

[15] Scores reflect the following scale: 5 = extremely well qualified, 4 = well qualified, 3 = qualified, 2 = possibly qualified, and 1 = no recommendation. Each college decides what scores it will accept. Reported means are averages across exams.

[16] For additional information on Texas high school graduation requirements please see http://tea.texas.gov/graduation-requirements/hb5.aspx.

(I, II, III, and one advanced ELA course), three in mathematics (Algebra, Geometry, and one advanced mathematics course), three in science (Biology, Integrated Physics, and Chemistry or an advanced science course), and three in social studies (U.S. History, U.S. Government (one-half credit), Economics (one-half credit), and either World History or World Geography). Completing Algebra II is not required under the Foundation High School Program.

Additionally, under the Foundation High School Program, students are required to select an endorsement upon entering high school. An endorsement is a series of courses that gives students the flexibility to focus on their interests. Essentially, the endorsements provide the basis for entering a career pathway, similar to a major in college. Completing an endorsement requires students to earn 26 credits to graduate. Students are also permitted to choose, at any time, to earn an endorsement other than the one the student previously selected at the beginning of Grade 9. After a student's sophomore year, a student may choose to graduate without earning an endorsement. Students are generally discouraged from graduating with the Foundation High School Program without the addition of an endorsement and cannot do so without consent from a parent or guardian.[17] Although five endorsements have been identified under the Foundation High School Program, districts are not required to offer all five endorsements. The five endorsement areas include business and industry; arts and humanities; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); public services; and multidisciplinary studies. Students may select more than one endorsement.

Given the focus of Texas GEAR UP SG on postsecondary education, it is worth examining Foundation High School Program requirements relative to college entrance requirements. In particular, the Foundation High School Program does not require students to complete Algebra II in order to graduate while many colleges require Algebra II completion in their entrance requirements. Specifically, students who select no endorsement may not complete Algebra II, and some endorsements provided under HB 5 do not include the requirement to complete Algebra II. In order to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program, students must exceed the required 22 credits in the Foundation High School Program. Students must complete at least one endorsement and must complete Algebra II as one of the four mathematics credits. In addition to better meeting college entrance requirements, another advantage of graduating with a distinguished level of achievement is that it is a requirement to be admitted to a Texas public university under the state's Automatic Admission Policy.[18] In August 2014, TEA published a Graduation Toolkit to support students, parents, and schools in understanding the new graduation requirements.[19] Texas GEAR UP SG participating schools/districts engaged in their own activities to introduce Grade 9 students to the new graduation requirement and endorsements, as described in the Year 3 Annual Implementation Report (Briggs et al., 2016). Efforts to support cohort students in the graduation

[17] This permission cannot be provided until after the student completes Grade 10.
[18] In 1997, during the 75th Legislative Session, Texas introduced the Automatic Admission policy (Texas Education Code [TEC] § 51.803) for students applying for admission to college. Students graduating in the top 10% of their high school class were eligible for automatic admission into Texas public colleges and universities. HB 5 added an additional requirement for automatic admission—that students must graduate with a distinguished level of achievement along with being in the top 10% of their high school class. For more information, visit http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.51.htm#51.803
[19] The TEA Graduation Toolkit is available online at http://tea.texas.gov/communications/brochures.aspx.

requirement and endorsements in Grade 11 are detailed in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and in the Case Study Reports (Appendix E).

In addition to graduation requirements, it is worth noting that HB 5 reduced the number of State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®) end-of-course (EOC) exams from 15 to 5 in order to be eligible for graduation: Algebra I, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History. Prior to HB 5, English I and English II STAAR EOC exams assessed reading and writing separately. In 2013–14, however, reading and writing were combined in a single EOC exam. This change is not anticipated to affect students' postsecondary educational opportunities, as these exams are not typically utilized as part of college entrance requirements.

In the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, Senate Bill (SB) 149, which further revised the state's assessment graduation requirements for students enrolled in the 11th or 12th grade for the 2014–15, 2015–16, or 2016–17 school years, was passed. SB 149 states that any student who fails STAAR EOC in up to two courses may receive a high school diploma if the student has qualified to graduate by means of an individual graduation committee (IGC). The decision is at the discretion of the IGC.[20] While the primary cohort was not initially expected to be impacted by SB 149, new legislation, SB 463, which was signed into law on June 9, 2017, has extended the expiration of the statute to 2021, which will impact the primary cohort as well as comparison cohorts.

1.1.3 About the Federal GEAR UP Program

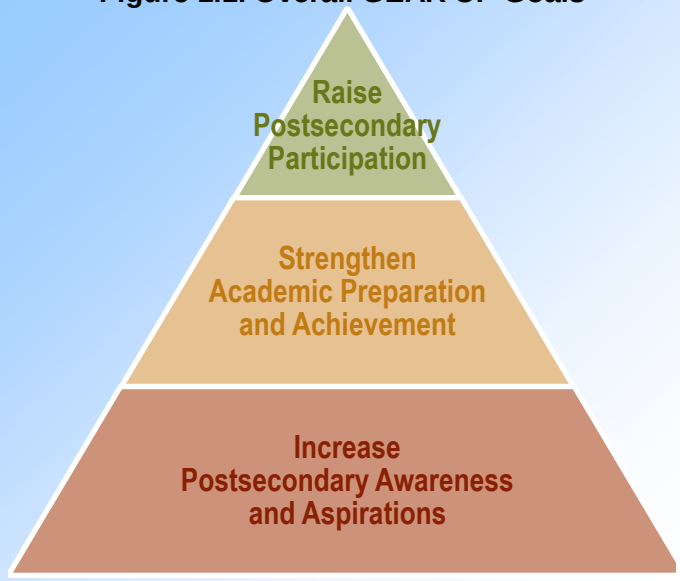
TEA's application for and receipt of a federal GEAR UP SG is in line with the general state focus on promoting college readiness and access discussed in the prior section. The federal GEAR UP program seeks to improve postsecondary enrollment and completion for low-income students. The GEAR UP program addresses the challenges faced by low-income students in attaining postsecondary success in an early and ongoing manner, providing services, activities, and resources to students from Grade 7 through the first year of college. These goals are presented as a pyramid, with each goal building on previously attained goals (CoBro Consulting, 2010; see Figure 1.1). Although the goals build on each other, the strategies associated with each goal can occur throughout the implementation of GEAR UP (e.g., implementation activities to increase college awareness and postsecondary aspirations occur across grades). The goals include the following:

[20] For additional information about how SB 149 amended the assessment graduation requirements, see http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/News_and_Multimedia/Correspondence/TAA_Letters/Assessment_Graduation_Requirements_as_Amended_by_Senate_Bill_(SB)_149/. For more information about the IGC review, see TEA's Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document at http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=25769821193&libID=25769821294. The Class of 2015 is the first graduating class in which students graduated by IGC determination; data on those graduates may be found at http://tea.texas.gov/acctres/dropcomp/years.html#igc.

1. **Increasing postsecondary awareness and aspirations.** This goal is focused on increasing GEAR UP students' and parents' knowledge of postsecondary educational options, the preparation needed to succeed at the postsecondary level, and parents' financial literacy regarding postsecondary education. Ideally, aspirations and expectations for postsecondary education are aligned and influence decisions (e.g., to complete Algebra I by the end of Grade 9, to apply for postsecondary enrollment in Grade 12). Texas GEAR UP project objectives, such as offering college awareness workshops to all students and parents by the end of the project's first year, support this effort.

2. **Strengthening academic preparation and achievement.** This goal focuses on providing academically rigorous opportunities for students (e.g., achieving college readiness benchmarks on state/national tests, completion of college credit in high school). GEAR UP PD opportunities for teachers are made available to increase academic rigor in the classroom. Grantees monitor, and students can self-monitor, progress on achieving early and intermediate outcomes that indicate postsecondary readiness (e.g., timely progress toward meeting a plan for graduation at the distinguished level of achievement). Texas GEAR UP project objectives, such as 85% of students completing Algebra I by the end of Grade 9 (Project Objective 1.1) and 60% of students completing an AP/pre-AP course by the fifth year (Project Objective 2.2), reflect this overarching goal.

Figure 1.1. Overall GEAR UP Goals



Source: CoBro Consulting (2010).

3. **Raising postsecondary participation.** Finally, GEAR UP seeks to improve high school graduation rates and enrollment in postsecondary education. This goal is at the top of the pyramid, in part, because it is the intended long-term outcome. However, implementation activities intended to aid grantees in meeting this goal also occur throughout the life cycle of the grant, including providing student support services such as tutoring and mentoring. The program anticipates that successful grantees will develop systems to identify students for such services early and at an appropriate level. Among the various implementation activities, TEA has indicated that participation in summer programs is of particular interest to the Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation. Texas GEAR UP SG project objectives for participation in GEAR UP activities, as well as graduating from high school with college-ready skills in mathematics and ELA, support this goal.

1.1.4 Overview of Texas GEAR UP State Grant

TEA was awarded a federal GEAR UP grant in April 2012 with a start date of July 2012. As described in prior implementation reports (Spinney et al., 2018; Briggs et al., 2016; Briggs et al., 2015; O'Donnel et al., 2013), the Texas GEAR UP SG serves low-income and historically underserved students through two primary strategies: (1) a district intervention package, which supports the targeted districts' college readiness and success initiatives; and (2) statewide initiatives, which provide guidance, information, and resources related to college access, readiness, and success for all Texas districts and communities. The Texas GEAR UP SG district intervention supports schools in four districts (six high schools at the time of this report) with a high population of low-income youth. In addition to district Texas GEAR UP SG services, GEAR UP-specific statewide supports are provided through existing and newly developed TEA college and career information resources, which provide a rich array of information and tools for educators, students and their parents to help provide guidance regarding postsecondary education.[21]

TEA based the selection of districts to participate in the Texas GEAR UP SG grant on data from the 2009–10 school year related to poverty and the risk of dropping out of school.[22] At that time, all seven Texas GEAR UP SG middle schools in the four selected districts had greater percentages of students identified as being economically disadvantaged and at risk (i.e., those students identified as being at risk for dropping out of school based on having one or more of 13 factors), compared to the state.[23] The seven middle schools also had higher-than-state-average enrollments of Hispanic/Latino students and three of the schools also had large African-American student populations.[24] Both Hispanic/Latino and African-American students are historically underrepresented in higher education (Editorial Projects in Education, 2013; Krogstad, 2016). Table 1.1 shows a list of the schools who participated in the Texas GEAR UP SG in each school year. Table F.1 in Appendix F presents demographic data for students. As previously mentioned, schools will be identified by a letter and districts by a number in order to mask the school and maintain the confidentiality that was promised for the site visits.

[21] This includes the statewide website at http://www.texasgearup.com.
[22] TEA first applied for the GEAR UP grant in July 2011 with plans for implementation to begin in the 2011–12 school year. Funding was awarded based on this application in a deferred award cycle (April 2012).
[23] TEC § 29.081 provides criteria for at-risk status For more information, see https://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=51539617810 and http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/Docs/ED/htm/ED.29.htm#29.081.
[24] See Annual Implementation Report #1 (O'Donnel et al., 2013) for additional details regarding the demographic characteristics of the schools during the 2009–10 school year.

Table 1.1. Texas GEAR UP SG Schools

District	Middle Schools (2012–13; 2013–14)	High Schools (2014–15; 2015–16; 2016–17)
Edgewood Independent School District	Brentwood, Garcia, Wrenn	Memorial, Kennedy
Lubbock Independent School District	Dunbar	Estacado
Manor Independent School District	Decker, Manor	Manor, Manor New Tech
Somerset Independent School District	Somerset	Somerset

HIGH SCHOOL OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO TEXAS GEAR UP SG STUDENTS

In Year 5, all Texas GEAR UP SG districts offered high school options with a particular focus on college readiness or were planning to in the near future. Unless otherwise stated in the following details provided for each district, students who elected to take advantage of these alternative high school options will no longer be included in the primary cohort. Specifically, some students in Grade 11 who are focused on postsecondary education may select one of these alternatives as a substitute that will facilitate this goal. This means that the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort will lose some students who might otherwise have counted towards achieving the postsecondary enrollment goal.[25] Following is a description of the postsecondary education alternatives available to students in the Texas GEAR UP SG participating districts:

- In Manor Independent School District, Manor New Tech High School (opened in the 2007–08 school year) offers project-based learning (PBL) focused on college and career readiness in STEM with students selected for enrollment by lottery. All Grade 11 students at this school are considered part of the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort. Additionally, Manor Independent School District started an early college high school program (available to students starting in the 2014–15 school year) in association with a local community college. Through the program, students have the opportunity to enroll in dual-credit courses during each year of high school to earn their associate's degree (60 college credit hours) by the time they graduate from high school. In Grade 9, the main goal of the program was to have the enrolled students pass the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) test.[26] Grade 9 students were also offered dual-enrollment classes at Manor High School. In Grade 10, students began traveling to community college for classes and continued to do so in Grade 11. Manor New Tech High School students in Grade 11, who are enrolled in the early college high school program, attend school at the Manor High School campus and are still included in the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort.
- Somerset Independent School District (in collaboration with two other districts) established a selective enrollment Early College Leadership Academy (ECLA) that offers opportunities for

[25] While some students may still attend a participating Texas GEAR UP SG high school, if they are receiving extra services through participation in an alternative college readiness program, they will no longer be included in the cohort for the purposes of analyzing the impact of the Texas GEAR UP SG.
[26] The TSIA is used to determine readiness for college coursework and identifies needs for any developmental coursework. Students must pass TSIA before taking community college courses unless such requirement was waived. For more information see http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=C92F1DAA-D49E-03F0-0750060AA756E807 and http://tea.texas.gov/WorkArea/linkit.aspx?LinkIdentifier=id&ItemID=25769823287&libID=25769823385.

students to earn an associate's degree in liberal arts along with their high school diploma. Year 5 of the Texas GEAR UP SG was the third year of operation for this program. Some Texas GEAR UP SG students in this district (who attended Somerset Middle School in 2013–14) may have attended this school (instead of the Texas GEAR UP SG high school) in 2014–15 and are no longer part of the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort. These students are not reflected in the data in this report and will be excluded from future reports unless the students return to the participating high school.

- Lubbock Independent School District has initiated an early college high school (ECHS) which began in summer 2016, in collaboration with a local university, for the 2016–17 school year. Student enrollment started with the Grade 9 students in the 2016–17 school year. School administrators confirmed that students can only enroll in the ECHS for free as Grade 9 students.[27] An ECHS director will serve as an advisor to the students enrolled in the dual-credit classes, but other duties and responsibilities are not yet known.
- Edgewood Independent School District has a Touch of Life Technology (TOLTech) Texas STEM academy, housed at one of the district's middle schools (which is not one of the former Texas GEAR UP SG middle schools in this district).[28] Both middle school and high school students attend the TOLTech Academy. Twenty-two percent of the cohort students at Memorial High School participated in the academy, an increase of one percentage point from Year 4.[29]

TRANSITION FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

In Year 3 of Texas GEAR UP SG, students transitioned from middle school to high school. This transition expanded the opportunities for students to prepare for college, such as being exposed to juniors and seniors who were applying for college and interacting with school staff who may be more familiar with college requirements. College Preparation Advisors, first introduced when the primary cohort was in Grade 8, also transitioned to continue serving students in the high school. While College Preparation Advisors may have had some contact with administrators and teachers from the high schools for vertical alignment activities and/or summer transition programs, Year 3 reflected a transition for the program to establish relationships with and support from teachers, administrators, and staff at the high school. Overall 79% of Grade 8 students remained in the primary cohort in Grade 9. In addition, 72% of Grade 9 cohort students attended a Texas GEAR UP SG school in Grade 8. While most of the Grade 8 cohort continued into Grade 9 and most of the Grade 9 cohort had been in Grade 8, the transition from middle school to high school introduced new students into the cohort. The Year 3 Annual Implementation Report (Briggs et al., 2016) provides a detailed review of implementation activities, the barriers and facilitators faced, and potential promising practices in the context of this transition.

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[27] Students not in Grade 9 in the 2016–17 school year, and future school years, can still enroll in the ECHS but for a $200 registration fee, not including text book prices which vary.
[28] Touch of Life Technologies, or TOLTech, creates career-long education solutions for health care students and professionals. More information about the organization is available at http://www.toltech.net.
[29] Kennedy High School did not report participation in the TOLTech Academy during the 2015–16 school year. It is unclear whether there were actually no participants from Kennedy or if there were participants, but staff did not report participation data.

PROGRAM LEADERSHIP AT SCHOOLS

In Year 5, program leadership at the six Texas GEAR UP SG high schools remained consistent—in terms of roles and responsibilities—to Year 4. Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators continued to coordinate parent and student events, build and maintain relationships with community alliances, liaise with district and school administrators and staff to deliver programming, and oversee implementation. College Preparation Advisors continued to service students in group and one-on-one settings during their time together. A total of seven College Preparation Advisors served the six Texas GEAR UP SG high schools during Year 5, one of whom started in Year 5. Texas GEAR UP SG teams in each district were also made up of staff that may include a parent liaison, data clerk, and/or tutor(s). These staff helped support Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators and College Preparation Advisors implement the grant and meet program goals.

District 2 experienced turnover at the district level with the Director of Federal and State Programs position in Year 5. Although the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator, College Preparation Advisors, and other Texas GEAR UP SG staff did not report any direct challenges with this turnover at the district level, they did mention new obstacles in getting approval to spend grant funds on Texas GEAR UP SG activities, particularly in conducting college visits. In District 3, a new Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator was hired in spring 2017, a change that many Texas GEAR UP SG staff found to be difficult due to the need to retrain and familiarize the new personnel with the Texas GEAR UP SG. Additionally, in District 4, site visit participants confirmed that the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator resigned and was expected to leave at the end of the school year in Year 5. Details regarding the new Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator for District 4 will be discussed in the Annual Implementation Report 6.[30]

TEXAS GEAR UP STATE GRANT COLLABORATORS

In Year 5, a total of seven collaborator interviews were conducted, and four of the six collaborators from Year 4 returned (Raise Achievement, AMS Pictures, TG, and GeoFORCE). The two new collaborators interviewed included Focus Training and Signal Vine. Focus Training was brought on to work with the Texas GEAR UP SG in spring 2016 (not interviewed in Year 4), providing content support regarding college readiness and non-cognitive skill development in the summer programs offered to the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort. Signal Vine was used to provide mass texting services for Texas GEAR UP SG staff in hopes of communicating tasks, reminders, and other pertinent information to students. See previous reports for a description of collaborators in previous years of the grant.

Support Center: The University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Public School Initiatives (UT-IPSI) Office for College Access manages and staffs the Support Center. The Support Center includes full-time staff who focus on Texas GEAR UP SG in addition to the seven College Preparation Advisors; the Support Center supervises College Preparation Advisors and provides them with a variety of trainings on financial aid and other pertinent topics related to Year 5 cohort students. In particular, the Support Center registered all College Preparation

[30] Additional details regarding changes in program leadership in schools is discussed in the case studies included in Appendix E.

Advisors to attend the Texas Association of College Admission Counseling training as a means of preparing them for helping Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students apply for colleges. TEA and Support Center staff also collaborated frequently (weekly by phone, monthly in person, and as needed); the Support Center communicates with schools at a similar frequency. In Year 5, two new positions were created within the Support Center, one of which was a new Family Engagement Trainer who provides family engagement assistance and resources for the districts. The other position supports data collection and provides monthly GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System (GUIDES) data reports to districts. In addition to monthly and quarterly reports, the Support Center has started to provide real time data on various Texas GEAR UP SG goals. One of these data points includes mentoring, in which every week the Support Center anonymously provides the district with the highest median hours to all four districts. The Support Center also continued to broadcast the podcast *To College and Beyond* in Year 5, led by the Special Projects and Outreach Director. Additionally, it was also reported that in Year 5 the Support Center implemented its first summer camp for students, which was led by the Special Projects and Outreach Director as well. As in prior years, the Support Center housed GUIDES and provided monthly and quarterly reports to TEA that are formatted similar to the ED required Annual Performance Report (APR); these data support TEA in aligning reports to project objectives, providing student- and teacher-level implementation data for the evaluation, and serving as formative information for TEA and the districts.[31] In Year 4 and in Year 5, improved use of these data to drive decisions about implementation included the ability to examine trends in data at a deeper level (such as using past attendance data to strategically target parents for event attendance). The Support Center continued to ensure that the districts complied with grant requirements by providing guidance and feedback on each district's Annual Strategic Planning Report (ASPR). Support Center staff visited each school monthly and engaged in calls/email, as needed, in between; these interactions were similar in frequency across districts.

The Support Center also managed the communication with other collaborators (except for AMS Pictures who interacts with TEA directly). Similar to Year 3 and 4 of Texas GEAR UP SG implementation, in Year 5, the Support Center was responsible for supervising, supporting, and training the College Preparation Advisors at each of the four districts.

AMS Pictures: At the end of Year 1, AMS Pictures launched the revised and publicly available Texas GEAR UP website at http://www.texasgearup.com. In Years 2–5, AMS Pictures continued to create resources for the website and market it to Texas GEAR UP SG grantees, as well as the population throughout the state. In Year 5, it was reported that AMS Pictures rebid on their contract in the previous year to continue their work and follow through with the same responsibilities as in previous years, which included creating resources and tools to help educators and parents prepare students for postsecondary education, as well as to disseminate those resources effectively. Additionally, AMS Pictures noted that their main goal in Year 5 was to increase the usage of their resources among districts across the state, with the goal of having at least 40% of school districts throughout the state accessing their resources. To achieve this goal, AMS pictures has continued to advertise themselves via social media, but also planned to mail 5,000 postcards to various school administrators and district offices throughout the state in

[31] See http://www2.ed.gov/programs/gearup/performance.html for additional information on the information required to be submitted annually by grant award recipients.

hopes of boosting statewide access and usage of their online resources. Year 5 also included the expanded use of online tools and activities with educators, students, and parents. One activity that was being produced in Year 5 was the AMS Pictures' "Near Peer" series, a video collection on how to continue on to college and pursue career interests. Throughout the life of the grant, AMS Pictures will visit schools to highlight practices identified by their research as being successful, as well as interact regularly with the Support Center regarding both the website and the conference (e.g., selecting a theme, visuals, promotion). AMS Pictures also continued to work on the development of statewide teacher resources to be introduced on Texas Gateway and through the Texas GEAR UP SG website.[32]

Signal Vine: Signal Vine is a company that provides mass texting services to colleges, non-profits, state education agencies, and various GEAR UP grants. In previous years, Signal Vine has presented at the National GEAR UP conference on mass texting research and the role it plays on preventing "summer melt," in which students who intend to go to college fall out of the college going process during summer while not being advised. Signal Vine was contracted between February and August 2017, in which a training was conducted at a GEAR UP capacity building conference in Texas, providing Texas GEAR UP staff from each of the schools, as well as counselors, guidance on implementing and using the system.

GeoFORCE: In Years 2–5, GeoFORCE continued to support Texas GEAR UP SG by providing an experiential outreach program housed at the University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin) and supported, in part, through TG Public Benefit.[33] It is a long-term college access initiative based on geosciences in which 40 students from the six Texas GEAR UP SG high schools participate in summer residential geological programs. In summer 2014, students went to Florida to learn about sediment transportation and erosion, in summer 2015, students went to the Grand Canyon, and in summer 2016, students went to the Cascades to analyze volcanic rock and other mountain building sites as well as to the U.S. Geological Survey Research building and meet some of the researchers there. The program is intentionally designed to increase in rigor over each year with the goal of encouraging students to seek out a college major in a field by focusing on social skills and independence in the first year (summer 2015 for Texas GEAR UP SG students), science skills in the second year (summer 2016 for Texas GEAR UP SG students), and college considerations in the third year (summer 2017 for Texas GEAR UP SG students). During summer 2017, GeoFORCE also added test preparation courses for the SAT and ACT, as well as informational career days for students to learn more about the STEM field in a professional setting. Through a related project that GeoFORCE is working on, dual-credit science courses may be available to Texas GEAR UP SG students, as well as other students in Texas, in the near future, with the intention that they will be available by the time Texas GEAR UP SG students are in their junior or senior year. In addition, a new program developed by the National Science Foundation called Texas Revolution teaches teachers how to teach earth science. GeoFORCE is also exploring grant opportunities with the Support Center to identify ways to sustain similar services with the cohorts of students that follow the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort of Grade 11 students.

[32] Texas Gateway (formerly Project Share) provides an online, interactive learning environment for Texas teachers. See https://www.texasgateway.org/ for additional information.
[33] See http://www.jsg.utexas.edu/geoforce for additional information about this program.

Raise Achievement: Raise Achievement, an independent consulting company, conducted a Year 3 formative needs assessment for the Support Center at each site to inform strategic planning. In Year 5, however, Raise Achievement was hired as a sub-contractor to AMS Pictures between May and July 2016 in a new capacity to create 12 content focused lesson plans on college readiness as it pertained to academic and soft skills. These lesson plans were created for counselors and teachers to lead in instruction, as the content were based on classroom activities that were meant to engage students. Following this three month contract, Raise Achievement was not scheduled for future work with the Support Center or other collaborators.

TG: TG is a company that creates financial aid learning modules, ultimately aiming to provide a better understanding among students and parents about all types of student loans. As one of the Texas GEAR UP SG collaborators in Year 5, TG contributed financial education modules for the summer 2017 camp, working alongside the Support Center, AMS Pictures, and Focus Training. Although TG provided the financial aid modules and presentations, Texas GEAR UP SG staff facilitated the training to students, while TG provided the materials beforehand. This arrangement also led to fewer direct interactions between TG and Texas GEAR UP SG staff. Unlike student presentations and modules, TG reported having conducted parent training presentations on financial aid across two districts and two schools total. In addition to the actual content presented, TG also provided Texas GEAR UP SG staff with advertisement fliers in English or Spanish for Texas GEAR UP SG staff to distribute as they see fit.

FOCUS Training: FOCUS Training, an interactive leadership company that specializes in college readiness and skill development, was brought on by the Support Center in Year 5 to provide guidance in planning and implementing a summer camp and a separate leadership retreat. The summer camp focused on helping students understand the college admissions process as it pertained to college entrance exam scores, essay writing for college applications and scholarships, and the college application process and timeline as a whole. Additionally, the summer camp provided activities designed to help students identify what college(s) are best fit for them academically, socially, and financially. The leadership retreat hosted 40 students from all four districts, in which mentorship and leadership skills were taught and practiced so that they could continue to pay it forward to their peers and younger students in their respective schools. As one of the collaborators who helped in creating these events, Focus Training worked alongside TG and AMS pictures, with the Support Center providing facilitation and oversight. Regular conference calls took place once every three or four weeks between the Support Center and Focus Training, and as time went on, other collaborators were added. These conference calls touched on event content, agenda planning, and event logistics and personnel.

1.2 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Findings from Previous Years

Previous implementation reports provided an overview of implementation for each year of the grant: for Grade 7 students during the 2012–13 school year (O'Donnel et al., 2013); Grade 8 students during the 2013–14 school year (Briggs et al., 2015); Grade 9 students during the 2014–15 school year (Briggs et al., 2016); and Grade 10 students during the 2015–16 school year (Spinney et al., 2018). The Texas GEAR UP SG will continue to serve the primary cohort through the seven-year grant period, which will continue through the students' first year of

postsecondary education in the 2018–19 school year. A primary source of data for each report is data on student participation in Texas GEAR UP SG services and events through February 28th of each year, which are collected for the APR and reported through the Texas GEAR UP SG GUIDES. Interviews with TEA and its collaborators on the grant, student and parent surveys, and qualitative site visit data also informed all of the implementation reports. Previous implementation reports (O'Donnel et al., 2013; Briggs et al., 2015; Briggs et al., 2016; Spinney et al., 2018) provide additional details about the Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, and Year 4 findings.

1.3 Evaluation Objectives, Research Questions, and Project Objectives

1.3.1 Year 5 Evaluation Objectives and Research Questions

The evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP SG program over the seven-year grant period focuses on accomplishing the following objectives:

- Providing TEA with regular, formative feedback regarding implementation of the program, including memos within 30 days of completion of each data collection.
- Understanding relationships among Texas GEAR UP SG implementation, the timing of implementation, and the implementation dosage on Texas GEAR UP SG outcomes.
- Describing opportunities provided through Texas GEAR UP SG at the statewide level.
- Identifying facilitators and barriers to Texas GEAR UP SG implementation.
- Identifying potential Texas GEAR UP SG promising practices and any possible correction in needed areas of program implementation.
- Evaluating the impact of Texas GEAR UP SG from a cost and sustainability perspective.
- As outcomes become available, the Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation will address the following additional objectives:
- Understanding the impact of participation in Texas GEAR UP SG on relevant student outcomes, including early, intermediate, and long-term indicators of meeting program goals.
- Understanding the impact of participation in Texas GEAR UP SG on relevant family, school, and community alliance outcomes.[34]
- As in prior years, the Year 5 implementation report focuses primarily on feedback regarding implementation and any indication of promising practices. In the context of these objectives, this report, as well as future reports, addresses a broad range of evaluation questions (see Appendix A). These questions are aligned with understanding the extent to which the overarching goals and project objectives of Texas GEAR UP SG are being met (see Appendix A). Overarching evaluation questions addressed in this report include the following:
- When and to what extent did grantees implement PD strategies? When and how did grantees provide PD regarding vertical team preparation and implementation to MS and HS teachers? Were appropriate teachers from all schools on the vertical team able to attend the PD?

[34] Community alliances refer to the business alliances, governmental entities, and community groups that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.

- What types of information were utilized to identify students for participation in Student Support Services implementation activities? What are perceptions of students, parents, and staff of Student Support Services implementation strategies?
- What facilitators and barriers can be identified to implementing Student Support Services implementation strategies?
- During each year of the grant, what types of information are grantees making available to students? By the end of the year, how many students (percentage) participate in each type of college readiness activity conducted by grantees? How many activities does each student attend?
- What are students' levels of understanding regarding readiness (e.g., college aspirations/ expectations, college options, being college ready at each grade level, financing college)?
- What practices implemented by the grantees might be identified as potential best practices based on short-term outcomes? What outcomes, if any, exist that support any long-term impact of early implementation of potential best practices?
- For each year of the grant, what types of information are grantees making available to students' families? How do grantees inform families about opportunities to learn about college attendance and career success?
- What information or opportunities do parents perceive to have been most relevant in informing them regarding college and career readiness?
- At the end of each grant year, how many partnerships have schools formed with business alliances? In what ways and how often have business partners offered opportunities for career exploration to students?
- What steps if any have the state office taken to communicate to schools and families about information available?
- For what services and activities do grantees use grant funds each year and over the entire time period of the grant? To what extent were grantees able to secure matching funds? For what services and activities do grantees use matching funds each year and over the entire time period of the grant?
- To what extent are grantees able to sustain activities initiated with the GEAR UP cohort with following cohorts of students?
- What facilitators and barriers can be identified to sustaining GEAR UP activities? Do perceptions of these change over the course of the grant funding?
- Future implementation and comprehensive reports will focus on addressing the following additional evaluation questions:
- How are implementation and outcomes related to one another? Are certain dosages of implementation associated with more successful outcomes? Are there certain patterns of participation in implementation strategies?
- What outcomes are associated with participation in Texas GEAR UP SG?
- How do trends in outcomes for the Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort students differ from the retrospective and follow-on cohorts?
- How do trends in outcomes at the Texas GEAR UP SG schools differ in comparison to the state average and/or the comparison group schools?[35]

[35] Comparison groups were selected through propensity score matching (PSM) for the upcoming comprehensive report.

- How do trajectories of outcomes differ based on exposure to implementation? For example, do students who participate in Texas GEAR UP SG activities in all grades (Grade 7 through the first year of college) differ compared to students who enter Texas GEAR UP SG schools at a later grade level?
- Do students who achieve certain early markers of postsecondary readiness have different trajectories of outcomes than students who do not achieve the early marker (e.g., successful completion of Algebra I in Grade 8 or in Grade 9)?
- What is the impact of Texas GEAR UP SG on families, schools, and community alliances? What is the impact on statewide access to information and strategies?
- What is the cost of providing Texas GEAR UP SG at the school and state levels? To what extent are grantees able to sustain implementation of Texas GEAR UP SG with follow-on cohorts of students beyond the primary cohort? What facilitators/barriers do grantees face in sustaining implementation?[36]

1.3.2 Year 5 Project Objectives

This report includes findings aligned to the project goals and objectives set by TEA (see Appendix A for a full list). Relevant project objectives emphasized in this report include the following:

- Project Objective 1.1: By the end of the project's second year, 30% of cohort students will have completed Algebra I in the 8th grade. By the end of the project's third year, 85% of students will have completed Algebra I.
- Project Objective 2.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all participating high schools will make opportunities available for each student to complete 18 hours of college credit (through AP, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment) by the time he or she graduates from high school.
- Projective Objective 2.2: By the end of the project's fifth year, 60% of the cohort, including limited English Proficient (LEP) students, will complete a pre-AP or AP course.
- Project Objective 3.1: All core content teachers will have the opportunity to participate in training regarding differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, and project-based learning.
- Project Objective 3.2: Teams of teachers at the middle and high school will complete at least five days of vertical teams preparation and implementation each year.
- Project Objective 4.1: By the end of the second year, at least 75% of the 8th Grade students will be involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program based on results of teacher/counselor input and diagnostic data.
- Project Objective 4.2: Beginning in the second year, at least 30% of the students will be involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level, ease transitions, and increase college awareness.
- Project Objective 4.3: By the end of the project's third year, the on-time promotion rate of cohort students will exceed the state average.

[36] The sustainability of successful implementation activities is one goal/requirement of the federal GEAR UP program. Some efforts may be easier to sustain than others. For example, increased academic rigor may be relatively easy to sustain with ongoing teacher PD. On the other hand, the cost of continuing to provide a broad range of student supports may be prohibitive.

- Project Objective 4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college.
- Project Objective 5.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all cohort students will complete the ACT Aspire or the Preliminary SAT (PSAT).[37] By the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT.
- Project Objective 7.1: By the end of the first year, the state office will make information regarding college options, preparation, and financing will be made available to students, parents, and educators throughout the state.
- Project Objective 7.2: By the end of the first year, information and workshops aimed at linking college attendance to career success will be available to 100% of cohort students and their parents.
- Project Objective 7.3: Each year, at least 50% of cohort parents, including parents of current and former limited English proficient (LEP) students, will attend at least three college awareness activities.
- Project Objective 7.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, teachers and counselors will complete training in the college admissions and financial aid process.
- Project Objective 8.1: All participating districts will form business alliances that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.
- Project Objective 8.2: Participating campuses will form alliances with governmental entities and community groups to enhance the information available to students regarding scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness.
- Project Objective 9.1: Annually increase the number of educators participating in GEAR UP professional learning, including through Texas Gateway and face-to-face trainings.

In addition, there are several near-term objectives relevant to Year 5 Texas GEAR UP SG implementation to some extent. These objectives are referenced as appropriate and will take on a more prominent focus in forthcoming implementation reports. Near-term objectives are as follows:

- Project Objective 1.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 2.3: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 50% of cohort students will be eligible to earn college credit by AP exam or through dual credit.
- Project Objective 5.2: The percentage of students meeting criterion on the ACT/SAT will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 5.3: The number of students who graduate college ready in mathematics and English will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 9.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 40% of Texas school districts will have utilized at least one Texas GEAR UP statewide resource, including materials and PD.

[37] Texas GEAR UP SG initially indicated a goal aligned with students taking ACT PLAN by the end of project's fourth year. However, ACT has replaced PLAN with ACT Aspire. Similarly, the PSAT has been replaced by the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) and Preliminary SAT for Grade 10 students (PSAT 10). While it is possible to take the PSAT/NMSQT in Grade 10, it is typically taken in fall of Grade 11 year.

1.4 Evaluation Design and Methods

The Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation uses a longitudinal design to evaluate the Texas GEAR UP SG over the seven years of the program and examine change over time in the Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort of students. In addition, a quasi-experimental design (QED) is being used to compare outcomes for students in Texas GEAR UP SG schools to outcomes for students in comparable schools. Throughout the evaluation, there is a mixed-methods approach; that is, both quantitative and qualitative data were and will be collected and examined. Data collected by TEA will be used whenever possible (e.g., STAAR results). APR and GUIDES data submitted by the schools regarding Texas GEAR UP SG provision of student support services, student and parent workshops/events, teacher PD, and community alliance activities were and will continue to be a primary source of implementation data, supplemented by data collected during fall and spring site visits to each school. In addition, student and parent surveys and site visits will provide information regarding perceptions of the program, knowledge about postsecondary education, and educational aspirations and expectations. Appendix B provides additional information regarding the evaluation design, methods, and analyses. Appendix C provides an overview of the data submitted to the APR, and Appendix D contains copies of all surveys and site visit protocols. Appendix E provides detailed summaries of the site visits conducted in fall 2016 and spring 2017.

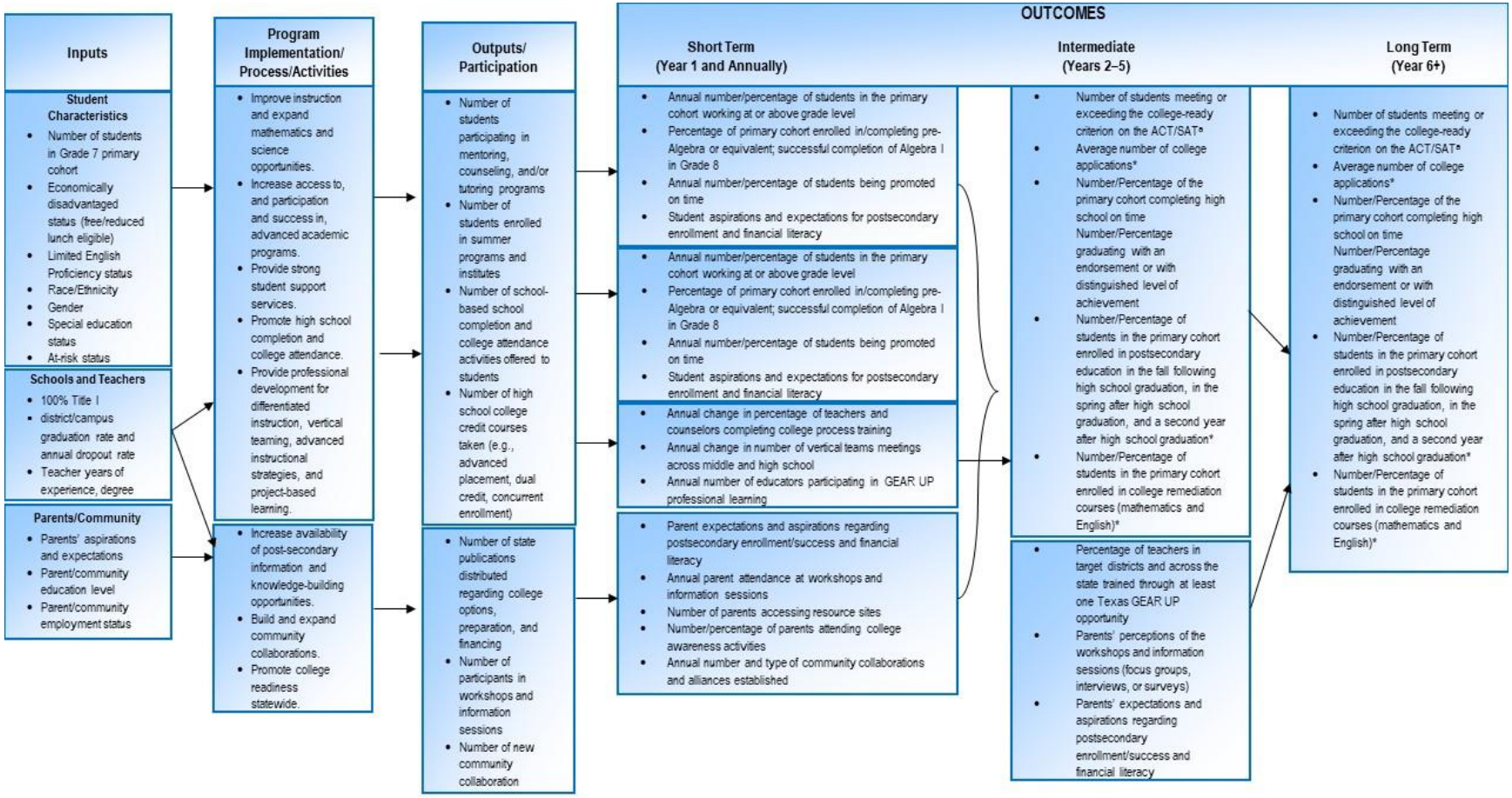
1.4.1 Logic Model

The evaluation design depicts how change is conceptualized to occur via the Texas GEAR UP SG (Figure 1.2). The logic model maps the inputs, program implementation activities, and intended outcomes of the program to be delivered.

In the logic model, the first column on the left identifies important inputs for the program. These inputs are the existing conditions that the students, parents, and schools bring with them as they begin participation in the Texas GEAR UP SG. Many of these inputs are not subject to change by the program (e.g., economic status, education level). Texas GEAR UP SG implements school-based activities with students, teachers, and parents; also included is the development of materials for statewide distribution. Outputs related to levels of participation are the extent to which individual students, parents, and teachers actually participate in such activities and the patterns of participation. Understanding what activities are implemented and the trends in participation are critical to understanding the potential effect of such participation on outcomes.

Several outcomes of the project will be measured annually to establish changes in trends related to Texas GEAR UP SG activities. For example, students' educational aspirations and expectations will be measured each year to understand changes over the course of the grant period. These and other annual measures will inform the evaluation's longitudinal analyses. Teacher preparation and PD to support providing rigorous academic instruction in advanced courses will also be evaluated. While visually the model appears to be linear, new implementation activities are anticipated to occur throughout the life of the Texas GEAR UP SG. Similarly, early and intermediate outcomes, such as successful completion of Algebra I in Grade 9, are anticipated to affect eventual long-term outcomes (e.g., enrollment in courses earning college credit during high school).

Figure 1.2. Texas GEAR UP Evaluation Logic Model



Assumptions

Program Implementation/Process/Activities: The evaluation team assumes that processes and activities will change, will be ongoing, and will have varied effects on project outputs and outcomes. As program elements and activities are implemented, evaluators will identify specific expected outputs and short- and long-term outcomes. This process will continue during each stage of the project.

Outputs/Participation: Evaluators will monitor changes in outputs as a result of project processes and activities. We will also assess, to the extent possible, the relationship between changes in outputs and short- and long-term outcomes.

Short-Term and Long-Term Outcomes: Several outcomes will serve as annual measures of program success, including, for example, STAAR results, grade-level performance, and so forth. Items marked with an asterisk (*) will be compared to project goals, historical performance, matched comparison groups from like students and schools, or the state average performance on these measures. Successful attainment of short-term outcomes will also be considered in understanding successful completion of long-term outcomes.

[a] PSAT is the Preliminary SAT. ACT Aspire is the pre-ACT test. SAT and ACT are tests used for college admission.

1.4.2 Overview of Data

Evaluation of Texas GEAR UP SG implementation is based on analysis of a variety of data sources, including annual performance data reported through the GUIDES, student and parent survey data, site visit data, and other sources of data. Details regarding the various data sources are described in this section

GUIDES

Annual performance data reported through GUIDES constitute the primary data source for measuring grant implementation across most of the project objectives. Year 5 data from GUIDES include data reported between March 1, 2016, and February 28, 2017. These data span the 3rd and 4th quarters of Year 4 (Grade 10) and the 1st and 2nd quarters of Year 5 (Grade 11).

Findings related to Year 5 project objectives (e.g., Project Objective 7.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, teachers and counselors will complete training in the college admissions and financial aid process) are preliminary since data reported through GUIDES only represent the first semester of Year 5.

SURVEY DATA

To enhance the evaluation of grant implementation, survey data are used to supplement and triangulate the annual performance data reported through GUIDES. Student surveys were conducted in fall 2016 and spring 2017 and parent surveys were conducted in spring 2017. Respondents included the primary cohort of Grade 11 students and their parents served in the 2016–17 school year.[38] Unless otherwise noted, all student survey data presented in this report was collected in spring 2017. See Appendix G for details about survey administration, data cleaning, and the demographic characteristics of the survey respondents.

This section summarizes the response rates for the Texas GEAR UP SG surveys administered in Year 5. Survey data presented in the forthcoming chapters reflect those students and parents who responded to the survey, not the cohort overall.

Student Survey Response Rates

There was an overall response rate of 60% for student surveys.[39] The response rates by school for students are included in Table 1.2. In Year 5, two schools (High Schools J and M) achieved the highest response rate, with 74% of students responding to the survey. Overall, student survey response rates decreased by 9 percentage points from Year 4 (69%).

[38] The term *parent* is used here to simplify reporting. The surveys indicated that an appropriate parent, family member, or guardian could complete the survey.

[39] Although ED no longer required an 80% response rate for student surveys in Year 5, TEA and the evaluation team set the goal of obtaining the same rate when working with cohort schools to administer the survey.

Table 1.2. Student Survey Response Rates by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of Students	Number of Valid Student Surveys Received	Student Survey Response Rate
High School H	269	195	72%
High School I	269	172	64%
High School J	147	109	74%
High School K	462	213	46%
High School L	110	32	29%
High School M	271	200	74%
Total	**1,528**	**921**	**60%**

Source: Cohort Enrollments Reported by Texas GEAR UP SG Coordinators during Survey Administration (Spring, 2017); Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).

Student Demographics

The student survey respondents were almost evenly split by gender, with only slightly more female than male students responding (51% and 49%, respectively). This is similar to the percentage of male and female students responding to the survey in Years 2 and 4.

The majority of students responding to the survey identified as Hispanic or Latino of any race (82%). The second largest group was Black or African American students (8%), then White students (4%). Less than 1% of students reported being Asian or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander. Given that not all students responded to the survey, race and ethnicity data of student respondents were compared to demographic characteristics of the Texas GEAR UP SG schools overall (Table 1.3). By comparing demographic data collected though the student survey with extant demographic data provided by TEA, Table 1.3 documents the degree to which student survey respondents represented the population of students at the Texas GEAR UP SG schools. As shown in Table 1.3, many of the student survey demographic data align with the extant data provided by TEA. The largest discrepancy between both sources was the percentage of students who reported themselves as Black or African American, with only 8% indicating that as their race. This is six percentage points less than what was provided in the extant data, and suggests that Black or African American students may have been slightly underrepresented in the student survey findings.

Half of students (50%) reported speaking only English at home. A little over a third of students (39%) said they speak both English and Spanish at home, and 9% speak only Spanish at home. With friends, the majority of students (69%) reported speaking only English, 28% reported speaking both English and Spanish, and 2% reported speaking only Spanish with friends. Details on language preferences may be found in Table G.4 (Appendix G).

Table 1.3. Overall Student Survey Demographics Compared to School Demographics, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Categories	Survey		Overall School Sample	
Gender	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Male	433	49%	--	--
Female	446	51%	--	--
Total	**879**	**100%**	**--**	**--**
Ethnicity/Race	**n**	%	**n**	%
Asian	5	<1%	51	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	13	2%	6	<1%
Black or African American	75	8%	911	14%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	730	82%	5,178	79%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	<1%	4	<1%
White	33	4%	316	5%
Two or more races	18	2%	56	1%
Race unknown/Do not wish to share	13	2%	0	0
Total	**888**	**100%**	**6,522**	**100%**

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017); Texas Academic Performance Reports, Year 5.
Note: The data on the overall school sample includes data on the entire school population for each of the six Texas GEAR UP SG schools. For more information regarding demographic data by school, refer to Table F.1. Gender data for the student population is not available in the Texas Academic Performance Reports.

Parent Survey Response Rates

There was an overall response rate of 23% for parents. The parent survey response rates for each high school are shown in Table 1.4. In Year 5, schools, on average, continued to struggle to achieve the 50% response rate goal for parent surveys.[40] For response rates, the number of parents at each school was based on the number of students enrolled at the time of submission of the Year 5 enrollment data provided by Texas GEAR UP SG Coordinators.[41] Overall, parent survey response rates decreased by 3 percentage points from Year 2 (26%) to Year 5 (23%). High School M (42%) came closest to the 50% response rate requirement.

[40] Although ED no longer required a 50% response rate for parent surveys in Year 5, TEA and the evaluation team set the goal of obtaining the same rate when working with cohort schools to administer the survey.
[41] One parent was requested to respond to the survey, more than one parent of a child may have completed the online survey.

Table 1.4. Parent Survey Response Rates by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of Parents	Number of Valid Parent Surveys Received	Parent Survey Response Rate
High School H	269	57	21%
High School I	269	60	22%
High School J*	147	58	39%
High School K	462	48	10%
High School L	110	15	14%
High School M	271	114	42%
Total	**1,528**	**352**	**23%**

Source: Cohort Enrollments Reported by Texas GEAR UP SG Coordinators during Survey Administration (Spring 2017); Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).
* School J reported that some parent surveys were administered over the phone by a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member. Responses from this school should be interpreted with caution.
Note: The parent survey response rate is calculated based on one parent per student.

Parent Demographics

Given that parent demographics are not available from TEA, demographic characteristics of parent respondents—collected via the survey—were compared to demographic characteristics of the Texas GEAR UP SG schools overall (Table 1.5). By comparing demographic data collected though the parent survey with extant demographic school data provided by TEA, Table 1.5 documents an estimate regarding the degree to which parent survey respondents represented the population of parents at the Texas GEAR UP SG schools. As shown in Table 1.5, nearly all demographic data collected in the survey align with the extant data provided by TEA. The largest discrepancy between both sources was the percentage of parents who reported themselves as Hispanic or Latino of any race, with only 72% indicating that as their race. This is seven percentage points less than what was provided in the extant data, and suggests that Hispanic or Latino parents may have been slightly underrepresented in the parent survey findings.

Table 1.5. Overall Parent Survey Demographics Compared to School Demographics, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Categories	Survey		Overall School Sample	
Ethnicity/Race	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Asian	2	<1%	51	1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0%	6	<1%
Black or African American	49	14%	911	14%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	253	72%	5,178	79%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0%	4	<1%
White	21	6%	316	5%
Two or more races	7	2%	56	1%
Race unknown/Do not wish to share	20	6%	0	0
Total	**352**	**100%**	**6,522**	**100%**

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017); Texas Academic Performance Reports, Year 5.
Note: The data on the overall school sample includes data on the entire school population for each of the six Texas GEAR UP SG schools. In addition, the denominator for the parent demographic rate is determined based on one parent per student.

SITE VISIT DATA

Site visit data are used to supplement and triangulate annual performance data reported through GUIDES and survey data in describing grant implementation.

Site visit data presented in the Year 5 report include data collected from one-day site visits to each participating Texas GEAR UP SG school in fall 2016 and again in spring 2017. Site visits at each school included interviews and focus groups with the following stakeholders:

- Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
- Texas GEAR UP SG College Preparation Advisors
- Additional school-based Texas GEAR UP SG staff, including parent liaisons, data clerks, and tutors
- School administrators, including principals, assistant/vice principals, and counselors
- School staff, including testing coordinators, instructional coaches, and academic deans
- Teachers of the GEAR UP cohort (including teachers who have worked with the cohort in the past)
- Cohort students
- Cohort parents
- Community alliances, including staff from other college access programs that are also based at the school (e.g., Advise Texas, LEARN, CIS [Communities in Schools], Project STAY, etc.), and staff from other organizations Texas GEAR UP SG staff collaborated with to support implementation

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WITH COLLABORATORS

The evaluation team conducted telephone interviews in spring 2017 with Texas GEAR UP SG program staff at TEA, the Support Center, and TEA collaborators (e.g., FOCUS Training, GeoFORCE, AMS, Signal Vine, and TG). These interviews provided critical information regarding statewide services provided through the Texas GEAR UP SG.[42]

EXTANT DATA

Extant data—or data already collected—are also used to describe implementation. Examples of extant data include:

- Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR) from 2016–17 are used to describe demographic characteristics of the six participating Texas GEAR UP SG schools.
- College Board 2016 Score Report data are used to contextualize PSAT scores received by students at participating Texas GEAR UP SG schools.
- Online resource usage data from Texas Gateway (www.texasgateway.org), the Texas GEAR UP website (www.texasgearup.com), and other resources are used to describe statewide usage of resources provided by the grant.

[42] TG announced in November 2017 that they changed the name of their organization to Trellis. They will be referred to as TG in this report since that is what they were referred to during the spring 2017 telephone interviews and in Year 5.

1.5 Overview of the Report

This annual implementation report addresses the evaluation objectives with respect to Year 5 implementation activities. Information regarding Year 5 implementation of the Texas GEAR UP SG, including summer 2016 and the 2016–17 school year, is found in Chapters 2–7. These chapters include data reported through GUIDES, collected via the Year 5 surveys, and site visits. Chapter 8 provides descriptive information regarding Year 4 budgets and expenditures as well as Year 5 budgets. A summary of findings, along with actionable recommendations, including potential promising practices for TEA, are provided in Chapter 9. Appendix E provides detailed case studies for each of the Texas GEAR UP SG schools/districts. In reporting findings, school and district names have been masked using the letters and numbers, respectively.

1.5.1 Limitations and Next Steps

A key limitation of the annual implementation reports is that they are based on incomplete data for the year—data reported through March 31 (in Years 1–4) or February 28 (Year 5) instead of through the end of the school year. The evaluation team made the decision to report on data from this time period in order to align the findings from the implementation reports to the original APR timeline.[43] Given this limitation, caution is urged in interpreting the findings. Additional information related to implementation and outcomes will be included in future reports, following the receipt and analysis of additional data.

FORTHCOMING REPORTS

TEA has and will continue to publish annual implementation reports each year through Year 7. In addition, ICF will prepare comprehensive reports that include an examination of all activities conducted to date, key impact findings to date, and interpretations of these findings. There is a time lag between the end of the school year and the availability of outcome data (e.g., successful course completion, promotion, STAAR results). The forthcoming first comprehensive evaluation report provides detailed analyses on Grade 8 outcomes and connects Grade 7 and Grade 8 implementation to Grade 8 outcomes. A final comprehensive evaluation report will provide high school outcomes and examine the relationship between implementation and these outcomes. The final comprehensive evaluation report will be published in 2019 and will report on outcomes through the 2018–19 school year. While the Year 5 implementation report focuses primarily on implementation, it includes some early outcomes, such as course completion.

[43] After the APR timeline changed, however, TEA and the evaluation team decided to continue reporting consistently with previous reports rather than changing the reporting period to align with the new APR timeline.

PART II: IMPLEMENTATION

2. Student Progress Toward High School Graduation and College

Given that the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort entered Grade 11 in Year 5, progress toward graduation and postsecondary education became a more pressing priority. This chapter discusses available implementation data related to such progress as it applies to the following project objectives:

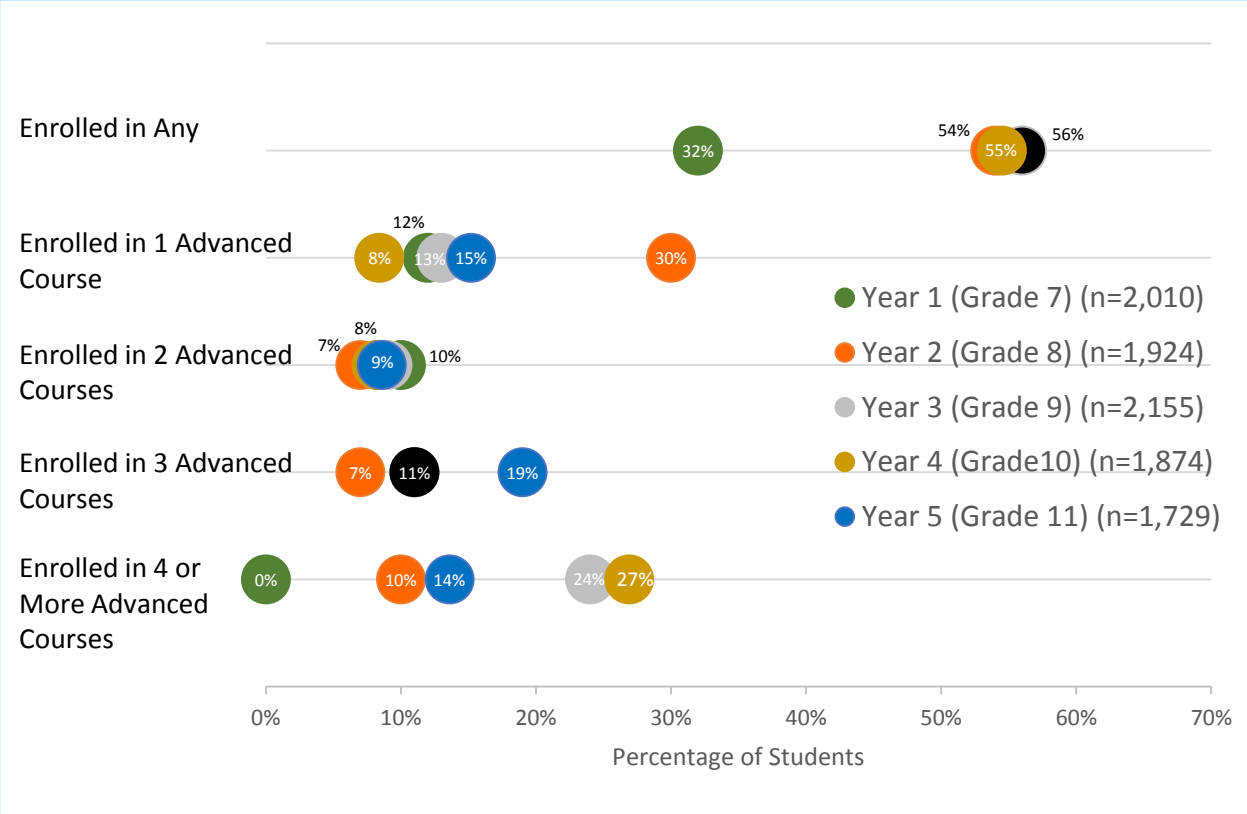
- Project Objective 1.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement, will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 2.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all participating high schools will make opportunities available for each student to complete 18 hours of college credit (through AP, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment) by the time he or she graduates from high school.
- Project Objective 2.2: By the end of the project's fifth year, 60% of the cohort, including limited English proficient (LEP) students, will complete a pre-Advanced Placement (AP) or AP course.
- Project Objective 2.3: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 50% of cohort students will graduate with college credit earned by AP exam or through dual credit.
- Project Objective 4.3: By the end of the project's third year, the on-time promotion rate of cohort students will exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college.
- Project Objective 5.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all cohort students will complete the ACT Aspire or the PSAT. By the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT.
- Project Objective 5.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of students meeting criterion on the ACT/SAT will meet or exceed the state average.
- Project Objective 5.3: The number of students who graduate college ready in mathematics and English will meet or exceed the state average.

2.1 Student Enrollment in and Completion of Advanced Courses

Prior research points to the importance of taking advanced courses for college readiness and college enrollment. For example, Chajewski, Mattern, and Shaw (2011) found that in a national sample of students who took at least one AP course, 83% enrolled in a four-year institution, compared to students who did not take any AP courses, of which only 46% enrolled in a four-year institution. Taking AP courses also provides the advantage that students who score well enough on an AP exam may receive college credit for the course, thus supporting achievement of Project Objective 2.3 (at least 50% of students will be eligible to earn college credit by AP exam or through dual credit).

Just over half of the Texas GEAR UP SG Grade 11 primary cohort students (56%) were enrolled in at least one advanced course during Year 5 according to GUIDES data (as shown in the dot plot in Figure 2.1 and in Table F.2, Appendix F).[44] This was an increase of one percentage point from the enrollment of Grade 10 primary cohort students in advanced courses during Year 4 (55%). In Year 5, 14% of all students (*n*=1,729) were enrolled in four or more advanced courses, a decrease of thirteen percentage points from Year 4 (27%).

Figure 2.1. Percentage of Students Enrolled in Advanced Courses, Year 1 (Grade 7), Year 2 (Grade 8), Year 3 (Grade 9), Year 4 (Grade 10), and Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: Black marker indicates the same values for 2012–13, 2014–15, and 2015–16.

A potential reason for the decline in students taking four or more advanced courses could be related to the challenging nature of such courses as described by participants during the Year 5 site visits. For example, students at each school reported that they found these courses to be challenging. Teachers in Districts 3 and 4 reported that, based on their perception, some students were misplaced into pre-AP and AP courses—similar to findings reported in Year 4. These teachers felt that the students they perceived to be misplaced were enrolled in the

[44] Texas GEAR UP SG districts were advised as follows, "Advanced courses are classes that are identified as above grade level by the student's school. Most honors and pre-AP courses are considered *advanced*." The schools reported a range of names for advanced courses (e.g., pre-AP Social Studies, Spanish I). Advanced mathematics courses included courses taken above grade level (e.g., Calculus in Grade 11), as well as pre-AP or AP courses taken at grade level (e.g., pre-AP Pre-Calculus in Grade 11). For the purpose of this report, advanced course taking within a given content area is collapsed across course names. Totals may appear to differ from the numbers presented in the figure due to rounding.

advanced courses because of Texas GEAR UP SG goals. Teachers provided mixed responses when asked how these students may or may not affect the rigor of their courses; some said they maintain rigor and expectations for all students while others said they may provide additional support or accommodations when necessary. An administrator in High School K reported that students do not want to be academically challenged so are reluctant to enroll or take the initiative to seek out advanced courses; she further described the reluctance as a cultural barrier for the school to overcome. As a result of the challenging nature of some advanced courses, some administrators and teachers reported that students sometimes make requests to be removed from pre-AP and AP courses when they find them to be too difficult. Some site visit participants reported that their schools made efforts to reassign students after consulting with parents, teachers, and counselors, but counselors were unable to reassign students due to master schedule limitations. It was reported at High School M that a policy was implemented in Year 5 that only allowed students to drop advanced courses after attending at least 10 tutoring sessions for the class; a Texas GEAR UP team member said that students often did need to drop the class even after tutoring sessions.

Students who reported being enrolled in advanced courses on the survey also shared their feelings on how challenging these courses have been for them academically as shown below in Table 2.1. AP courses were rated as the most challenging, with 68% of students saying they were *challenging* or *extremely challenging*. Dual credit courses were rated as *challenging* or *extremely challenging* by 62% of students, and pre-AP courses were rated as *challenging* or *extremely challenging* by only 34% of students taking the survey.

Table 2.1 Student-Reported Ratings of How Challenging Advanced Courses Have Been, Year 5 (Grade 11)

	Pre-AP courses (*n*=839)	AP courses (*n*=842)	Dual Credit courses (*n*=834)
Percentage of students who reported being currently enrolled	54.2%	54.4%	22.5%
So far, how challenging would you say these courses, on average, have been for you academically?			
Not at all challenging	15.6%	3.5%	7.1%
A little challenging	50.1%	28.6%	31.0%
Challenging	31.0%	49.4%	40.5%
Extremely challenging	3.3%	18.5%	21.4%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017)

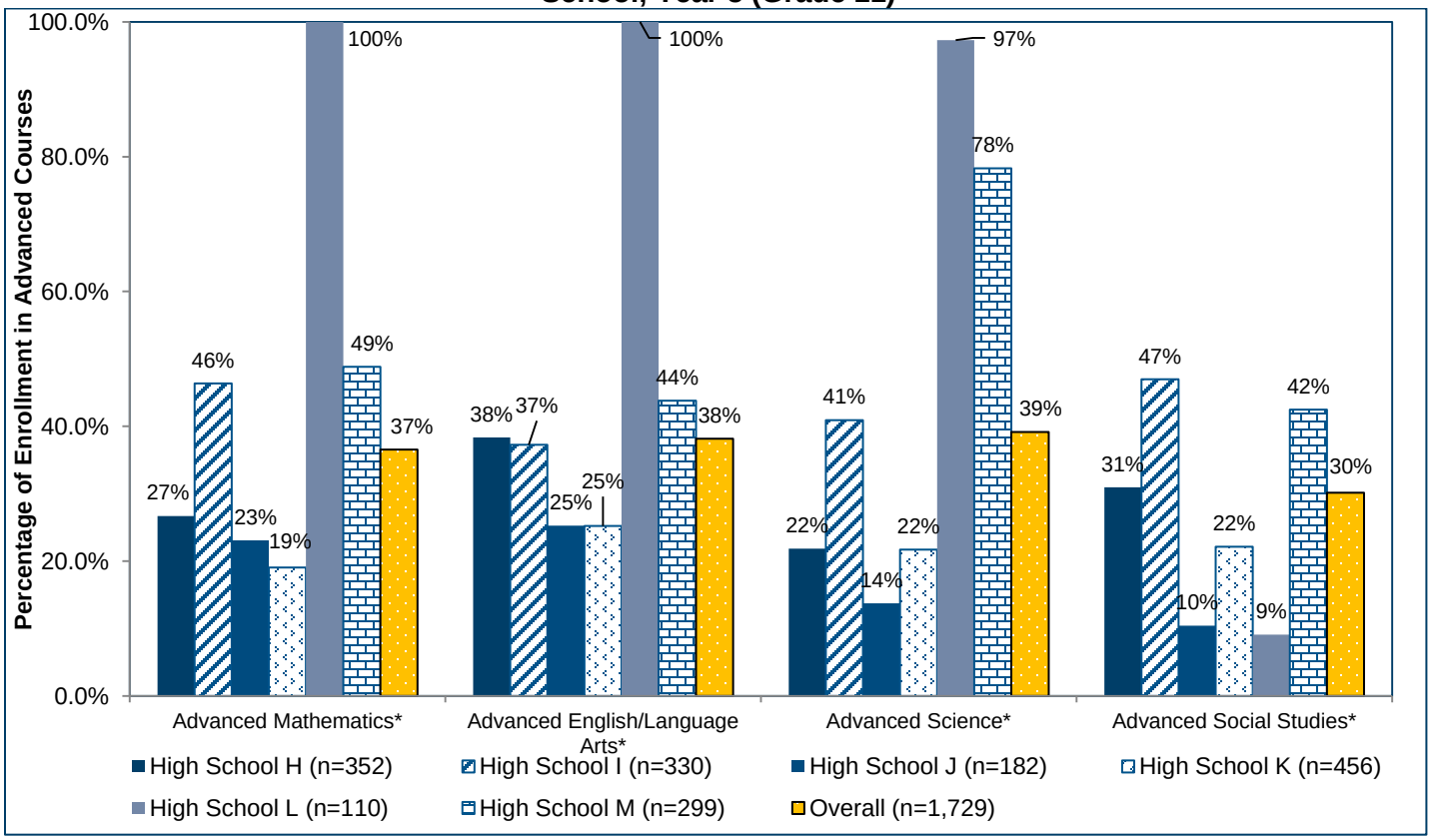
2.1.1 Advanced Course Enrollment by Content Area

Exploring Grade 11 student enrollment in advanced courses by content area is another way to gauge progress toward student completion of pre-AP/AP (advanced) courses (Project Objective 2.2). According to GUIDES data reported by cohort schools in Year 5, more students were enrolled in advanced science than in other content areas (Figure 3.2). Specifically, across all schools, 39% were enrolled in an advanced science course, 38% of Grade 11 students were enrolled in an advanced ELA course, 37% were enrolled in an advanced mathematics course, and 30% were enrolled in an advanced social studies course (Table F.4, Appendix F).

Enrollment in each of the four content areas varied significantly by school (Figure 3.2 and Table F.4, Appendix F). High School L had the highest enrollment in advanced courses with almost all

students enrolled in advanced courses for mathematics (100%), ELA (100%), and science (97%). High School I had the highest enrollment for advanced social studies courses (47%). High School K had the lowest enrollment in advanced mathematics (19%). High School J and High School K had the lowest enrollment for advanced ELA courses (25% for each). High School J also had the lowest enrollment for advanced science courses (14%), while High School L had the lowest enrollment for advanced social studies courses (9%).

Figure 2.2. Percentages of Grade 11 Students Enrolled in Advanced Courses by Content Area and by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
* Percentage of enrollment was significantly different across schools for each subject area. Math: $\chi^2(5) = 482.1$, $p < 0.001$; ELA: $\chi^2(5) = 221.6$, $p < 0.001$; Science: $\chi^2(5) = 777.6$, $p < 0.001$; Social Studies $\chi^2(5) = 127.5$, $p < 0.001$.

In comparison to data reported in GUIDES, self-reported enrollment in advanced courses via the student survey reflected higher percentages of enrollment. Specifically, 49% of students reported taking a pre-AP or AP mathematics course, 48% said they took an AP ELA class, 46% reported taking an AP science course, and 45% of students said they took an AP social studies course. It is possible that students who were enrolled in advanced courses were more likely to have completed the student survey—which would explain the discrepancy between enrollment data from the survey and from GUIDES.

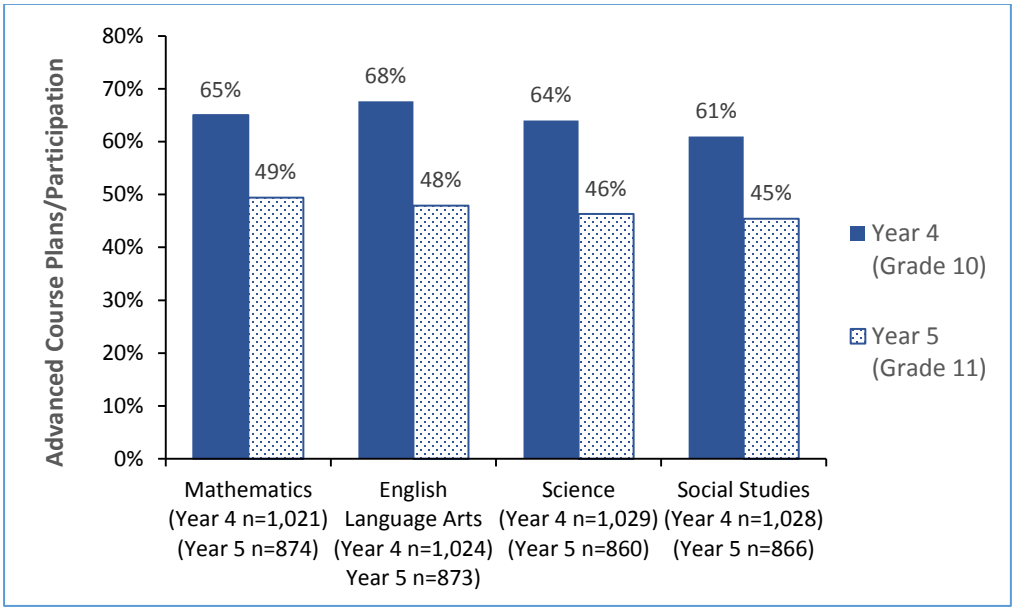
In spring 2015, students were asked in the Year 4 (Grade 10) student survey about their plans for taking advanced courses in Year 5 (Grade 11). As demonstrated in Figure 2.3 and Table G.6 (Appendix G), across content areas, a greater percentage of students reported planning to take advanced courses (selecting *agree* or *strongly agree*) (ranging from 61% to 68%, depending on the content area) than the percentage of students who self-reported enrolling in those courses the following year (ranging from 45% to 49%, depending on the content area). Specifically, 65% of student survey respondents planned to take an advanced mathematics course and 49% said they actually took it; 68% of respondents planned to take an advanced ELA/writing course and 48% said they actually took it; 64% of respondents planned to take an advanced science course and 46% said they actually took it; and 61% of respondents planned to take an advanced social studies course and 45% said they actually took it. Overall, the gap between plans and self-

reported enrollment was approximately 16 to 20 percentage points, depending on the content area. There are several possible reasons for this gap. In attempting to heed the advice of College Preparation Advisors, Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators, and other Texas GEAR UP SG staff at their school, who were likely providing encouragement to take more advanced courses in line with the Texas GEAR UP SG program goals, it is possible that at the time of spring survey administration in Year 4, cohort students were overly optimistic about their plans to take advanced courses in Year 5. Yet when confronted with final grades and teacher feedback later in the spring in Year 4, many of those same students could have decided to change their plans for Year 5. In addition, it is also possible that many respondents did enroll in advanced courses in Year 5, but dropped those courses in the fall because they found the courses to be too challenging. When considering the shift in advanced course options between Year 4 and Year 5 to include fewer pre-AP courses and more AP courses (Table F.3, Appendix F), it is possible that the level of rigor for some of the AP courses was more than students were prepared for or expecting, particularly if they had not yet ever taken an AP course. Another explanation for this gap is that because students who responded to the survey in Year 4 were comprised of a different sample than the students who responded in Year 5, it is possible that the respondents in Year 5 were less likely to plan to take advanced courses than the respondents in Year 4.

In looking ahead to Year 6 (Grade 12), Year 5 student survey respondents reported plans for taking advanced courses the following year. In general, fewer student survey respondents reported plans for taking advanced courses in Year 6 than they did in Year 5. Specifically, 56% of students indicated that they planned to take an advanced mathematics course next year; 61% of students indicated that they planned to take an advanced ELA/writing course next year; 53% of students indicated that they planned to take an advanced science course next year; and 57% of students indicated that they planned to take an advanced social studies course next year (Table G.6, Appendix G).[45]

[45] Student perceptions differed significantly across schools in each subject area except for ELA: Mathematics: $\chi^2(15) = 26.8$, $p < .05$; ELA: $\chi^2(15) = 19.6$, $p = .19$; Science: $\chi^2(15) = 31.1$, $p < .01$; and Social Studies: $\chi^2(15) = 43.4$, $p < .001$.

Figure 2.3. Comparing Students' Plans to Take Advanced Courses in Year 4 (Grade 10) with Students Self-Reported Participation in Advanced Courses in Year 5 (Grade 11): Percentages of Agreement Across Content Areas



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2016 and Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages across those who responded with some level of agreement may not total exactly 100% due to rounding. Results for each response option are included in the full data presented in Table G.6, Appendix G.

A key takeaway from these data is that a majority of cohort students either took or intend to take advanced courses across the four core content areas, which has helped the cohort achieve Project Objective 2.2. Texas GEAR UP SG staff should consider targeting the 40–50% of students across schools who do not plan on taking advanced courses (Table G.7, Appendix G), potentially through collaboration with school guidance counselors, in order to better prepare these students for postsecondary education.

ADVANCED MATHEMATICS

On average, across all schools, 37% of Grade 11 students were enrolled in advanced mathematics—courses that were taken at the honors, pre-AP or AP level (e.g., pre-AP Calculus) or courses that were taken ahead of schedule (e.g., Calculus)—a decrease from Year 4 when 43% of Grade 10 students were enrolled in what was considered advanced mathematics for Grade 10 students. Student enrollment in advanced mathematics in Grade 11 ranged from a low of 19% at High School K to a high of 100% at High School L, as shown in Figure 3.2 (see also Table F.4, Appendix F).

Because Algebra II completion is a requirement for obtaining the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program, an analysis of Algebra II completion and enrollment data from cohort students may provide insights as to the percentage of cohort students who are on track to obtain the distinguished level of achievement (details about the distinguished level of achievement are included in Section 1.1.2). Specifically, this serves as an indicator of Project Objective 1.2 (By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort

students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement, will meet or exceed the state average). In Year 5, 39% of Grade 11 students had completed Algebra II prior to Grade 11 and were pursuing an endorsement and an additional 40% were currently enrolled in the course in Grade 11 and pursuing an endorsement (Table F.5, Appendix F). While equivalent statewide comparison data are not yet available for students in the class of 2018, it is possible to look at data from students in the class of 2016 who opted to graduate on the Foundation High School Program (*n*=25,009). For the class of 2016, 13,543 (54%) graduated with the distinguished level of achievement (TEA, 2017a). Considering that 79% of Grade 11 students in the GEAR UP cohort had either already completed or are currently enrolled in Algebra II, Grade 11 students in the cohort may be on track to meet or exceed the state average for obtaining the distinguished level of achievement.

2.1.2 Pre-AP/AP Course Taking

Calculating Grade 11 student completion rates of pre-AP and AP courses, a subset of advanced courses overall, is the primary way to measure achievement of Project Objective 2.2.[46] According to GUIDES data, approximately 73% of the cohort—including 68% of LEP students—had completed a pre-AP or AP course prior to Grade 11, indicating that overall the cohort met Project Objective 2.2 prior to the end of Year 5 (Table F.6, Appendix F). One high school did not meet the goal for cohort students generally (High School J) and another high school did not meet the goal for LEP students, specifically (High School I). High schools varied significantly in their pre-AP and AP course completion rates. High School L had the highest completion rate with 99% of students having completed a pre-AP or AP course prior to Grade 11 and High School J had the lowest completion rate, with 59% of students having completed a pre-AP or AP course prior to Grade 11. This variance may be a result of several variables such as opportunities to learn about these courses, availability of particular pre-AP or AP courses, interaction with students and their College Preparation Advisors, or school culture. For example, School L considers all courses offered to be at the honors or pre-AP level, which helps to explain their high levels of pre-AP course taking.

It is not only important to measure the overall rates of enrollment and completion in pre-AP/AP courses in Grade 11, but to also measure the number of cohort students taking their first ever pre-AP/AP courses; this latter number may better reflect the advanced-course recruitment efforts of school-based program staff. Overall, 4% of the cohort was currently enrolled in their first pre-AP/AP course (Table F.6, Appendix F). High School H had the highest percentage of students (6%) who were currently enrolled in their first pre-AP or AP course in Grade 11. High School L had the lowest percentage of students currently enrolled in their first pre-AP or AP course (0%), which, as discussed previously, is because all courses at the school are considered honors-level. Regarding LEP students, High School I had the highest percentage of LEP students (13%) enrolled in their first pre-AP or AP course in Grade 11, however, High

[46] Pre-AP and AP course enrollment is a subset of advanced course enrollment. Specifically, while advanced courses include pre-AP and AP courses, advanced courses may also include general-level courses taken by students ahead of grade level (e.g., taking Calculus in Grade 11).

School I also had the highest percentage of LEP students (40%) who had never enrolled in a pre-AP or AP courses. These data suggest that while High School I has perhaps made a recent push to enroll more LEP students in their first pre-AP and AP courses, School I should continue to enroll more LEP students in pre-AP and AP courses in order to prepare them for postsecondary education.

College Preparation Advisors play an important role in conveying the importance of AP courses in preparing for postsecondary education and in working with students to enroll them in pre-AP and AP courses. Student survey data provided insights on the impact of students' College Preparation Advisors in discussing pre-AP and AP courses with them. Almost two-thirds of student respondents (62%) indicated that their College Preparation Advisor (31% reported another source in addition to their College Preparation Advisor) was their primary source for information on enrollment in pre-AP/AP courses. An additional 15% of student respondents said they did not learn about enrolling in pre-AP/AP courses (See Table G.17, Appendix G). These findings suggest that College Preparation Advisors will need to continue to reach out to all students regarding the importance of enrolling in pre-AP and AP courses in order to prepare them for postsecondary education.

It is noteworthy to consider not only what College Preparation Advisors are doing to convey the importance of AP courses in preparing students for postsecondary education, but also how effective students perceive these courses once they are enrolled. As discussed in Table 3.1 in Section 3.1, 68% of respondents who reported that they were currently enrolled in an AP course rated the course as *challenging* or *extremely challenging* and 34% of respondents who reported that they were currently enrolled in a pre-AP course rated that course as *challenging* or *extremely challenging*. In addition, as shown in Table 3.2, student respondents also described the effectiveness of their pre-AP and AP courses broken out by four core content areas. Across content areas, the majority of respondents perceived these courses to be *mostly effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college.[47]

Table 2.2 Student Participation in, and Effectiveness Ratings of, Pre-AP and AP Courses, Year 5 (Grade 11)

	Pre-AP or AP mathematics course (*n*=874)	AP ELA course (*n*=873)	Pre-AP or AP science course (*n*=860)	AP social studies course (*n*=866)
Percentage of students who reported being currently enrolled	49.4%	47.9%	46.3%	45.4%
Effectiveness Rating				
Not Effective	6.2%	6.2%	9.6%	5.0%
Slightly Effective	24.4%	24.5%	30.9%	20.2%
Mostly Effective	46.9%	41.6%	39.7%	45.7%
Very Effective	22.7%	27.6%	19.8%	29.1%
Mean Effectiveness	2.86	2.91	2.70	2.99

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).

[47] For more information regarding student participation in advanced courses by each implementation year, please see Table G.8.

Texas GEAR UP SG staff, especially College Preparation Advisors, can play an important role in supporting students pre-AP and AP course taking by increasing their outreach to cohort students about the value of these advanced courses to students' postsecondary education goals. Texas GEAR UP SG staff across all schools should continue to offer tutoring for these courses to help ensure that students—and particularly students who are enrolled in their first pre-AP or AP courses—receive needed supports.

2.1.3 Opportunities to Earn College Credit

Cohort students have two primary avenues in which to earn college credit—by earning a score of a 3 or higher on AP course examinations and through successful completion of dual credit courses. Project Objective 2.1 states that by the end of Year 4, all participating high schools are to make opportunities for each student to be eligible to complete 18 hours of college credit (through AP, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment) by the time he or she graduates from high school. According to course lists provided by the Support Center, all participating high schools met this objective by the end of Year 4 and are continuing to meet this objective again in Year 5.

Project Objective 2.3 states that by the end of the project's sixth year, at least 50% of cohort students will graduate with college credit earned by AP exam or through dual credit. Although data were not available through GUIDES regarding the cohort's performance on AP course examinations through February 28, 2017, data were available on cohort students' enrollment in and completion of dual credit courses and AP courses (Table F.7, Appendix F). Specifically, 11% of cohort students were enrolled in dual credit courses in Grade 11 during the 2016–17 school year and 2% of the cohort had completed a dual credit course prior to February 28, 2017. The highest enrollment rate was at High School L, with 43% of the cohort currently enrolled in a dual credit course; this high percentage is likely due to the advanced nature of the school's curriculum. The lowest enrollment rate was a High School J, with just 1% of cohort students enrolled in a dual credit course. As for dual credit completion, the highest completion rate was at High School M, with 9% of cohort students having completed a dual credit course. The lowest rates were at High Schools H, I, K, and L, with 0% of students having completed a dual credit course. The difference among schools may be due to more opportunities for Grade 9 and Grade 10 students to participate in dual credit courses at School M. In order to meet Project Objective 2.3, additional students will need to enroll in and successfully complete more dual credit courses and/or score a 3 or higher on AP course examinations.

According to the student survey data, a third of students (32%) reported that their College Preparation Advisor was their primary source of information to learn about enrolling in dual credit courses and an additional 30% reported that they rely on their College Preparation Advisor and other sources to learn about this topic. Overall, 18% said they did not learn about enrolling in dual credit courses (See Table G.17, Appendix G). Similarly, regarding information for transferring credits from dual credit or AP courses to college, 31% of students said their College Preparation Advisor was their primary source of information and an additional 27% reported that they rely on both their College Preparation Advisor and other sources. However, 26% of students reported not learning about this from anyone at their school.

Students who participated in focus groups and were enrolled in dual credit courses reported that, like pre-AP and AP courses, dual credit courses were difficult. They found it especially

challenging to manage their time to complete the heavy workload and work to meet higher expectations from their instructors. Some students added, though, that they felt the dual credit courses would help better prepare them for postsecondary education.

Overall, while all schools offered opportunities for students to take dual credit courses, relatively few cohort students enrolled in dual credit courses in Grade 11 (11%) and students found the courses to be challenging (Table 3.1 and Table F.7, Appendix F). The low enrollment may be a result of a lack of information about dual credit courses or may be related to some students' inability to meet requirements for enrolling in dual credit courses.[48]

2.2 Progress toward Graduation Programs

Another aspect of student progress toward high school graduation relates to Project Objective 1.2 (By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement, will meet or exceed the state average). According to GUIDES data, as of February 2017, 93% of Grade 11 students were pursuing an endorsement as part of their graduation plans, which is the same percentage as in Year 4 (Table F.8, Appendix F).[49] Although the overall percentage was the same from Year 4 to Year 5, there were shifts within the various endorsement areas. Specifically, the following percentages of students selected each endorsement: 33% Business and Industry (compared to 24% in Year 4); 29% Public Service (compared to 24% in Year 4); 15% STEM (compared to 16% in Year 4); 10% Arts and Humanities (compared to 28% in Year 4); and 6% Multidisciplinary Studies (compared to 2% in Year 4). The shifts in some endorsement areas, particularly in Arts and Humanities, which had the largest percentage point change from Year 4 to Year 5, reflect the degree to which the students changed their endorsements in Year 5.

As shown in Figure 3.4, student survey data reveal additional information regarding endorsements and changes in endorsements, in particular. Sixty-two percent of students responding to the survey said they were on track to graduate with an endorsement. Of all the survey respondents, 18% have changed their endorsement at some point, and 22% reported having plans to change their endorsement in the near future. One-third of student respondents (35%) indicated that they have no plans to change their endorsement.[50]

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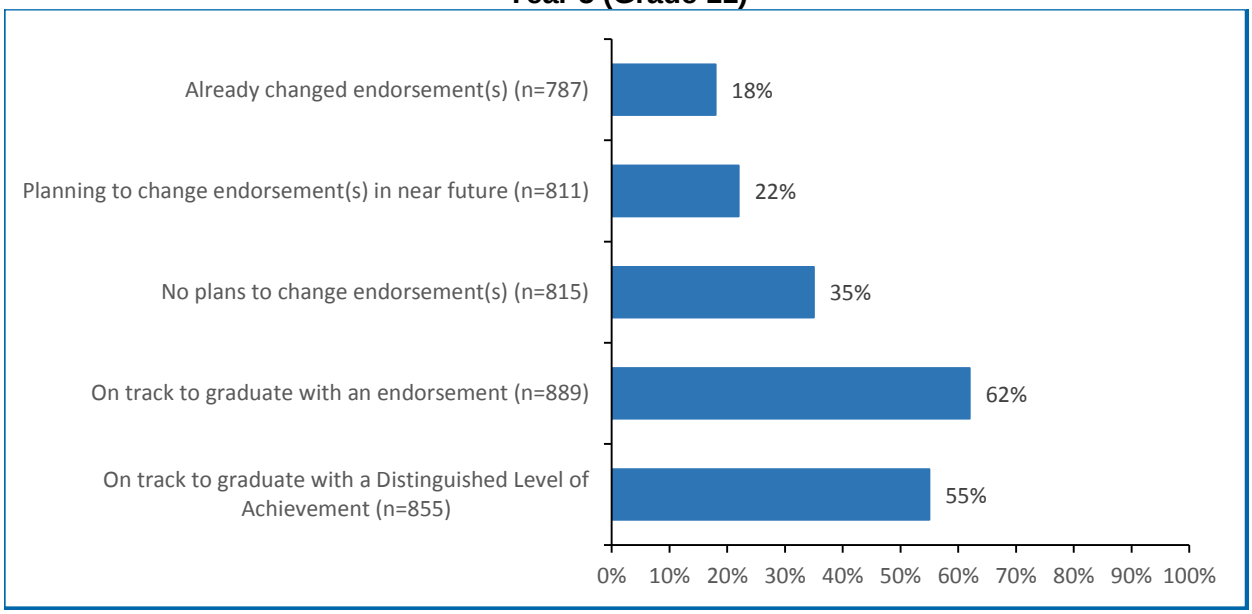
[48] Information regarding requirements for enrolling in dual credit courses may be found in the following document: http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/reports/PDF/1514.PDF?CFID=5475504&CFTOKEN=58745610.

[49] Of all Grade 11 student survey respondents, 93% of students had selected an endorsement; 3% were not on the Foundation High School Program, and 4% had not selected an endorsement. For those students who were not on the Foundation High School Program or had not selected an endorsement, it is possible that they entered Grade 9 prior to the 2014–15 school year, prior to when the Foundation High School Program went into effect with the enactment of Texas HB 5, or that they dropped their endorsement at the end of Grade 10 with permission from a parent/guardian. For more information on the Foundation High School Program and Texas HB 5, please see Chapter 1.

[50] Students were given the option to drop their endorsement in Grade 10. According to the fall 2016 survey, just 2% of students elected to drop their endorsement in Grade 10.

Overall, the overwhelming majority of cohort students were pursuing an endorsement by Grade 11 as part of their graduation plans with over half of students reporting that they are on track to graduate with an endorsement (55%).

Figure 2.4. Students' Progress and Plans Regarding Their Endorsements, Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).

In Year 5, some students in all four districts who participated in focus groups reported that they successfully changed their endorsement in the past or would like to change their endorsement. Students at each school also reported that they do not plan to study a subject area related to their endorsement in postsecondary education. Most students who participated in focus groups from High School K reported that they were unsure what their endorsement was and if they were on track to meet the requirements to graduate with their endorsement. Students and Texas GEAR UP SG staff across all six schools reported that endorsements and graduation requirements are discussed with students most often by counselors, and they are the person who will permit or not permit students to change endorsements and/or graduation plans. Administrators from High Schools H and K explained that they are reluctant to allow students to change their endorsements or find it difficult to do so because the timing of the change may prevent students from graduating with enough credits to earn the endorsement; thus, they often encourage students to not change their endorsements despite their change of interest in the endorsement selected during Grade 8 to begin pursuing in Grade 9.

Similar to Year 4, during the Year 5 site visits, Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported using endorsement selections to inform college awareness and readiness activities. Specifically, Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators for Districts 1 and 2 reported, like in Year 4, that student endorsements are often used to determine students' potential interest in Texas GEAR UP SG activities such as job site visits or college visits. Since some students do not plan to select their endorsement topic as their college major and/or are no longer interested in their endorsement area, it may be helpful for Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators to use additional means to identify students for college awareness and readiness activities.

Regarding graduating with the distinguished level of achievement, as discussed in Section 2.1.1, Algebra II completion is a requirement for obtaining the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School Program. In Year 5, 39% of Grade 11 students had completed Algebra II prior to Grade 11 and were pursuing an endorsement and an additional 40% were currently enrolled in the course in Grade 11 and were pursuing an endorsement—suggesting that by the end of Year 5, it is possible that close to three-quarters of the cohort may have completed the course and fulfilled at least one of the requirements for graduating at the distinguished level of achievement (Table F.5, Appendix F). Student survey data also provide insights on the percentage of students who were planning to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Specifically, 55% of student survey respondents reported that they are on track to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement. However, there was quite a bit of uncertainty regarding the distinguished level of achievement among students who participated in focus groups during site visits. Only students from a focus group at High School H reported that they plan to and were on track to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement. Some students from High School I reported that they were unsure of what distinguished level of achievement referred to while others, based on their understanding of the graduation plan, believed that their class would not be eligible to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement. For example, one student said "…when I was in 8th grade we started looking at the endorsements… they told us that all the other plans—like distinguished, regular, excel—they all got thrown out because students weren't meeting the criteria. So the endorsements, we're supposed to have our 4x4's in every class and we're supposed to have a specific number of classes for our endorsement so none of us will be [able to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement]." Similarly, students from High School K reported that they were unsure to what "distinguished level of achievement" referred and did not know the requirements for graduating with the honor. Texas GEAR UP SG staff should work with school counselors and other staff to help ensure that students are aware of and know about the requirements for this graduation distinction.

2.3 PSAT Completion

Student progress toward college readiness may also be measured by completion of and performance on standardized tests (Project Objective 5.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all cohort students will complete the ACT Aspire or the PSAT. By the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT.) According to GUIDES data, as of February 28, 2017, 74% of students had taken the PSAT during their high school career. This percentage varied significantly across schools.[51] As indicated in Table F.9 in Appendix F, High School L had the highest percentage of students take the examination (94%) and High School I had the lowest percentage of students take the examination (66%). The cohort did not meet Project Objective 5.1 regarding participation in the PSAT or ACT Aspire.

For the fall 2016 PSAT test administration, the PSAT mean score for the cohort was 866, an increase from Year 4 when the PSAT mean score for the cohort was 785 (Table F.10, Appendix F). High School L reported the highest mean score of 914 and High School I reported the lowest

[51] Percentage of PSAT participation was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 45.3$, $p < 0.001$

mean score of 828. For comparison, the PSAT mean score for Grade 11 students throughout the U.S. who took the exam in fall 2016 was 1009—a difference of 143 points.[52] The difference between the cohort mean score and the national mean score narrowed between Year 4 (224 points difference) and Year 5 (143 points difference).

In addition, the College Board identified a combined score of 970 (460 for Evidence Based Reading and Writing and 510 for Math) as the college and career readiness benchmark for Grade 11 students who took the fall 2016 exam. Overall, 14% of the cohort met this benchmark. The College Board reported that 69% of all Grade 11 U.S. test takers scored at or above this benchmark for Evidence Based Reading and Writing and 47% scored at or above this benchmark for Math. The College Board did not report on the percentage that met the combined score, and data reported through GUIDES did not break out the cohort's separate scores, so a precise comparison cannot be made regarding how the cohort is comparing to U.S. test takers. That said, overall, the cohort appears to be behind U.S. test takers in meeting college and career readiness benchmarks. If the trend in which cohort scores lag behind national scores continues with SAT and ACT scores—and if they lag behind state scores, as well—the cohort will not be on track to meet Project Objective 5.2 (By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of students meeting criterion on the ACT/SAT will meet or exceed the state average).

Student survey data provide additional information regarding students' plans for taking the PSAT and how they learned about and prepared for the exam. The majority of student respondents (89%) reported that they had taken or planned to take the PSAT during the 2016–17 school year: 78% said they had already taken it and 11% planned on taking it before the year ended (Table 2.3). Twelve percent of students said they had no plans to take the PSAT. These results generally align with data reported through GUIDES, with approximately three-quarters of students (74%) of students having completed the PSAT by February 2017.

Table 2.3 Student-Reported Plans to take College Entrance Exams, Year 5 (Grade 11)

	Yes, I have taken	No, but I plan on taking before the end of the current school year	No, I have not taken and I have no current plans to take this school year
PSAT/NMSQT (*n*=880)	77.5%	10.9%	11.6%
SAT (*n*=889)	63.7%	23.3%	13.0%
ACT (*n*=832)	18.0%	47.5%	34.5%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017)

Most students (43%) indicated that their primary source of information to learn about college entrance exam requirements was their College Preparation Advisor and an additional 28% reported that they relied on both their College Preparation Advisor and other sources to learn about requirements. However, 18% said they were not provided with information on entrance exam requirements (See Table G.17, Appendix G). Additionally, 40% of students reported that their College Preparation Advisor was their primary source of information to learn about participating in PSAT, SAT, or ACT test preparation and an additional 32% reported that they relied on both their College Preparation Advisor and other sources to learn about test

[52] See https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/pdf/psat-nmsqt-understanding-scores-2016.pdf for more information.

preparation (See Table G.17, Appendix G). Fourteen percent of student respondents said that they did not learn about test preparation from anyone at their school.

It was reported during site visits that the PSAT was administered during the school day for the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort at all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools. Nearly all students who participated in site visits reported that they felt more confident and more prepared to participate in the PSAT during fall 2016 than they felt in previous years. Most attributed their increased confidence to clearer expectations for and understanding of the assessment after participating in the assessment during the previous year (Year 4).

In explaining why approximately one quarter of cohort students did not complete the assessment, administrators and school staff clarified during the site visits that some cohort students may not have had appropriate or necessary accommodations or were absent on the day of administration.

According to site visit data, each Texas GEAR UP SG school offered test preparation materials and/or sessions for students. Khan Academy was reported as a resource used by students at High Schools J, H, and I.[53] High School J also offered test preparation booklets for students to study with at home. High Schools H and I held three, five-hour boot camp sessions that reviewed practice tests and test-taking strategies with students; College Preparation Advisors reported that students provided positive feedback about these sessions, but they also reported that were not well-attended. Staff at High School I and the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator for District 2 reported that teachers of cohort students in their respective schools received training or materials to embed into their curriculum to help prepare students for the PSAT. Students at High School L noted that they had the opportunity to attend two-hour afterschool study sessions the two days before the PSAT was administered. High School M offered an SAT Preparation Course as an elective as well as a PSAT Saturday School Academy as opportunities to review test-taking strategies and content to be covered on the assessment.

Overall, while all six high schools offered the PSAT during the school day, only 74% of students completed the assessment. That said, students' PSAT mean scores did increase from Year 4 to Year 5, which may be attributed to test preparation opportunities at each school and students' increased confidence after previous PSAT participation. In looking forward to SAT test preparation, Texas GEAR UP SG staff and school staff are encouraged to work together to help ensure that a higher percentage of cohort students complete the SAT and/or ACT and should continue to provide test preparation services and materials to students.

2.4 SAT and ACT Completion

Although no SAT or ACT completion data were reported through GUIDES by February 28, 2017, student survey data provides insight regarding the percentages of students who took or plan to take the SAT and ACT in Grade 11. Specifically, 87% of student respondents reported that they took or planned to take the SAT before the 2016–17 school year ended; 64% had already taken it and 23% were planning to take it (Table 2.3). Thirteen percent of student

[53] Khan Academy offers free College Board approved study tools to all students to help prepare for the SAT.

respondents had no plans to take the SAT, which is similar to the 12% of student respondents who reported having no plans to take the PSAT.

It was reported on site visits that cohort students in Districts 1, 3, and 4 had all participated in an SAT School Day in Year 5. District 4 staff explained that the 2016–17 school year was the first year for their district to participate and that meeting Texas GEAR UP SG goals for SAT completion was an impetus for implementing the SAT School Day.[54] It was reported by all three participating districts that logistics for the day were managed by school testing coordinators and/or counselors. However, Texas GEAR UP SG staff across districts reported that they made efforts to make students aware of upcoming test dates and offer assistance to register students for the assessment.

Students at High Schools I and K reported that they felt the SAT was easier than the PSAT and felt more prepared for the SAT than the PSAT. College Preparation Advisors at High Schools H and J noted that student SAT scores, which they described as "average," were as they expected them to be, based on students' most recent PSAT scores from the fall 2016 administration.

Site visit participants also described SAT test preparation efforts. College Preparation Advisors across all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools explained they continued to promote the use of Khan Academy to prepare for the SAT. Many students who participated in site visits reported that they used Khan Academy in their own time to study, and students at High School K reported that their teachers used Khan Academy during class. Teachers from High School K who participated in site visit focus groups and used Khan Academy in class said the Khan Academy videos provided good content but were often too long and caused students to quickly tune them out. In addition to Khan Academy, Texas GEAR UP SG staff at High School J reported that they held a one-day boot camp test preparation session a few days before the SAT. Teachers from High School L reported that they facilitated Saturday SAT preparation sessions that were initiated by Texas GEAR UP SG, but they were frustrated by the minimal guidance and expectations for the sessions, which the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator provided over two months after test preparation sessions had already begun; they added that the sessions also had low attendance.

In addition to the SAT, student survey and site visit data also provided information about the ACT. According to the student survey, only 18% of respondents indicated that they took the ACT during the 2016–17 school year, although another 48% said they planned to take it before the year ended. Slightly over one third of student respondents (35%) said they had no plans to take the ACT (Table 2.3). Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported on site visits that they encouraged students to take the ACT during Year 5. College Preparation Advisors explained that they helped students become informed about the ACT and register those who were interested in participating. Some students who participated in the ACT reported during focus groups that they felt the ACT was easier than the SAT for them. A College Preparation Advisor from High School K explained in an interview that research shows that the ACT is "less grammatically and

[54] The SAT School Day is a program offered through the College Board to offer the SAT during a school day instead of on the weekend. For more information, please visit https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/k12-educators/sat-school-day.

vocabulary intensive," so those who do not speak English as a first language may find the ACT less challenging to comprehend.

Overall, activities and preparation geared toward preparation for the SAT exceeded activities and preparation for the ACT, which aligns with students' priorities and plans to take the SAT (87%) versus the ACT (66%), as indicated by the student survey results (Table 2.3). Texas GEAR UP SG staff collaborated with school staff to play an important role in test preparation planning activities and execution. It is recommended that Texas GEAR UP SG staff continue to work with school staff for test preparation activities as cohort students continue to take college entrance examinations in Year 6.

2.5 Texas Success Initiative Assessment

The TSIA is one of the possible requirements needed for enrolling in dual credit courses and is an indicator of students who are considered college ready. According to data reported through GUIDES, 27% of cohort students took the TSIA in Reading and 23% of cohort students took the TSIA in Mathematics in either Grades 9, 10, or 11 (Table F.11, Appendix F).[55] Of the students that took the assessments, 48% passed the TSIA in Reading and 24% passed the TSIA in Mathematics. High School K had the highest passing rate for TSIA in Reading (78%) and High School J had the highest passing rate for TSIA in Mathematics (47%). While statewide TSIA data for the 2016–17 school year were not yet available at the time of publication, statewide data from 2015–16 were available and can be used to measure progress toward Project Objective 5.3 (The number of students who graduate college ready in mathematics and English will meet or exceed the state average). Specifically, in 2015–16, the state average for the TSIA was 22.6% for ELA and 18.1% for mathematics.[56] While only about a quarter of cohort students took the TSIA in Year 5, based on those who did, the cohort was on track to meet Project Objective 5.3. Only two schools were not on track to meet Project Objective 5.3; specifically, the passage rate for TSIA: Mathematics at School I was 12.5% and School K did not have any students take the TSIA: Mathematics. As more students take the TSIA in Year 6, it is possible that the cohort's TSIA pass rates for ELA and mathematics may decrease.

Data from the student survey provides further insights regarding students' participation in the TSIA as shown in Table 2.4. Specifically, over a third of student respondents (36%) reported that they took the entire TSIA and 13% reported having taken only some sections of the TSIA. The majority of students (52%) had not taken any part of the TSIA. In addition, fewer than half of the student respondents (40%) said they had re-taken at least one section of the TSIA.

[55] The TSIA is a standardized test used to determine readiness for college coursework and identifies needs for any developmental coursework. For more information see http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=C92F1DAA-D49E-03F0-0750060AA756E807.
[56] Statewide data on the TSIA in 2015–16 may be found at the following URL: https://rptsvr1.tea.texas.gov/perfreport/tapr/2017/state.pdf

Table 2.4 Student Experiences with the TSI/TSIA, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Did you take the entire TSI/TSIA? (*n*=911)	Percentage of students
Yes	35.6%
I have taken some, but not all sections of the TSI/TSIA	12.7%
No, I have not taken any section of the TSI/TSIA	51.7%
Have you ever retaken a section of the TSI/TSIA?* (*n*=432)	
Yes	40.0%
No	60.0%
When was the most recent semester in which you took a section of the TSIA?* (*n*=419)	
Spring 2017	33.2%
Fall 2016	25.5%
Spring 2016	29.8%
Fall 2015 or earlier	11.5%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017)

Site visit participants provided insight on the number of Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students who participated in the TSIA and the ways that students prepared for the assessment. Texas GEAR UP SG staff in Districts 2 and 4 reported that school testing coordinators and counselors managed all logistics and recruitment for the TSIA, but Texas GEAR UP SG staff in all four districts discussed ways in which they could help promote the value of the assessment and the implications for taking it early and passing. An administrator from High School K said that more Grade 11 students than ever before participated in the TSIA—a success facilitated by funding available through Texas GEAR UP SG—and thus the number of Grade 11 students enrolled in dual credit courses in the 2016–17 school year nearly doubled the average number of Grade 11 students typically enrolled in dual credit courses at the school.[57]

TSIA test preparation was also available to cohort students in Year 5. College Preparation Advisors played a role in informing students about TSIA test preparation. According to the student survey, 36% of student respondents said that their College Preparation Advisor was their primary source of information on participating in TSIA test preparation and an additional 27% reported that they relied on both their College Preparation Advisor and other sources to learn about the preparation opportunities (Table G.17, Appendix G). Twenty-two percent of students said they did not learn about TSIA test preparation from anyone at their school. In addition, each school described different approaches to administering additional TSIA test preparation during the Year 5 site visits. The College Preparation Advisor at High School M handed out test preparation booklets according to focus group students. Some students at High School H said that a teacher incorporated TSIA practice questions into their classwork. Some students at High Schools K and L reported that their College Preparation Advisors recommended they take a TSIA preparation course over the summer at a local community college. An administrator at High School M reported that some students received TSIA tutorials available through their online credit recovery program. The Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator at High School J said that students were able to prepare for the TSIA on their own time using an online website that helped them to discover areas of weaknesses in their knowledge of the content assessed on the TSIA.

[57] According to Table F.7 (Appendix F), 5% of Grade 11 students in High School K enrolled in dual credit courses in 2016–17. As data on dual credit courses were not reported in GUIDES for the 2015–16 school year, it is not possible to confirm whether enrollment doubled using data reported in GUIDES.

Overall, a smaller percentage of students took the TSIA than planned to take the SAT or ACT; however, test preparation for the TSIA was encouraged by Texas GEAR UP SG staff and was often included in preparation for the SAT. Given the level of student participation and student feedback, College Preparation Advisors could spend more time discussing the assessment with students and the benefits of taking the assessment, such as enrollment in dual credit courses.

2.6 Multiple Skill Sets Necessary for High School Success

In addition to academic preparation, research suggests the importance of a range of skills (e.g., planning, organization) on students' postsecondary success, which are often referred to as soft skills. Teachers and Texas GEAR UP SG staff across all six schools discussed the perceived lack of soft skills within the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort during site visits. School counselors at High School J and the Texas GEAR UP SG District 3 Coordinator noted that students often failed to self-advocate and to initiate tasks or work to be completed. Teachers from High Schools J and M added that students were not well-organized, which may be troublesome in college. A teacher at High School J suggested that shadowing a college student for an entire day would allow all high school students to experience the importance of organization, strong note-taking skills, and time management. The Texas GEAR UP SG District 3 Coordinator said that students received planners to help keep better track of their schedules, but they did not seem to change behaviors related to organization. The College Preparation Advisor at High School I reported that soft skill development was a priority item for their district in Year 5, but was frustrated by some district and Texas GEAR UP SG staff's lack of prioritization of soft skill workshops. More specifically, the College Preparation Advisor went on to comment that it will be a priority in the Year 6 ASPR for their district and believe that staff see the importance of the soft skill workshops. The College Preparation Advisor added that Texas GEAR UP SG staff hired an outside organization to conduct a training with approximately 60 Texas GEAR UP SG students at School I. The organization provided a curriculum for teachers to implement in specific classes in an effort to meet their ASPR priority on soft skill development; however, the advisor was unsure if the curriculum received necessary administrator approval to be implemented and/or was integrated into class curricula.

2.7 On-Time Promotion

Project Objective 4.3 states that by the end of the project's third year, the on-time promotion rate of cohort students will exceed the state average. This project objective was not met at the end of Year 3. Although this project objective is from a prior year, on-time promotion of cohort students is still being tracked in the current and subsequent annual implementation reports. Texas GEAR UP SG schools reported in the annual performance data that, of the students who remained at the same school through the end of the school year, 82% of Grade 10 students were eligible for on-time promotion to Grade 11. According to statewide data for Grade 10

retention from the 2015–16 school year, the retention rate was 6%, implying a promotion rate of 94% (TEA, 2017a).[58]

Texas GEAR UP SG schools overall did not exceed the state on-time promotion rate by the end of the project's fourth year, though there was some variance across schools. Only High School L (99%) exceeded the state on-time promotion rate; the other schools all fell below the state on-time promotion rate (High School H: 80%, High School I: 74%, High School J: 76%, High School K: 84%, and High School M: 86%) (Table F.12, Appendix F).

2.8 Academic Preparation for College

Project Objective 4.4 states, "By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college." There are numerous ways to measure whether a student is knowledgeable about and academically prepared for college; accordingly, a variety of indicators were used in measuring progress toward Project Objective 4.4. Specifically, primary cohort students are considered to have met the requirements of Project Objective 4.4 if they meet the following criteria: participation in at least one "in-person" college visit and any one of the following: (1) meeting or exceeding the TSIA criteria in both ELA and mathematics; (2) completing one or more mathematics courses beyond Algebra II; (3) enrolling in a coherent sequence of career and technical education courses as part of a four-year plan of study; and/or (4) having a personal graduation plan at the end of Year 5 that includes the Foundation High School Program with a multidisciplinary studies endorsement.[59] Based on data reported in GUIDES, approximately 22% of primary cohort students met these criteria, ranging from 2% at School K to 85% at School J (Table F.13, Appendix F).

Overall, the cohort was not on track to meet Project Objective 4.4 by the end of the Year 5 reporting period (February 28, 2017). It is possible that by the end of Grade 11, however, many more cohort students will have met these criteria. The Year 6 Annual Implementation Report will contain more definitive information regarding the percentage of cohort students that met this Project Objective at the end of Year 5.

[58] Note that the state-level retention figure is not technically an average, but is the collective rate for all students in the grade level.
[59] Meeting criterion on the TSIA in ELA requires a score of 351 or higher; meeting criterion on the TSIA in mathematics requires a score of 350 or higher.

3. Postsecondary Planning

The postsecondary plans of Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort students and parents are important because they point to their current levels of postsecondary focus and readiness. Knowing that most students want to go to college positions Texas GEAR UP SG to respond with efforts to increase the knowledge about how to do so and spend less time convincing students of the importance of a college education. In addition, these data offer an understanding of aspirations and expectations, knowledge about college and college financing, and perceptions of college plans, which helps Texas GEAR UP SG know where to focus efforts and gauge progress in impacting students.

This chapter discusses available implementation data related to the following project objective:

- Project Objective 4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college.

Most of the data discussed in this chapter stems from the student and parent surveys and is supplemented with additional data sources as applicable. Analyses examined the overall distribution of responses and compared them over time, however a discussion of findings focused on two key time points—Year 4 (Grade 10), which is the previous year and marks the halfway point through high school, and Year 2 (Grade 8), which marks the conclusion of middle school.

3.1 Educational Aspirations and Expectations

Plans for attending college can be understood as both the level that one would like to achieve (aspiration) and the level that one anticipates achieving (expectation). The Texas GEAR UP SG program, as described in Chapter 1, is attempting to promote both aspirations and expectations in the direction of a four-year college degree or higher, items on both the student and parent surveys asked about the highest level of education desired (aspirations), as well as the anticipated level actually expected to achieve (expectations).[60] Figure 3.1 illustrates the percentage of students and parents who selected a four-year degree or higher for each time point.[61]

According to the Year 5 survey data, most students (70%) *aspire* to complete a 4-year degree or higher, but only 57% actually *expect* to complete that level of education (Figure 3.1).[62] The percent of students who *aspire* to complete a 4-year degree or higher decreased by two percentage points from Year 4 (72%), but was slightly higher than what students reported at the end of Year 2 (68%). In addition, the percent of students who *expect* to complete a 4-year

[60] The question regarding educational expectations was previously required by ED for both the student and parent surveys. This question has continued to be included in recent surveys in order to track responses longitudinally.
[61] Please note that parent data is not available for spring 2015 and 2016; student data is not available for fall 2015.
[62] In Year 5, there was a significant difference in students' aspirations and expectations of completing a 4-year degree or higher: $\chi^2(1) = 107.6$, $p < 0.001$.

degree in Year 5 (57%) slightly decreased from Years 4 (60%) and 2 (58%). Overall, student aspirations and expectations have not changed much over time since Year 2.

The percent of students who *aspire* to complete a 4-year degree or higher ranged from 63% at High School I to 81% at High School L (Table G.10, Appendix G). There was no significant difference between schools regarding the highest level of education that students' wish to complete. The percent of students who reported that they *expect* to complete a 4-year degree or higher ranged from 50% at High School H to 78% at High School L (Table G.11, Appendix G). There was a significant difference by school regarding the highest level of education that students *expect* to complete.[63] It is also noteworthy that only 12% of students surveyed during Year 5 *expect* to obtain a high school diploma or less, a finding which varied significantly by school (Tables G.9 and Table G.11, Appendix G).

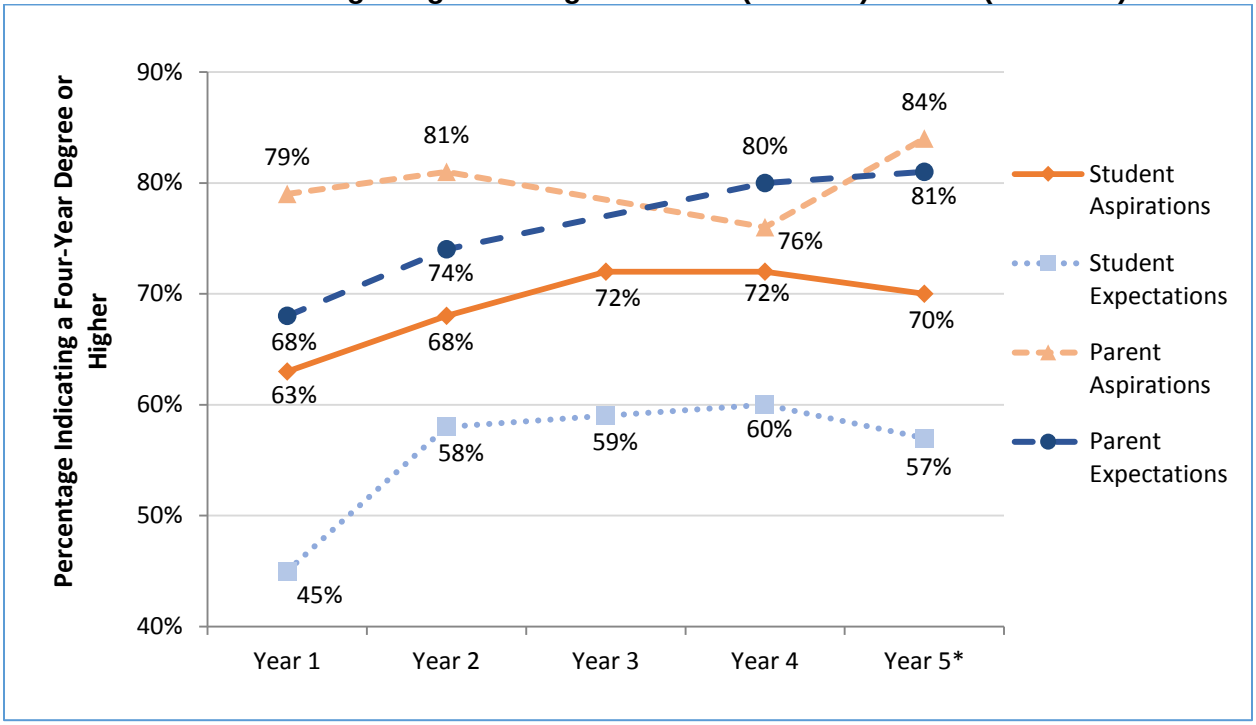
As shown in Figure 3.1, 84% of parents *aspire* for their child to complete a 4-year degree or higher, which increased by eight percentage points from Year 4 (76%) and three percentage points from Year 2 (81%). There was not a significant difference in parent aspirations across schools in Year 5 (Table G.12, Appendix G). Similarly, 81% of parents reported that they *expect* their child will complete this level of education; this represents an increase of one percentage point from Year 4 (80%) and seven percentage points from Year 2 (74%). Parents' expectations did not differ significantly by school in Year 5 (Table G.13, Appendix G).

In Year 5, there was a significant difference between student and parent *aspirations* for completing a 4-year degree or higher.[64] Parents' *aspirations* were 14 percentage points higher than students' *aspirations*. In addition, there was a significant difference between student and parent *expectations* for completing a 4-year degree or higher.[65] Parents' *expectations* were 24 percentage points higher than students' expectations (Tables G.11 and G.13, Appendix G).

Overall, students' educational aspirations and expectations decreased slightly from Year 4 to Year 5 while parents' educational aspirations and expectations slightly increased. Students at High School L reported the highest *aspirations* and *expectations*.

[63] $\chi^2(25) = 54.0$, $p < 0.01$
[64] $\chi^2(1) = 27.6$, $p < 0.001$
[65] $\chi^2(1) = 59.1$, $p < 0.001$

Figure 3.1. Percentages of Parents and Students Who Aspire and Expect to Obtain a Four-Year College Degree or Higher: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017); Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Given the low response rate in Year 3, parent survey results are not reported. In fall 2015 of Year 4, parent surveys were administered again due to low response rates in spring 2016. Additionally, low parent response rates in Year 1 and Year 2 warrant caution in interpreting the trend data included on parent surveys. Due to anonymity, responses are not linked to an individual respondent, thus comparisons over time are based on aggregate responses. N counts for each item are included in the full data presented in Table G.9, Appendix G. Additionally, parent and student aspirations by expectations in Year 5 can be found in Table G.14 and Table G.15, respectively.
*There was a significant difference between student and parent *expectations* for completing a 4-year degree or higher ($\chi^2(1) = 59.1$, $p < 0.001$). There was also a significant difference between student and parent *aspirations* for completing a 4-year degree or higher ($\chi^2(1) = 27.6$, $p < 0.001$).

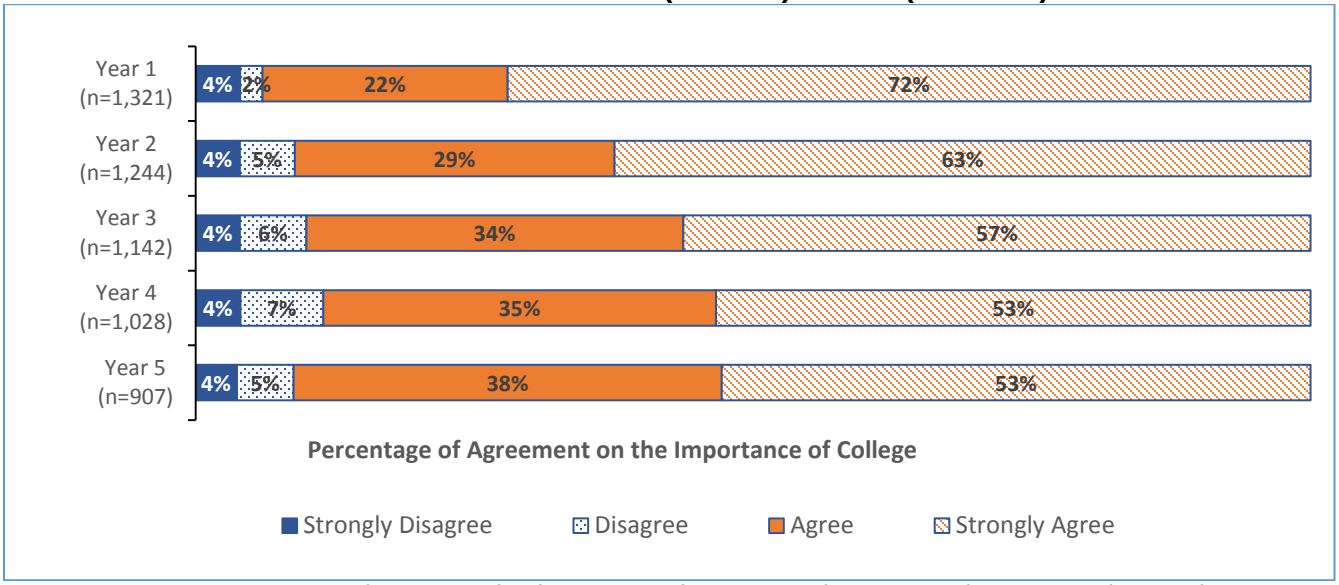
3.2 Perceptions of College Plans

Two items on the student survey addressed more specific aspects that may influence postsecondary expectations. One item addressed the respondents' belief that attending college is important to be able to attain their career goals and the other addressed the perception that it is too early to be talking about college. Each of these items may be related to decisions that students will make about attending college. In the first case, if students believe that they can attain their goals and the future they want without attending college, then college attendance becomes less relevant to them. Similarly, if students believe that it is too early to be thinking about college, then they likely are not having discussions or making plans to that end. Although college may have appeared to be something in the distant future in middle school years of the Texas GEAR UP SG implementation, it is anticipated that this will become a more pressing priority now that the cohort is in Grade 11.

Almost all students who responded to the survey (91%) *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that attending college is important for their career goals and their future. This is three percentage points higher

than Year 4 (88%) and one percentage point lower than Year 2 (92%).[66] Student agreement that attending college is important for their career and future goals differed significantly across years (Figure 3.2).[67] There was also a significant difference by school in students' level of agreement that attending college is important for their career and future goals (Table G.16, Appendix G).[68] The percent of students who *strongly agreed* that attending college is important for their future ranged from 42% in High School K to 65% in High School J.

Figure 3.2. Students' Levels of Agreement that Attending College is Important for Their Career Goals and Future: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages across those who responded with some level of agreement may not total 100% due to rounding. Due to anonymity, responses are not linked to an individual respondent, thus comparisons over time are based on aggregate responses. It was incorrectly reported in AIR 4 that 8% of students disagreed with the statement that attending college is important for their career goals and future. The correct percentage for Year 4 is 7%, which is reported in Figure 3.2.

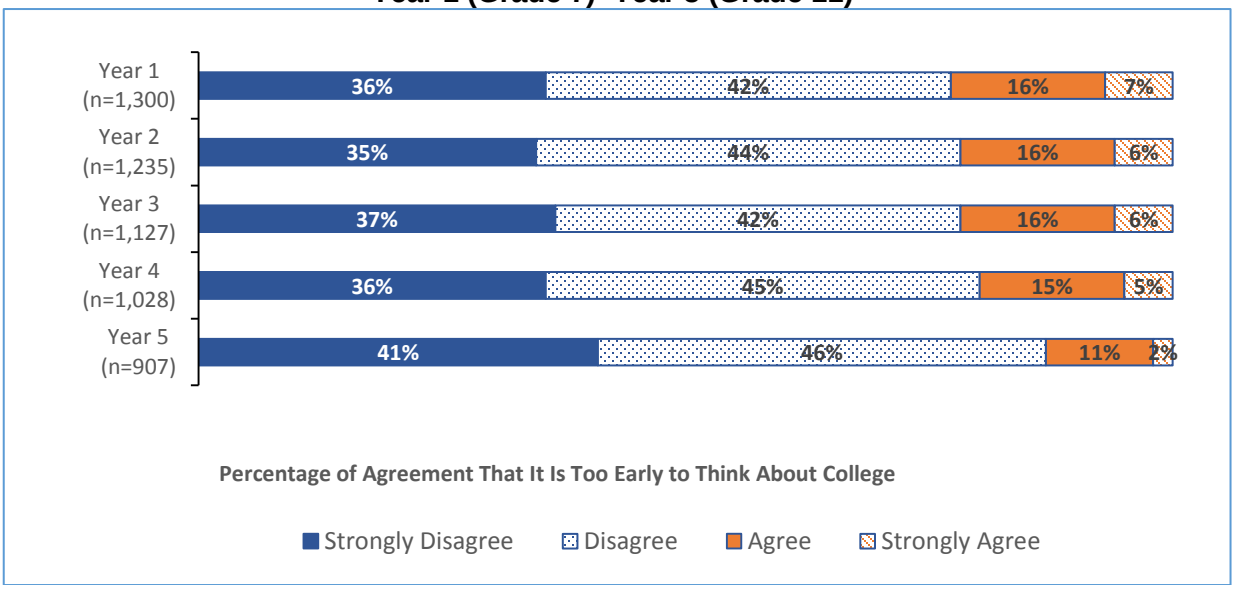
According to Figure 3.3, only 13% of students who responded to the survey *agreed* or *strongly agreed* that it was too early to think about college. This is a seven percentage point decrease from Year 4 (20%) and a nine percentage point decrease from Year 2 (22%). This decrease is to be expected as students are nearing the end of high school. Overall, student responses differed significantly across years (Figure 3.3)[69]

According to site visit participants, factors that were most often mentioned by students and parents as important to consider when determining where to pursue postsecondary education included cost of the attendance, programs and majors available, and distance from their family. Other factors that students reported in Year 5 included the community type where the school is

[66] Note that it was incorrectly reported in AIR 4 that 8% of students disagreed with the statement that attending college is important for their career goals and future. The correct percentage for Year 4 is 7%, which is reported in Figure 3.2.
[67] $\chi^2(8) = 148.7$, $p < 0.001$
[68] $\chi^2(15) = 34.9$, $p < 0.01$
[69] $\chi^2(8) = 72.3$, $p < 0.001$

located, school and class size, and whether the school will accept any of the dual credits earned while in high school.

Figure 3.3. Students' Levels of Agreement That It Is Too Early to Think About College: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages across those who responded with some level of agreement may not total 100% due to rounding. Due to anonymity, responses are not linked to an individual respondent, thus comparisons over time are based on aggregate responses.

Overall, Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students reported in the survey that they continue to agree that college will be important for their future and that it is not too early to think about college. Based on the increase of students who reported that it is not too early to think about college and the various factors that students are considering in determining the best fit for postsecondary education, it is possible that Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students have successfully engaged in college readiness activities regarding specific considerations for postsecondary education and the value of a postsecondary education. Details regarding students' participation in college readiness activities will be discussed in Chapter 5.

3.3 Knowledge about College

An understanding about specific terms and concepts related to college may be essential for students to make decisions that align with their plans; knowing students' levels of knowledge can help Texas GEAR UP SG focus on particular low-knowledge areas of concern.

Monitoring progress in this area will help ensure that Texas GEAR UP SG is on track for the following near-term project objective: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of Texas GEAR UP SG students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, the necessary academic preparation for college (Project Objective 4.4). Survey data can help inform the extent to which students

report that they know the academic expectations for college (such as the general requirements and, specifically, the minimum SAT or ACT scores).[70]

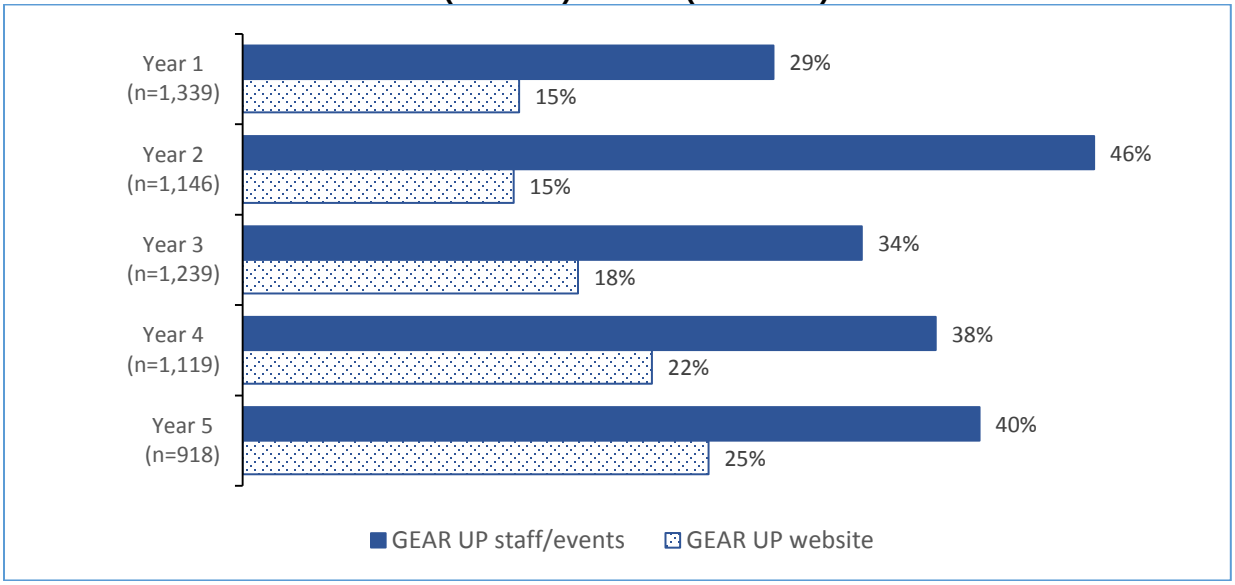
3.3.1 Sources of Information

In an effort to build student knowledge about a range of college topics, it helps to understand the frequently used resources that may be the initial approach for information dissemination. Awareness of less-often-used resources can also inform the necessary steps to refine the content/delivery of those materials. Analysis of survey data related to this topic informs the following evaluation question: "During each year of the grant, what types of information are grantees making available to students and their families?" When asked about what sources of information have helped inform postsecondary education plans, students selected from a list of various sources; two items specifically related to Texas GEAR UP SG are shown in Figure 3.4 (the remaining sources are included in Table G.18 in Appendix G).

Forty percent of students who responded to the survey said *Texas GEAR UP SG staff/events* helped them to think about their postsecondary education plans, a two percentage point increase since Year 4 (38%) and a six percentage point decrease from Year 2 (46%). There was a significant difference over time in student responses regarding Texas GEAR UP SG staff/events.[71] One-fourth of students reported that the Texas GEAR UP website helped them to think about their plans, an increase from Years 4 and 2 (22% and 15%, respectively). There was also a significant difference over time in student responses regarding the Texas GEAR UP website.[72]

[70] Another way to measure progress toward Project Objective 4.4 is discussed in Chapter 3.
[71] Students' indication of GEAR UP staff/events as a source of information differed significantly over time: $\chi^2(4) = 85.3$, $p < 0.001$.
[72] Students' indication of the GEAR UP website as a source of information differed significantly over time: $\chi^2(4) = 60.1$, $p < 0.001$.

Figure 3.4. Student-Reported College Information Sources: Percentages by Source Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Response percentages will not add up to 100% because respondents were able to select multiple responses. N counts for each year are included in the full data presented in Table G.19, Appendix G. Due to anonymity, responses are not linked to an individual respondent, thus comparisons over time are based on aggregate responses.

Of all of the options of sources of information listed in the survey question, the item selected by the largest percentage of student respondents was *college visits* (62%). Other common sources were *friends or other people their age* (48%), a *college fair* (48%), and *teachers/school counselors* (46%). Of the response options presented, sports continued to be the least often selected option in Year 5 (Table G.18, Appendix G).

Given the findings regarding sources of information used to build student knowledge about college topics, TEA should encourage and support Texas GEAR UP SG staff at all schools (with targeted support at some schools) to continue to maximize opportunities to share information with a broad range of students, including those new to the cohort. This might include engaging in both formal settings (such as Texas GEAR UP SG events—including college visits) and informal interactions (such as consulting with students in a GEAR UP office at the school).

3.3.2 Knowledge about College

An understanding about specific terms and concepts related to college may be essential for students to be able to make decisions that align with their plans; knowing students' levels of knowledge can help Texas GEAR UP SG focus on particular low-knowledge areas of concern. Survey data can help to inform the extent to which students report that they know the academic expectations for college (such as the general requirements and, specifically, the minimum SAT or ACT scores) and then can work toward demonstrating academic performance in those directions.

Student surveys asked respondents to indicate how knowledgeable they were about various college-related terms on a four-point knowledge scale, with 1 equaling *no knowledge* and 4

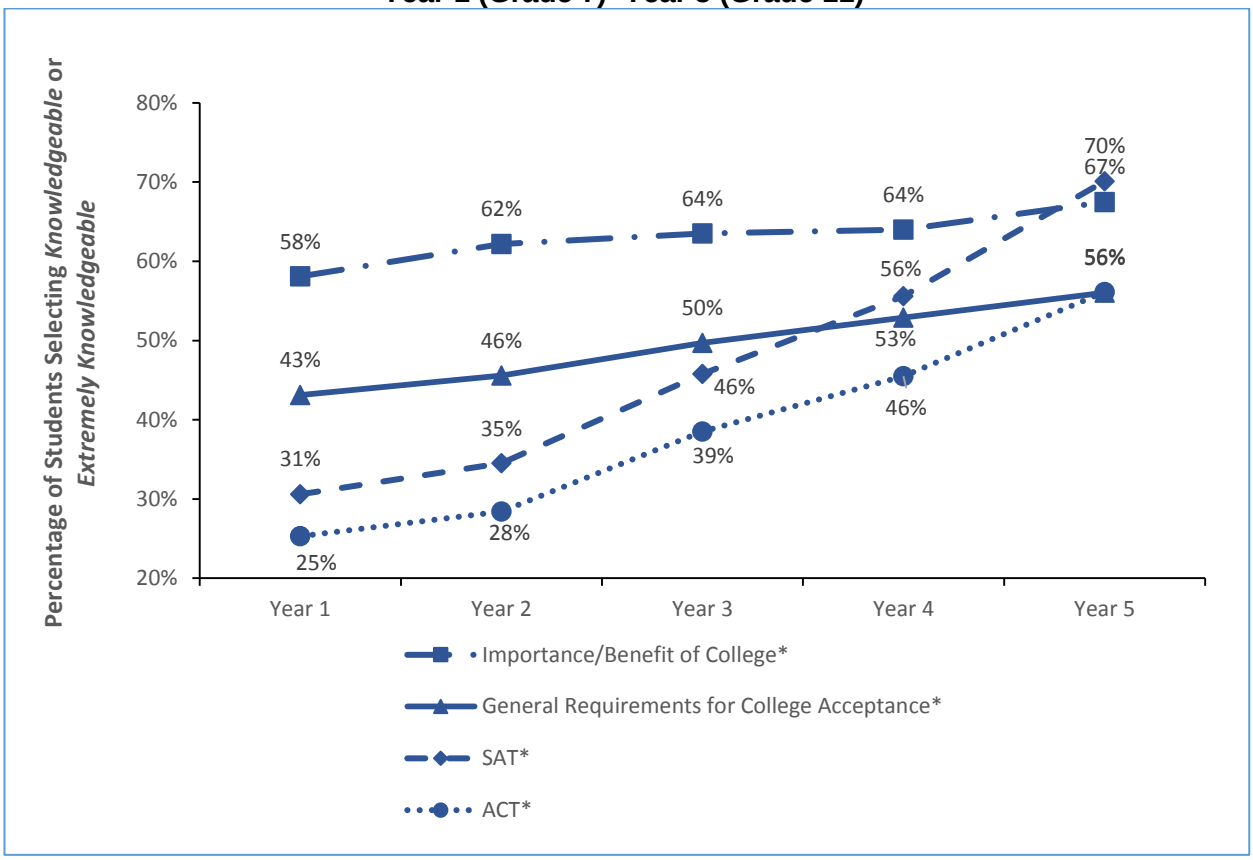
equaling *extremely knowledgeable*. These data, displayed in Figure 3.5, as well as in Table G.20 in Appendix G, are an important guide for Texas GEAR UP SG schools in possible directions for future events, activities, and resources.

Sixty-seven percent of students rated themselves as *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable*, and 11% felt *not knowledgeable*, about the importance/benefit of college. This percentage has increased since both Years 4 and 2 (64% and 62%, respectively) (Figure 3.5; Table G.21, Appendix G). Across schools, however, there was no significant difference in students' self-reported knowledge of the importance/benefit of college (Table G.21, Appendix G).

Fifty-six percent of students said they were *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the general requirements for college acceptance, which represents an increase from previous years. Specifically, at the end of middle school, 46% of students rated themselves as *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* and at the end of Year 4, 53% said they were *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* (Figure 3.5). The percentage of students who felt they were *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the general requirements for college acceptance ranged from 41% at High School K to 66% at High School M (Table G.21, Appendix G).[73]

[73] Across schools, there was a significant difference in students' self-reported knowledge of the general requirements for college acceptance: $\chi^2(15) = 57.2$, $p < 0.001$.

Figure 3.5. Students' Perceived Knowledge of College Terms and Concepts: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

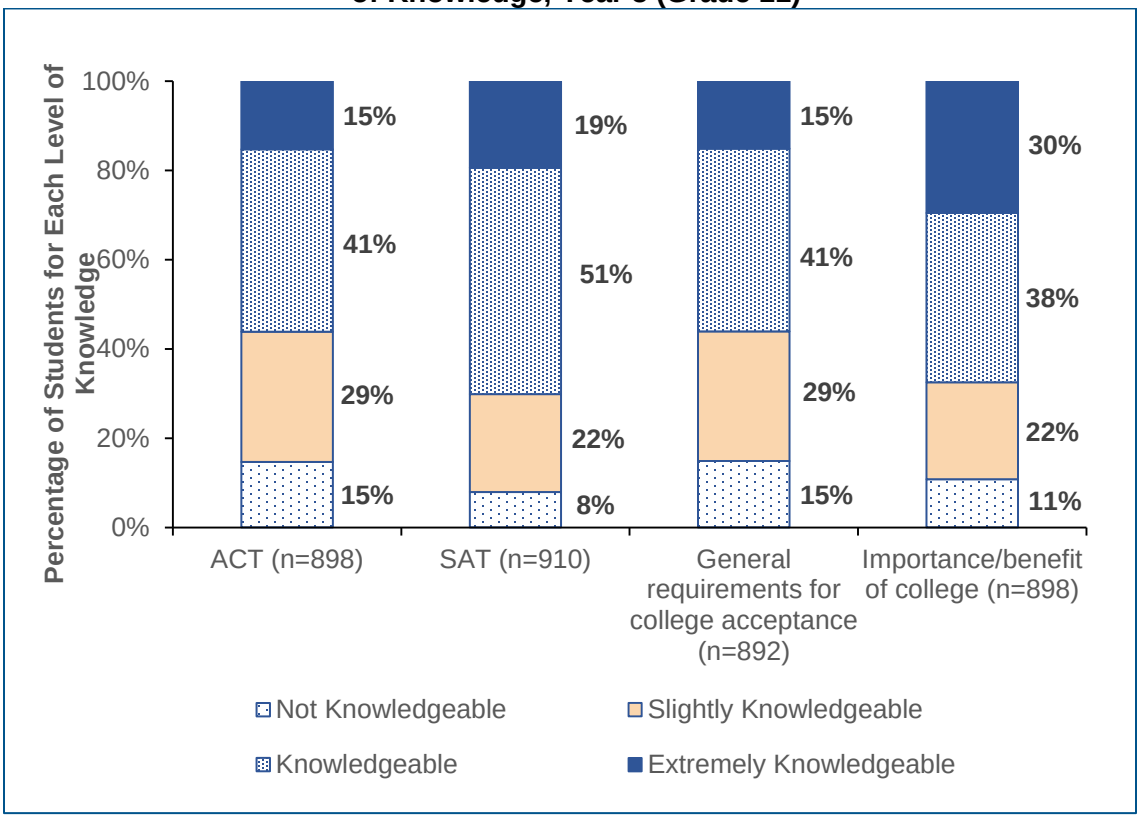


Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" were scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge, 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable, 3 – Knowledgeable, and 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable. N counts for each item and each response option are included in the full data presented in Figure 4.6. Due to anonymity, responses are not linked to an individual respondent, thus comparisons over time are based on aggregate responses.
*There were significant differences across time for all topics listed in graph: Importance/Benefit of college: ($\chi^2(4) = 40.5$, $p < 0.001$); General requirements for college acceptance: $\chi^2(4) = 100.6$, $p < 0.001$; SAT: $\chi^2(4) = 449.5$, $p < 0.001$; and ACT: $\chi^2(4) = 291.1$, $p < 0.001$.

Seventy percent of students felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* and 8% felt *not knowledgeable* about the SAT (Figure 3.6). This is 14 percentage points higher than in Year 4 (56%) and twice the percentage of students who felt knowledgeable at the end of Year 2 (35%) (Figure 3.5). The percent of students who felt they were knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable about the SAT ranged from 56% at High School K to 82% at High School M (Table G.22, Appendix G).[74]

[74] Across schools, there was a significant difference in students' self-reported knowledge of the SAT: $\chi^2(15) = 51.4$, $p < 0.001$.

Figure 3.6. Students' Perceived Knowledge about College: Percentages by Level of Knowledge, Year 5 (Grade 11)



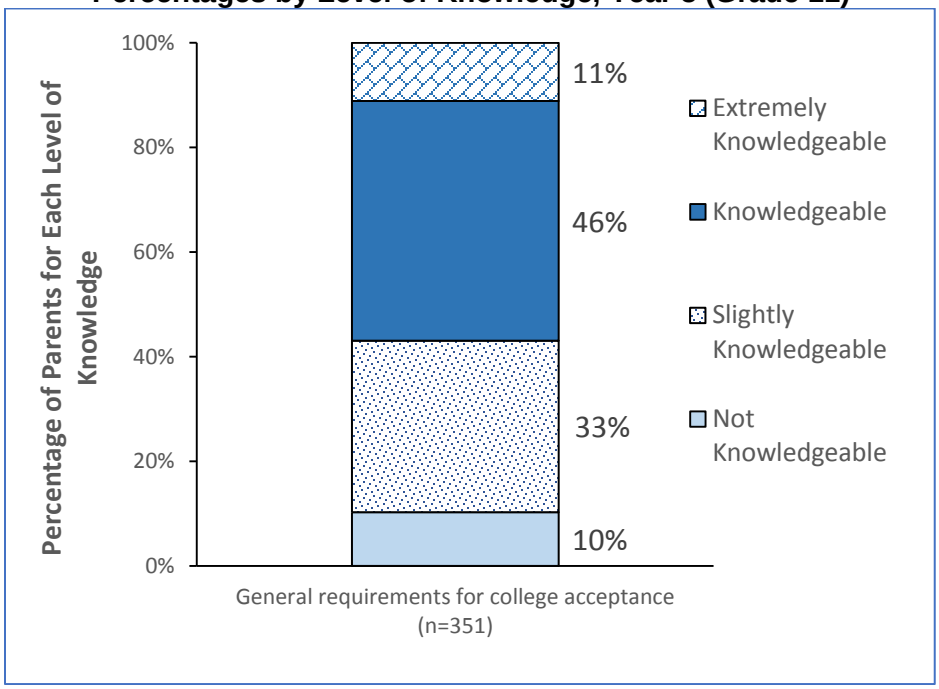
Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

As shown in Figure 3.6, 56% of students indicated that they were *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the ACT, an increase from both Years 4 and 2 (46% and 28%, respectively). The percent of students who felt they were *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the ACT ranged from 48% at High School K to 63% at High School J (Table G.22, Appendix G).[75]

Student responses relating to feeling *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about college terms and concepts differed significantly across time.[76] Considering that fewer than 70% of students rated themselves as knowledgeable or extremely knowledgeable about the ACT, the importance and benefits of college, and the general requirements for college acceptance, the cohort was not on track to meet Project Objective 4.4—requiring 70% of students to have knowledge about the necessary academic preparation for college—by the end of Year 5. In addition, no schools were on track to meet this objective. The use of survey data to measure progress toward this project objective is just one calculation; for more information about measuring progress toward this project objective, see Section 2.8 in Chapter 2.

[75] Across schools, there was a significant difference in students' self-reported knowledge of the ACT: $\chi^2(15) = 27.0$, $p < 0.05$.
[76] SAT: $\chi^2(4) = 449.5$, $p < 0.001$; ACT: $\chi^2(4) = 291.1$, $p < 0.001$; general requirements for college acceptance: $\chi^2(4) = 100.6$, $p < 0.001$; importance/benefit of college: $\chi^2(4) = 4.6$, $p < 0.001$.

Figure 3.7. Parents' Perceived Knowledge about College: Percentages by Level of Knowledge, Year 5 (Grade 11)

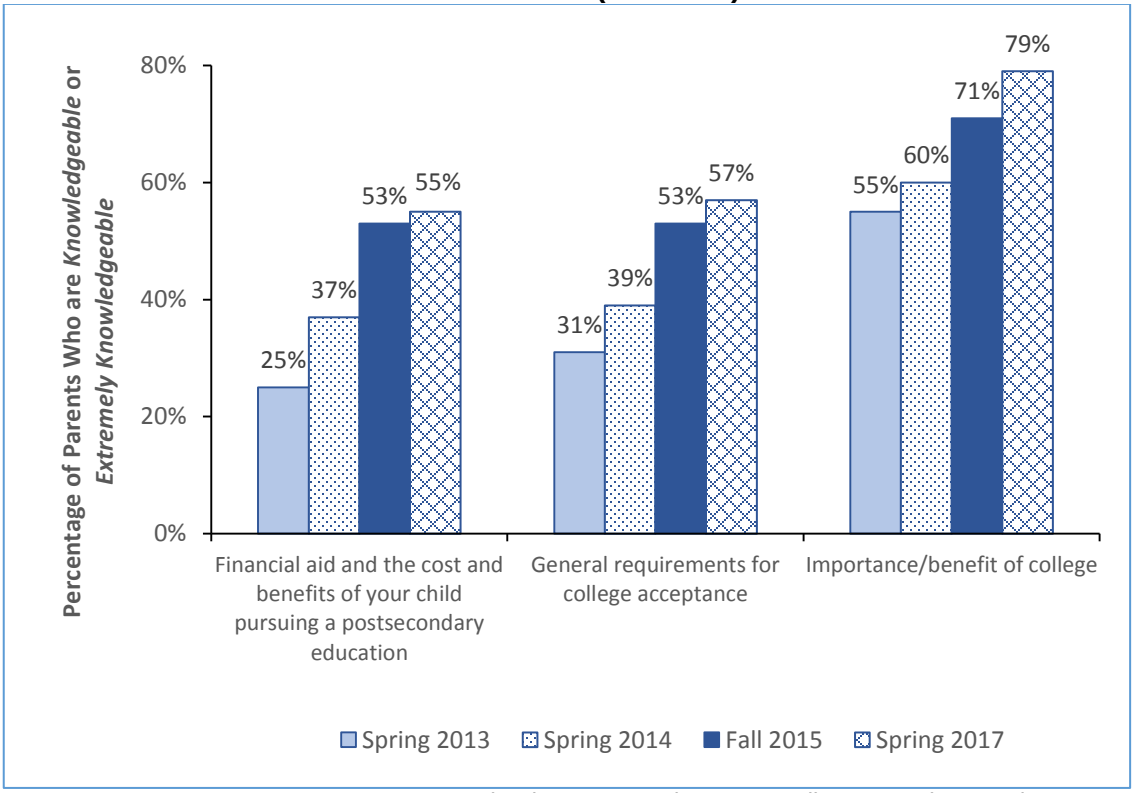


Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

It is likewise important to measure parents' knowledge about specific terms and concepts related to college in order to help Texas GEAR UP SG focus on low-knowledge areas of concern and improve parent programming accordingly. In Year 5, 57% of parents who responded to the survey reported that they felt *extremely knowledgeable* or *knowledgeable* of the general requirements for college acceptance, as shown in Figure 3.7. Additionally, as shown in Figure 3.8, 55% of parents who responded to the survey felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about financial aid and costs/benefits of pursuing a postsecondary education. This has increased 18 percentage points since Year 2 when 37% of parents felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* and has slightly increased since Year 4, when 53% of parents said they felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* (See Figure 3.8).[77] Twelve percent of parents taking the survey in Year 5 indicated that they felt *not knowledgeable* about financial aid and costs/benefits (Table G.23 Appendix G).

[77] There was a significant difference across all years in parent self-reported knowledge of financial aid and costs/benefits of pursuing a postsecondary education: $\chi^2(4) = 2121.4.4$, $p < 0.001$. There was also a significant difference in parent knowledge of this topic between years 4 and 5: $\chi^2(1) = 8.5$, $p < 0.01$.

Figure 3.8. Percentages of Texas GEAR UP SG Parents Who Are Knowledgeable or Extremely Knowledgeable About Financial Aid, College Acceptance Requirements, and the Importance and Benefits of College: Year 1–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017).
Note: These data were not collected in Year 3 due to low parent response rates in the spring 2015 survey administration.

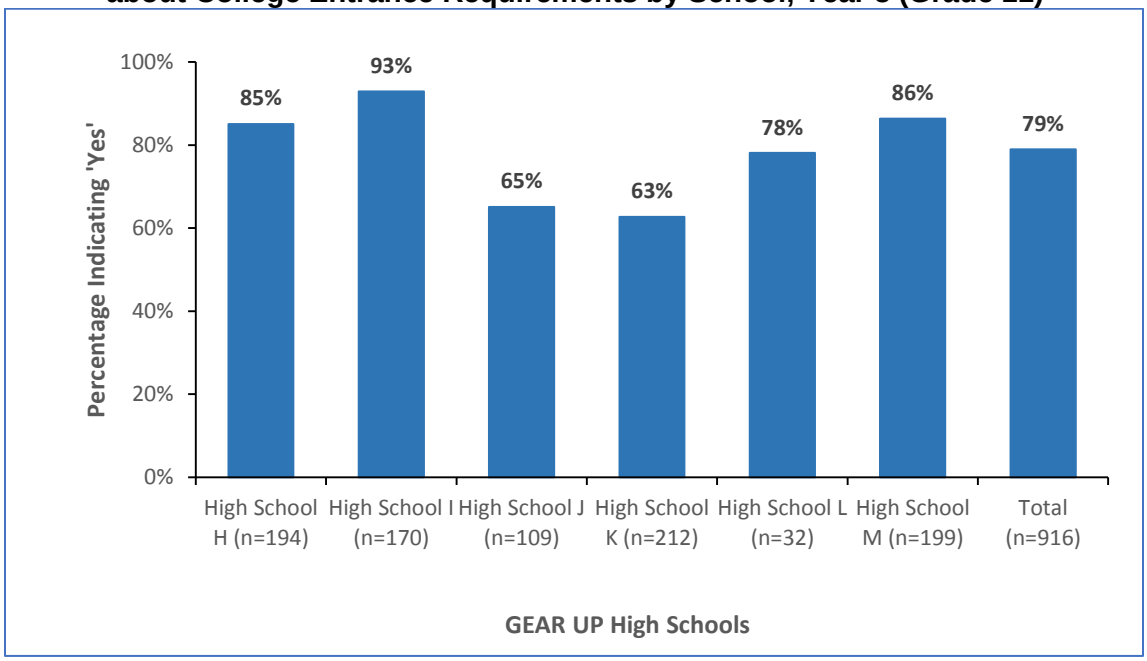
Seventy-nine percent of parent respondents felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the importance and benefit of a college education. This percentage has been steadily rising since the parent survey was first administered, and has increased by 19 percentage points since Year 2 and eight percentage points since Year 4 (Figure 3.8).[78] Only 4% of parents said they did not feel knowledgeable about the importance and benefit of a college education (Table G.23, Appendix G).

Fifty-seven percent of parent respondents felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the general requirements for college acceptance, which is an increase of four percentage points since Year 4 and 18 percentage points since Year 2.[79] Ten percent of parents said they were *not knowledgeable* about this topic (Table G.23, Appendix G).

[78] There was a significant difference across all years in parent self-reported knowledge of the importance and benefit of a college education: $\chi^2(4) = 67.8$, $p < 0.001$. There was also a significant difference in parent knowledge of this topic between Years 4 and 5: $\chi^2(1) = 8.1$, $p < 0.001$.
[79] There was a significant difference across all years in parent self-reported knowledge of general requirements for college acceptance: $\chi^2(4) = 317.9$, $p < 0.001$. Parent knowledge of this topic did not differ significantly between Years 4 and 5.

Overall, although the survey data discussed in this section suggest that the cohort was not on track to meet Project Objective 4.4 by the end of Year 5, the percentage of students and parents who reported that they were *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about various college entrance topics all increased from Year 4 to Year 5. College Preparation Advisors and other GEAR UP staff can play an important role in providing information about college to students and parents—which in turn can help to increase their knowledge. Overall, 79% of students said that someone from their school or Texas GEAR UP SG spoke to them about college entrance requirements, as shown in Figure 3.9. A similar percentage of parents (75%) reported that someone from their child's school or Texas GEAR UP SG spoke to them about college entrance requirements (Table G.24, Appendix G). Additionally, there was a significant difference across schools, with 63% of students from High School K reporting that someone talked with them about college entrance requirements and 93% of students from High School I reporting the same (Figure 3.9).[80]

Figure 3.9. Percentage of Students Reporting "Yes" to GEAR UP Discussions about College Entrance Requirements by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: These data include responses to the following item: "Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about college entrance requirements?"
*Student responses differed significantly across schools: χ^2 (5) = 77.4, p < 0.001.

It is important to note that there was a positive, statistically significant correlation between student discussions about college entrance requirements with someone from their school or Texas GEAR UP SG and students' perceived knowledge of separate college entrance topic areas as shown in Table 3.1. These findings suggest, overall, that Texas GEAR UP SG staff should continue to provide students and parents with information about various topics related to college to help increase knowledge and understanding of each.

[80] There was a significant difference across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 77.4$, $p < 0.001$.

Table 3.1. Correlation Between Conversations About College Entrance Requirements and Students' Perceived Knowledge of College Topics

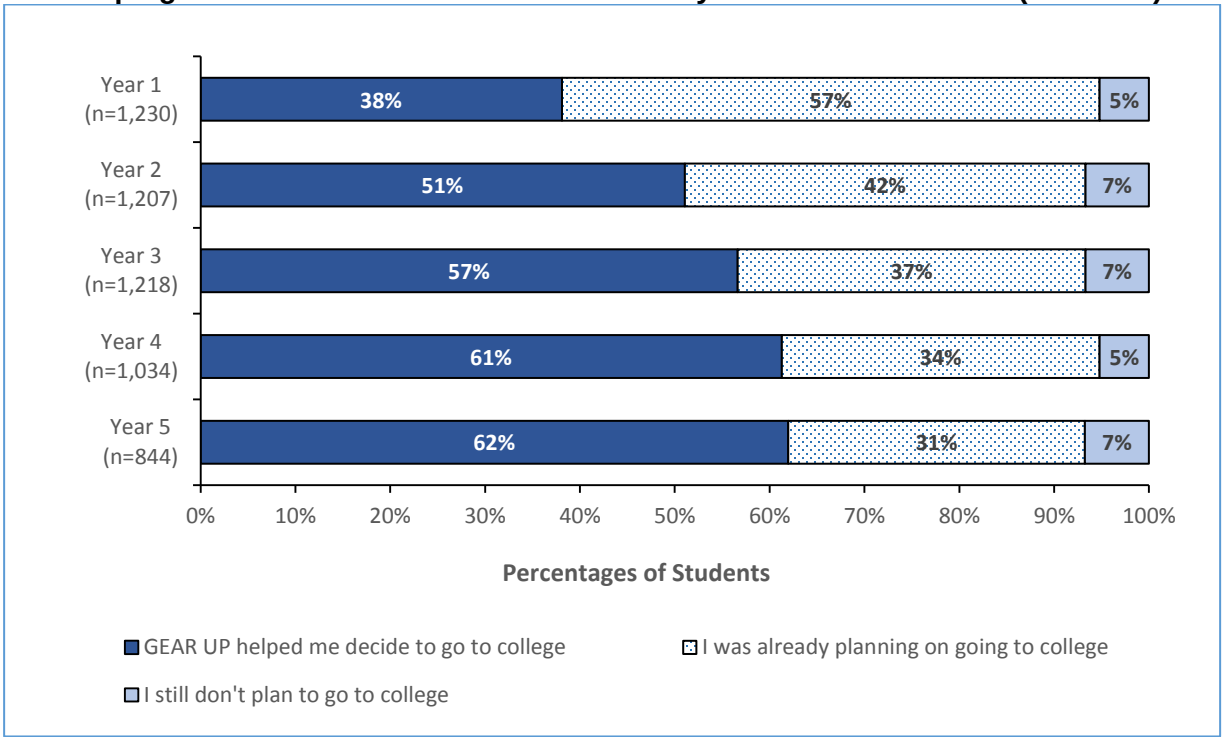
Survey Item	Knowledge Topic Area	Means		*Correlation Result*
Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about… ***College entrance requirements?***	SAT	Yes	2.91	$r(905) = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.47	
	ACT	Yes	2.67	$r(893) = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.21	
	General requirements for college acceptance	Yes	2.69	$r(887) = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.08	
	Importance/benefit of college	Yes	2.94	$r(893) = 0.15$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.59	

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: The Means column lists the average level of knowledge reported by students for each of the topic areas. Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" are scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge; 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable; 3 – Knowledgeable; 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable. "Yes" and "No" refers to whether or not the student reported that someone from GEAR UP spoke to them about college entrance requirements.

3.4 Perceived Impact of Texas GEAR UP SG on Educational Plans

Given the goals of Texas GEAR UP SG, it is important to understand the extent to which Texas GEAR UP SG is related to postsecondary education plans and decisions. Items on the survey asked students to indicate whether they believe that Texas GEAR UP SG activities/events helped them decide to go to college after high school (Figure 3.10).

Figure 3.10. Percentages of Students Who Do and Do Not Credit Texas GEAR UP SG in Helping Them Determine Their Postsecondary Plans: Year 1–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages in Figure 3.10 reflect responses after removing respondents that selected the following response option: "Does not apply, I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school but I do plan to go to college," or "Does not apply, I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school and I do no not plan to go to college." However, when including the "Does not apply" options, the following percentages of total responses for these two options are as follows: Year 1 (Grade 7): 10.8% (*n*=1,363), Year 2 (Grade 8): 6.2% (*n*=1,287), Year 3 (Grade 9): 7.2% (*n*=1,313), Year 4 (Grade 10): 8.7% (*n*=1,132), and Year 5 (Grade 11): 8.3% (*n*=921).

Of the student respondents who reported participating in Texas GEAR UP SG in Year 5 (92% of all respondents), over half (62%) said the Texas GEAR UP SG program activities helped them decide to go to college after graduation, which is an increase of one percentage point since Year 4 and 11 percentage points since Year 2 (Figure 3.10).[81] In Year 5, the percentage of students who attributed Texas GEAR UP SG activities with helping them decide to go to college ranged from 39% to 67% (High School K and High School I, respectively).[82] Thirty-one percent of student respondents said that they were already planning to go to college, which is less than in Years 4 and 2 (34% and 42%, respectively). Seven percent of student respondents said they are still not planning to go to college, even after participating in Texas GEAR UP SG activities, which is two percentage points higher than in Year 4 (5%) and the same percentage as in Year 2 (Table G.25, Appendix G). Moving forward, Texas GEAR UP SG efforts in all schools should seek to address the 7% of students, overall, who still do not plan to go to college.

[81] Student responses to whether or not they would credit Texas GEAR UP SG activities with helping them decide to go to college differed significantly across all time points: $\chi^2(8) = 199.6$, $p < 0.001$.
[82] There was a significant difference in student respondents who attributed Texas GEAR UP SG activities with helping them decide to go to college across schools: $\chi^2(20) = 74.4$, $p < 0.001$.

3.5 Understanding of Financial Aspects Related to Postsecondary Education

The goal of Texas GEAR UP SG to increase postsecondary awareness and aspirations also includes financial literacy about college. Site visit data pointed to various efforts to address students' awareness of college financing. For example, College Preparation Advisors reported that they continued to discuss the availability of financial aid to help cover costs of postsecondary education in one-on-one meetings with both students and parents, which allowed conversations to be tailored to the needs of the families. Students also reported that they learned about different types of financial aid in workshops facilitated by Texas GEAR UP SG staff during class time. As in Year 4, students and College Preparation Advisors said the focus was on scholarships, specifically on how to find the available scholarships and determine which scholarships were a good fit for students. Parents across schools reported that financial aid was a topic that also continued to be discussed at family events and meetings, but the focus in Year 5 was on the information and documentation that would be needed to apply for federal and state-provided aid in Year 6. Looking ahead, Texas GEAR UP SG staff at each school reported that they plan to host financial aid and FAFSA nights in fall 2017 to encourage students and parents to submit their FAFSA applications early since early submission will provide parents and students with more time to determine which postsecondary education options are most feasible. Several survey items also addressed students' and parents' thinking about money and college. The following subsections will explore that thinking in more detail.

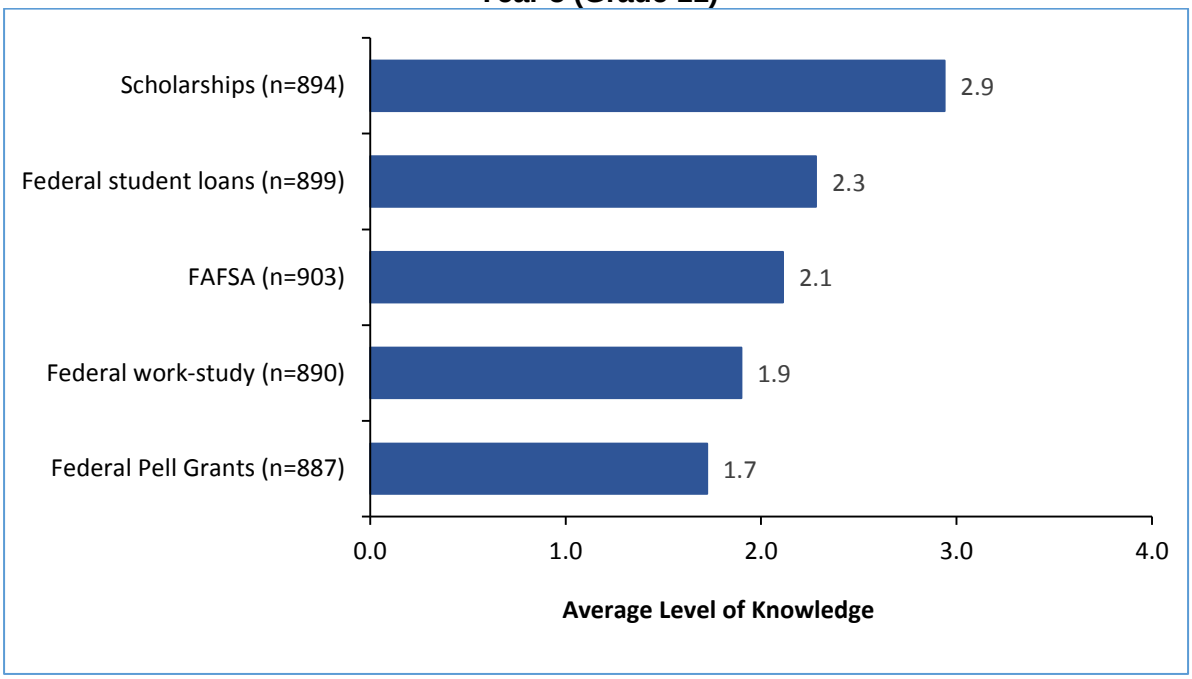
3.5.1 Knowledge about Financing College

Existing literature points to the importance of providing information about and assistance with the financial aid process to students and parents. Bettinger, Long, Oreopoulos, & Sanbonmatsu (2009) found that high school seniors and recent graduates from low- and moderate-income families who received information about and assistance with the FAFSA application were 25–30% more likely to enroll in college than those who did not, which underscores the importance of financial knowledge and support. Student surveys asked respondents to indicate how knowledgeable they were about various topics related to financing college on a four-point knowledge scale, with 1 equaling *no knowledge* and 4 equaling *extremely knowledgeable*. These findings be helpful in informing Texas GEAR UP SG program staff about gaps in financial aid knowledge that should be addressed in programming.

As shown in Figure 3.11, of the different types of financial aid, students on average were more knowledgeable about scholarships (2.9), followed by federal student loans (2.3) and FAFSA (2.1). In particular, 73% of student respondents rating themselves as *extremely knowledgeable* or *knowledgeable* about them and only 6% of students rating themselves as *not knowledgeable* about scholarships (Table G.26, Appendix G). The next topic which students were most knowledgeable was federal student loans; 41% percent of students reported that they were *extremely knowledgeable* or *knowledgeable* about federal student loans and 21% said they were *not knowledgeable* about these loans. Less than one-third of students reported being *extremely knowledgeable* or *knowledgeable* about FAFSA (32%), federal work-study (26%), and federal Pell grants (18%)—which points to important knowledge gaps among student

respondents in different financial aid options.[83] Across all schools, 72% of students reported engaging in discussions with Texas GEAR UP SG staff about financial aid, with High School I having the highest percentage (89%) and High School K with the lowest percentage (53%) of students engaging in these discussions (Table G.27, Appendix G).

Figure 3.11. Students' Average Perceived Knowledge of Financial Aid Terms, Year 5 (Grade 11)

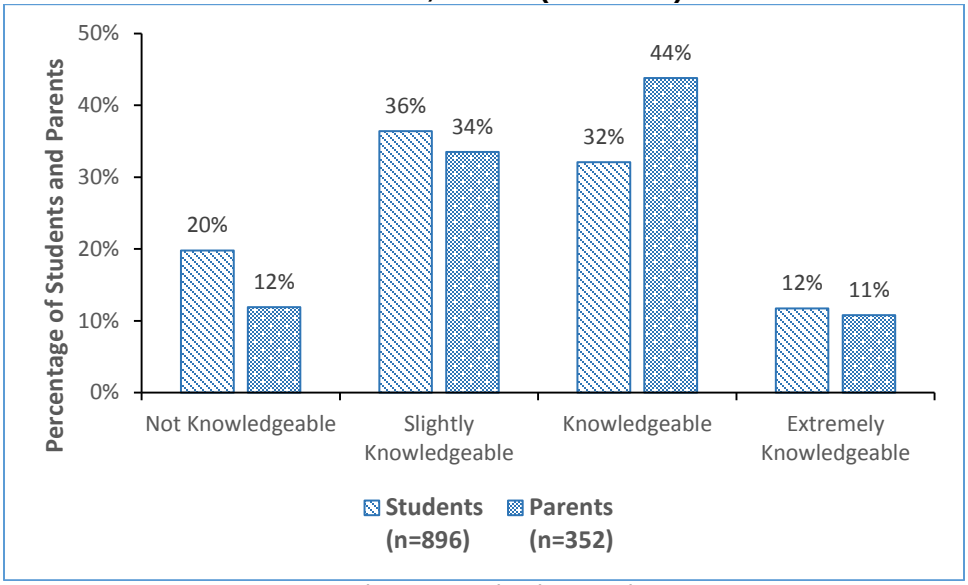


Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" are scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge, 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable, 3 – Knowledgeable, and 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable. N counts for each item are included in the full data presented in Table G.26, Appendix G. FAFSA is Free Application for Federal Student Aid; however, the survey items used only the acronym.

When asked about financial aid and the cost and benefits in pursuing a postsecondary education in general, students rated themselves as *slightly knowledgeable* (mean 2.36). Fifty-five percent of students rated themselves as *extremely knowledgeable* or *knowledgeable* about financial aid and the cost and benefits in pursuing a postsecondary education. However, 20% of students rated themselves *not knowledgeable* about this general topic (Figure 3.12).[84]

[83] Student ratings of either *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the following financial aid terms differed significantly across time: FAFSA: $\chi^2(4) = 122.0$, $p < 0.001$; Federal student loans: $\chi^2(4) = 11.5$, $p < 0.05$; Scholarships: $\chi^2(4) = 15.0$, $p < 0.01$.
[84] Student ratings of either *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about financial aid and the cost and benefits in pursuing a postsecondary education differed significantly across time: $\chi^2(4) = -266.6$, $p < 0.001$.

Figure 3.12. Parents' and Students' Perceived Knowledge Regarding Financial Aid and the Cost/Benefits of Pursuing Postsecondary Education, Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017); Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).

When asked their primary source of information about scholarship opportunities, most student respondents (38%) said they learned of these from their College Preparation Advisor (with 15% of students indicating that they were not provided with information about scholarship opportunities) (Table G.17, Appendix G). Students continued to report in Year 5 on site visits, as they had previously, that they often received information from their College Preparation Advisors about scholarship opportunities, which validates this survey finding. Regarding student financial aid information (e.g., FAFSA, Pell grants, student loans), 38% of students reported learning about these topics from their College Preparation Advisor (with 19% of student respondents reporting that they did not learn about student financial aid information from anyone at their school).

Overall, students appear to be less aware of the federal financial aid opportunities than they do of scholarships and loans. Texas GEAR UP SG staff—and particularly College Preparation Advisors who are cited as the primary source of financial aid information—should plan to provide more information in Year 6 as students become eligible to apply for aid.

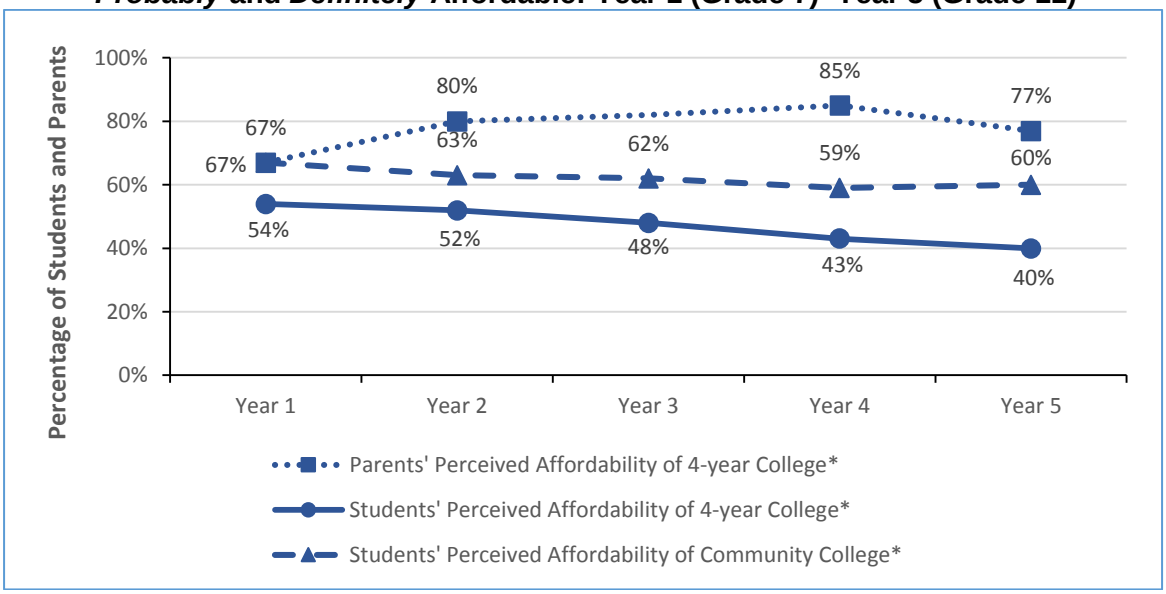
3.5.2 Perceived Ability to Afford Postsecondary Education

It is important that students have enough knowledge about financing options to perceive college as being affordable through one or more of the many financing options available.

Forty percent of student survey respondents said they would *probably* or *definitely* be able to afford a public, 4-year college: 10% said *definitely* and 30% said *probably* (Figure 3.13 and Table G.28, Appendix G). This percentage decreased as students advanced through middle and high school; in Year 2, 52% of students felt they could afford a public, 4-year college and in

Year 4, 43% reported such.[85] The percentage of students who felt they could *probably* or *definitely* afford to attend a public, 4-year college ranged from 35% at High Schools H and K to 52% at High School M (Table G.28, Appendix G).[86]

Figure 3.13. Parents' and Students' Perceptions of College Affordability as Being *Probably* and *Definitely* Affordable: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017); Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017).
Notes: Response options include *Definitely not*, *Probably not*, *Not sure*, *Probably*, and *Definitely*; however, *Not sure* was not available as a response option for parents on the Year 3, Year 4 (parents), Year 4 (students), and Year 5 survey. Parents' perceived affordability of 4-year college and students' perceived affordability of community college were both at 67% in Year 1. Given the low parent response rate in Year 3, parent survey results are not reported. In fall 2015 of Year 4, parent surveys were administered again due to low response rates in spring 2015. Additionally, low parent response rates in spring Year 1 (*n*=397), Year 2 (*n*=463), and Year 5 (*n*=352) warrant caution in interpreting the trend data included on parent surveys. N counts for each item and each response option for Year 5 are included in the full data presented in Table G.29, Appendix G.
*Students that reported themselves as either *Definitely* or *Probably* able to afford the following types of higher education significantly differed over time: Local public community college: $\chi^2(4) = 59.0$, $p < 0.001$; Public 4-year college: $\chi^2(4) = 62.1$, $p < 0.001$.

Seventy-seven percent of parents reported that they would *probably* or *definitely* be able to afford for their child to attend a public, 4-year college: 27% said *definitely* and 49% said *probably* (Table G.29, Appendix G). While parents' perceived affordability for a public, 4-year college was on an upward trend between Years 2 and 4 (80% and 85%, respectively), the Year 5 data represents a significant decrease in parents' perceived affordability of a 4-year college.[87]

[85] There was a significant difference in student responses over time regarding the affordability of a public, 4-year college: $\chi^2(4) = 62.1$, $p < 0.001$.
[86] There was a significant difference across schools in terms of whether or not students felt they could afford to attend a public, 4-year college: $\chi^2(20) = 38.9$, $p < 0.01$.
[87] There was a significant difference in parent responses between Years 4 and 5 regarding the affordability of a public, 4-year college: $\chi^2(1) = 11.7$, $p < 0.001$.

Community colleges were perceived to be more affordable for many families. Specifically, 60% of students said they would *probably* or *definitely* be able to attend a local, public community college and 90% of parents reported the same. In Year 4, 59% of students felt this way and in Year 2, 63% of students felt this way.[88] The range for those students who reported that they *definitely* or *probably* could afford to attend a local public community college was 53% to 59% at all schools except High School M, where 73% of students said they could *probably* or *definitely* afford to attend a local, public community college (Table G.28, Appendix G).[89]

Overall, both parents' and students' perceived ability to afford a public 4-year college decreased in Year 5; however, students' perceived ability to afford a local public community college increased slightly. Students from High School M reported the highest rates of perceived affordability for both a public 4-year college and a local public community college. The decrease in perceived affordability of a public 4-year college in Year 5 may be due to increased postsecondary education research students and parents began in Year 5 as they started to select schools to apply to in Year 6. Texas GEAR UP SG staff should consider providing more information on financial aid opportunities, including federally-available financial aid options, and how they may help finance college and also present postsecondary education options in a variety of price ranges.

3.5.3 Perceived Cost of Higher Education

One possible reason for students perceiving postsecondary education as unattainable may be that they overestimate the costs (O'Donnel et al., 2013). Accurate knowledge about the cost of postsecondary education is one step toward perceiving postsecondary enrollment as a possibility. For students who underestimate the cost of a postsecondary education, however, accurate knowledge about the cost of higher education may make such education seem to be out of reach. Ultimately, building awareness about the actual costs of various types of schools—as well as ways to finance those costs through financial aid and scholarships—can be a way for Texas GEAR UP SG to reach out to parents and students who may have otherwise seen college as unattainable for reasons related to cost.

In 2016–17, the actual average cost of tuition and fees for one year at a local two-year community college was $2,559, and the actual average cost of tuition and fees for one year at a public four-year college or university in Texas was $8,669 (THECB, 2017). As indicated in Table 3.2, student surveys included a question prompting respondents to estimate the amount that it would cost to attend a local public 2-year community college and a 4-year public college in Texas. While students correctly perceived that there were lower costs associated with one year of attendance at a local public 2-year community college as compared to a 4-year public college in the state, students generally overestimated the costs of both types of colleges. For example, 56% of students thought that one year at a 2-year community college would cost more than $3,000. Similarly, 62% of students estimated the cost of one year at a 4-year college to be more

[88] There was a significant difference in student responses across all years regarding the affordability of community college: $\chi^2(4) = 59.0$, $p < 0.001$.
[89] There was a significant difference across schools in terms of whether or not students felt they could afford to attend a local public community college: $\chi^2(20) = 33.6$, $p < 0.05$.

than $9,400, above the actual average; this includes approximately one in four students (26%) who expect a single year to cost more than $18,000. Only 26% of students correctly estimated the per year cost of attending a 2-year community college and 18% correctly estimated the per year cost of attending a 4-year public college in Texas. Some of the differences between perceived and actual costs may be related to what is known about actual local costs or the inclusion of additional costs related to college (e.g., room and board, books, transportation) in students' estimation. Despite these potential explanations, students' overestimation of the costs of tuition and fees (which was shown to occur in survey findings from Years 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) suggests that helping students understand actual college costs continues to be crucial in overcoming cost as a barrier to postsecondary education.

Table 3.2. Students' Perceived Cost of Higher Education, Percentages by Cost Grouping, Year 5 (Grade 11)

How much do you think or would you guess it costs (tuition and fees only) to attend for one year at …	n	$1 to $1,000	$1,001 to $1,900	$1,901 to $3,000	$3,001 to $6,500	$6,501 to $9,400	$9,401 to $13,000	$13,001 to $18,000	More than $18,000
Your local public two-year community college?	893	5%	14%	26%	24%	15%	7%	5%	5%
A four-year public college in your state?	863	2%	2%	5%	11%	18%	20%	16%	26%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Grey boxes indicate the actual cost ranges for each higher education option.

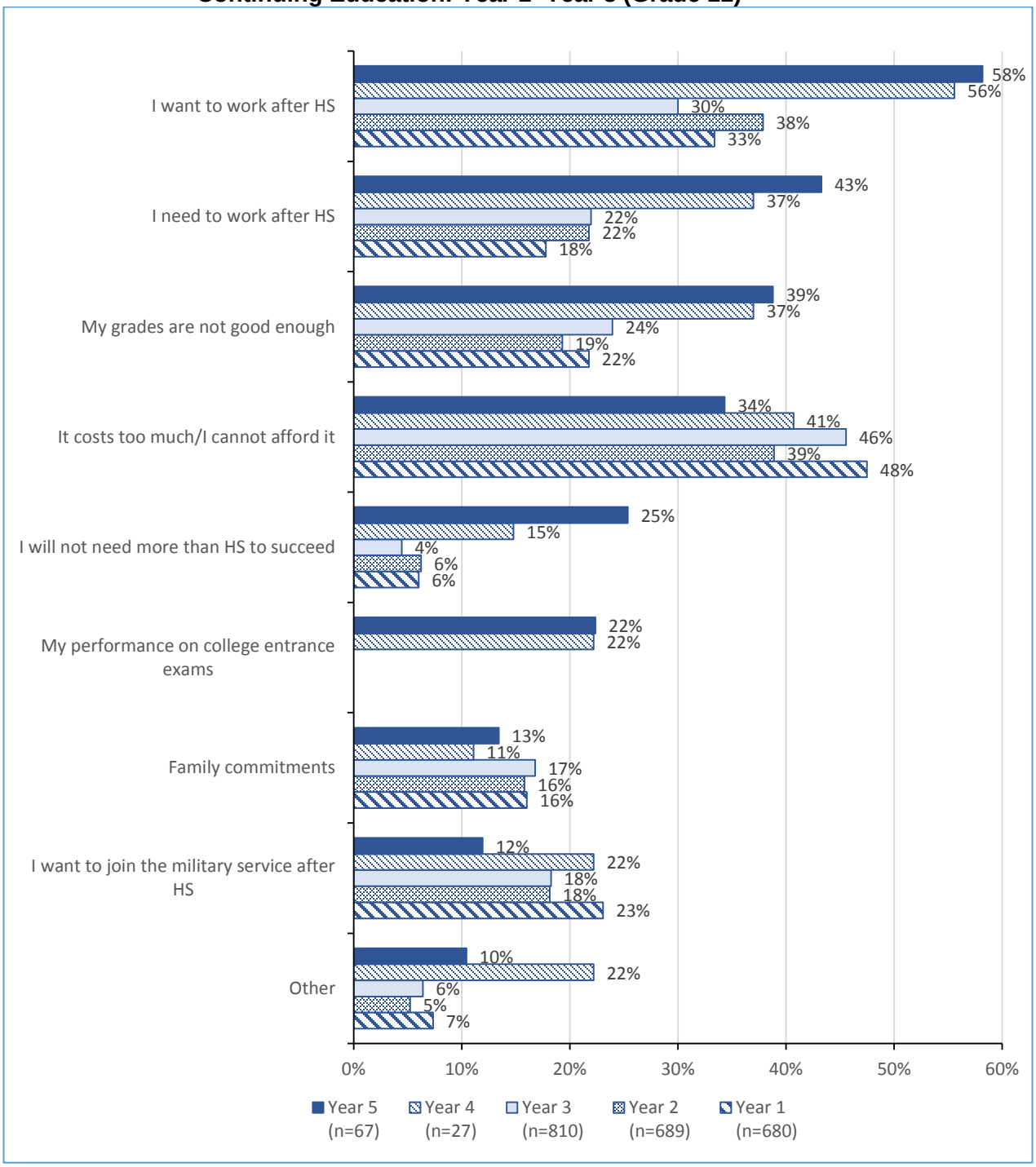
3.6 Reasons for Not Continuing

In an effort to better understand the perspectives of students who do not plan on attending college, one item on the student survey asked the following: "If you do not continue your education after high school, what would be the reason(s)?"

Reasons provided by students who stated that they do not plan to continue their education after college are summarized in Figure 3.14. For the 67 students who responded to this question, the most common reasons were wanting to work after high school (58%) and needing to work after high school (43%). In Year 4, the top reasons selected were also wanting to work after high school (56%) and costs too much (41%). Similarly, the top two reasons in Year 2 were it costs too much (39%) and wanting to work after high school (38%).[90] In Year 5, other reasons for not continuing included their grades weren't high enough to be accepted into college (39%); it costs too much to go to college (34%); not needing more than high school to succeed (25%); their performance on college entrance exams (22%); family commitments (13%); and wanting to join the military (12%). Due to the low number of respondents who selected at least one option in response to this question (n=67), however, the results should be interpreted with caution.

[90] There were significant differences across all years in the reasons that students selected for not continuing their education. There was a significant difference over time between the percentage of students who listed: it costs too much ($\chi^2(4) = 429.2$, $p < 0.001$); I need to work ($\chi^2(4) = 25.3$, $p < 0.001$); I want to work ($\chi^2(4) = 34.4$, $p < 0.001$); I will not need more than HS to succeed ($\chi^2(4) = 50.0$, $p < 0.001$); I want to join the military ($\chi^2(4) = 15.6$, $p < 0.01$); and my grades are not good enough ($\chi^2(4) = 19.3$, $p < 0.001$).

Figure 3.14. Percentages of Texas GEAR UP SG Students by Reason for Not Continuing Education: Year 1–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: "My performance on college entrance exams" was a new response option added in Year 4 (Table G.30, Appendix G).

In addition to asking students about their reasons for not continuing, the student survey also included a question for students who indicated on the survey that they did not plan to continue

their education after high school if their thinking around this has changed in the past year. Fifty-four percent of students responded that they have never expected to complete more than high school and 46% said they did expect to continue their education in prior years, but they no longer expect to do so (See Table 3.3).

Table 3.3. Students' Thinking About Continuing Their Education After High School Because of Texas GEAR UP SG, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Has thinking about this changed in the last year?	n	%
In prior years, I expected to continue my education after high school.	32	46%
I have never expected to continue my education after high school.	37	54%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).

In considering how to use these findings to improve programming, Texas GEAR UP SG staff should consider prioritizing their focus on the value of postsecondary education for many careers and employers since students most often indicated that that they want to or need to work after high school. In addition, Texas GEAR UP SG staff may consider reaching out to students who previously thought they may continue their education but no longer expect to do so to explain the different pathways available for obtaining a postsecondary education.

4. Participation in and Perceptions of Texas GEAR UP State Grant Activities

This chapter focuses on participation in and perceptions of Texas GEAR UP SG activities, overall and comparatively, across the six participating high schools in four districts. It is based on analysis of program documents, data reported through GUIDES (March 1, 2016, to February 28, 2017, including summer 2016), student and parent surveys (from spring 2017 unless otherwise indicated), and data from site visits (conducted in fall 2016 and again in spring 2017). More specifically, data reported through GUIDES are used to report on levels of participation in activities, while data from surveys, site visits, and program documents are used to report on perceptions of the activities from a variety of stakeholders and provide additional details regarding the activities. Findings are presented in the context of the federal GEAR UP recommendations for the types of implementation activities that schools should engage in to support GEAR UP goals.

This chapter will address the following project objectives:

- Project Objective 3.1: All core content teachers will have the opportunity to participate in training with regard to differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, and PBL.
- Project Objective 3.2: Teams of teachers at the middle and high schools will complete at least five days of vertical teams preparation and implementation each year.
- Project Objective 4.1: By the end of the second year, at least 75% of the 8th grade students will be involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program based on results of teacher/counselor input and diagnostic data.
- Project Objective 4.2: Beginning in the second year, at least 30% of the students will be involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level, ease transitions, and increase college awareness.
- Project Objective 4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college.
- Project Objective 7.2: By the end of the first year, information and workshops aimed at linking college attendance to career success will be available to 100% of cohort students and their parents.
- Project Objective 7.3: Each year, at least 50% of cohort parents, including parents of current and former LEP students, will attend at least three college awareness activities.
- Project Objective 7.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, teachers and counselors will complete training in the college admissions and financial aid process.
- Project Objective 8.1: All participating districts will form business alliances that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.
- Project Objective 8.2: Participating campuses will form alliances with governmental entities and community groups to enhance the information available to students regarding scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness.

As with other sections of this report, Year 5 findings are compared findings from Year 2 (at the end of middle school) and Year 4 (Grade 10) descriptively.

4.1 Participation in and Perceptions of Texas GEAR UP State Grant Activities for Students

As part of the Texas GEAR UP SG, various activities were directly targeted to students, including student support services, college visits, job site visits/job shadowing, summer programs, and workshops/events. The sections that follow summarize the implementation of those activities for students as well as students' and parents' perceptions of those activities in Year 5.

4.1.1 Student Support Services: Academic Tutoring, Mentoring, and Counseling/Advising

In reporting implementation of student support services, the following project objective is relevant:

- Project Objective 4.1: By the end of the second year, at least 75% of the 8th grade students will be involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program based on results of teacher/counselor input and diagnostic data.

While objective 4.1 specifies a Year 2 outcome, it has been interpreted to mean beginning in Year 2 and then continuing in each year thereafter. This section includes findings about primary cohort students' participation in each type of student support service in Year 5.[91]

STUDENT ACADEMIC TUTORING

As required by their subgrants, all schools offered academic tutoring to primary cohort students.[92] According to data reported in GUIDES, schools reported that, on average, 44% of Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort students received tutoring in at least one subject in Year 5, which is a decrease of seven percentage points from Year 4 (Figure 4.1). The number of subjects in which students received tutoring differed significantly by school (Figure 4.1; Table F.14, Appendix F).[93] Tutoring was most limited at High Schools L and K, in which a large portion of students were not tutored (93% and 83%, respectively). One high school in particular was able to accomplish notable successes regarding tutoring. At High School J, 87% of students received tutoring in at least one subject and 54% of students received tutoring in two or more subjects. High School J began using tutors hired by a local university in Year 5 to provide academic student supports.

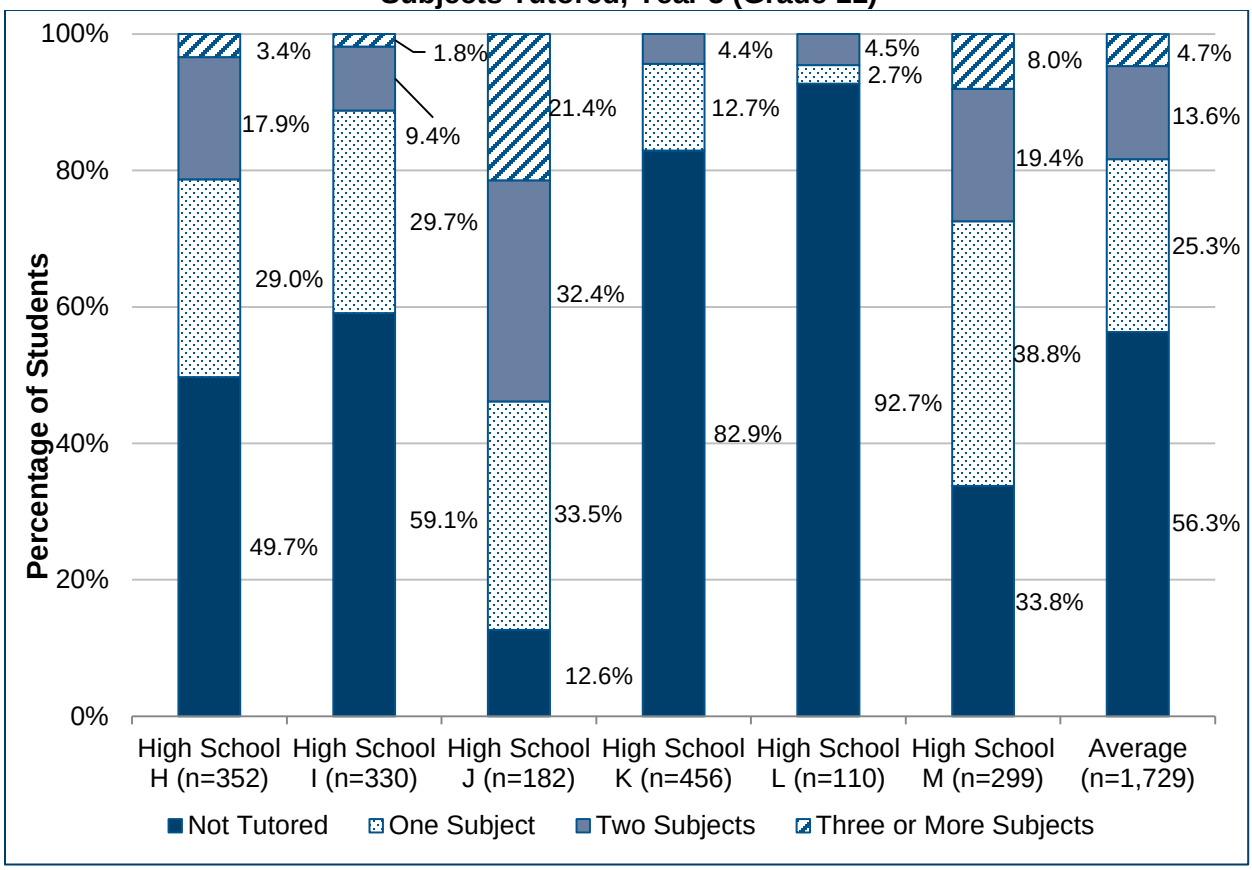
The average hours that Grade 11 students received tutoring, across all subjects, was 11.1 hours; an increase when compared to the average 9.4 hours in Year 4 (Table F.14, Appendix

[91] Schools were provided with standard definitions of all terms, including tutoring, mentoring, and counseling, in order to submit GUIDES data. These definitions can be found in Appendix C and were developed by the College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium and the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (2013).
[92] The term *tutoring* is used in this section, although in the definition it is referred to as tutoring or homework help.
[93] There was a significant difference across schools in the number of subjects in which student received tutoring: $\chi^2(20) = 514.9$, $p < .001$.

F). The average total hours tutored varied significantly by school, and was highest at High School M (23) and lowest at High Schools I (2.3) and H (3.3).[94]

Examining tutoring across core content areas, the largest percentage of students received tutoring in mathematics (22%), in comparison to Year 4 when the largest percentage of students received tutoring in ELA (32%). Tutoring declined in each subject area except for social studies. Specifically, for mathematics, tutoring declined from 30% in Year 4 to 22% in Year 5; in ELA, tutoring declined from 32% in Year 4 to 19% in Year 5; and in science, tutoring declined from 14% in Year 4 to 7% in Year 5 (Tables F.15–F.18, Appendix F). In social studies, however, tutoring increased from 5% in Year 4 to 18% in Year 5 (Table F.18, Appendix F).[95] Overall, the percentage of students who received tutoring varied significantly across schools in each content area.[96]

Figure 4.1. Percentages of Grade 11 Students Participating in Tutoring by the Number of Subjects Tutored, Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Difference across schools: χ^2 (20) = 514.9, p < .001.

[94] There was a significant difference across schools in the average total hours tutored: $F(5, 749) = 43.6$, $p < 0.001$.
[95] For more information about tutoring in Year 4, please see the Year 4 Annual Implementation Report (Spinney et al., 2018).
[96] There was a significant difference across schools in the percentage of students receiving tutoring in each content area: tutoring in mathematics: $\chi^2(5) = 226.4$, $p < 0.001$; tutoring in ELA: $\chi^2(5) = 405.5$, $p < 0.001$; tutoring in science: $\chi^2(5) = 191.3$, $p < 0.001$; tutoring in social studies: $\chi^2(5) = 224.7$, $p < 0.001$.

Of the 52% of student survey respondents who reported participating in tutoring/homework assistance during the 2016–17 school year, 59% of respondents found the support service to be *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; 6% said it was *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). Tutoring received a mean effectiveness rating of 2.69 (*mostly effective*) among respondents who participated in tutoring in any subject, though this ranged from 2.50 at High School K to 2.87 at High School I (Table G.33, Appendix G).[97] Examining effectiveness ratings for tutoring by content area, students rated tutoring/homework assistance in social studies as slightly more effective (mean 3.00) than tutoring/homework assistance in mathematics (2.86), ELA (2.81), and science (2.81). Twenty-seven percent of student survey respondents learned about academic tutoring from their College Preparation Advisor, while one-quarter of students (25%) said they did not learn about academic tutoring from anyone at their school (Table G.17, Appendix G).

Students, teachers, and Texas GEAR UP SG staff provided insights during site visits about tutoring efforts that were implemented across the six schools. Every school except High School J relied on teachers to provide tutorial sessions for students outside of class time. Texas GEAR UP SG staff at High School J reported that they collaborated with college access programs on their high school campus to hire tutors from a local university. These hired tutors offered support both in-class and outside of class. Teachers from High School J were not always happy about the in-class support provided by tutors; some teachers explained that they would have preferred to have more input on whether a tutor was placed in their class, the way in which the tutors supported the teachers (e.g., working with students during class time, pulling students out during class time, working with students after school, etc.), and the qualifications necessary for tutors. The teachers added that they did not trust their in-class tutors to know the content because the tutors were not studying the content in college and often had to be taught the lesson themselves by the teacher. The tutors at High School J noted that they felt comfortable tutoring in all subject areas, despite their classes and majors in college.

High School M also had tutors available to support students' academic needs, in addition to the tutorials offered by teachers. Texas GEAR UP SG hired one tutor, who primarily worked with students in English as a Second Language classes, but the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort also had opportunities to be supported by tutors available for all students schoolwide.

The Texas GEAR UP SG District 2 Coordinator explained that they would have liked to hire push-in tutors (i.e., tutors in the classroom), but it was difficult to find qualified candidates due to the location of the schools in the district and the rate of pay. Teachers in District 2 noted that most teacher-led tutoring was administered after-school, but some students were unable to stay late because they did not have a ride home or had other obligations, such as work. Texas GEAR UP SG in District 2 also purchased a license to Tutors.com for cohort students to access online support.[98]

Overall, there was a wide range of students who participated in tutoring services across schools, with as much as 87% of students receiving tutoring at High School J to 7% of students

[97] There was a significant difference across schools in student ratings of effectiveness for tutoring in any subject: $\chi^2(5) = 59.9$, $p < 0.001$.

[98] Tutors.com is an online tutoring service that offers video instruction on-demand.

receiving tutoring at High School L. Of the students that participated in tutoring services, they found it to be effective in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college. All cohort schools should consider developing robust tutoring programs so that more students may benefit from this valuable support service. In doing so, however, it is recommended that teachers play a role in helping to shape the tutoring program to ensure that tutoring is aligned with course content and instruction.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN COMPREHENSIVE MENTORING

As required by their subgrants, all Texas GEAR UP SG schools offered comprehensive mentoring to primary cohort students in Year 5. According to GUIDES data, across Texas GEAR UP SG schools, 38% of Grade 11 students received comprehensive mentoring in Year 5, which was an increase of six percentage points from Year 4 (32%) (Table F.19, Appendix, F). Whereas mentoring has occurred with less frequency than tutoring in prior years, in Year 5, mentoring as a student support service occurred at a comparable level as tutoring (38% and 44%, respectively). The average amount of time spent on mentoring was 5 hours, though, compared to 11.1 hours on tutoring (Table F.19, Appendix F).

The percentage of students mentored differed significantly across schools (Table F.19, Appendix F).[99] The majority of the students participating in mentoring came from High Schools I and M, where 38% and 92% of Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort students, respectively, had a mentor. The lowest percentage of students with a mentor came from High School L, in which 6% received mentoring.

Of the 26% of student survey respondents who reported participating in mentoring during the 2016–17 school year, 69% reported that mentoring was *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college; only 3% said it was *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). Mentoring received a mean effectiveness rating of 2.98 (*mostly effective*) among respondents who participated in mentoring (Table G.33, Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in effectiveness ratings for mentoring.

Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators provided more detail about the implementation of mentoring activities in Year 5 while on site visits. Across all districts, Texas GEAR UP SG staff were assigned a caseload of mentees; caseloads ranged from 6–10 students. In addition, Districts 1 and 4 reported that they also worked with community alliances such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, CIS, and local businesses to provide mentoring services. Districts 3 and 4 reported that they also provided mentoring in designated classes. Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators in both districts expressed concern about the quality of mentoring services offered in these classes because of the high number of students assigned to individual mentors.

Overall, while mentoring was the least offered student support service, of the student survey respondents who participated in mentoring, respondents found the service to be *mostly effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college. Districts that collaborated with community alliances to provide mentoring services tended to have better student participation,

[99] Percentage of students receiving mentoring was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 479.8$, $p < 0.001$

which suggests that bringing in additional mentors may provide more students with the opportunity to participate in mentoring.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN COUNSELING/ADVISING

Counseling/advising is another student support service that all Texas GEAR UP schools offered to primary cohort students. According to data reported in GUIDES, across schools, 93% of cohort students participated in counseling in Year 5, an increase of 6 percentage points from Year 4 (Table F.20, Appendix F).[100] All high schools, except one (High School K), had over 90% of students participating in counseling/advising. On average, Grade 11 cohort students who received counseling/advising experienced 3.9 hours of the service in Year 5, an increase over Year 4 (3.3 hours). The number of hours that students experienced counseling/advising ranged from 1.2 hours at High School L to 10.0 hours at High School M (Table F.20, Appendix F).

According to the student survey, of the 40% of student respondents who reported participating in academic or career counseling/advising, 75% of respondents found the services to be *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; only 1% said it was *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). Academic or career counseling/advising received a mean effectiveness rating of 3.04 (*mostly effective*) among respondents who participated in the support service (Table G.33, Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in effectiveness ratings for academic or career counseling/advising.

Overall, more students participated in counseling/advising in Year 5 than in Year 4 and average counseling/advising sessions were longer in Year 5 than in Year 4. This could be attributed to the fact that cohort students were in Grade 11 during Year 5—with the college application process starting in the next year. College-related topics could have become a sharper focus for both students and counselors/advisors, resulting in more counseling/advising sessions. As cohort students move into Grade 12, it is possible that student participation in counseling/advising will continue to increase.

Student Participation in Meetings with College Preparation Advisors

While data on tutoring, mentoring, and counseling/advising are not broken out by the types of school staff or Texas GEAR UP SG staff who provided the support to students, it is important to note that College Preparation Advisors played a significant role in meeting with students to provide various types of support.

According to GUIDES data, across all high schools, 1,388 students met with their College Preparation Advisors—or approximately 80%—which is an eight percentage point increase from Year 4 (Table F.21, Appendix F).

According to the student survey, of the 50% of student survey respondents who reported meeting with their College Preparation Advisor during Year 5, nearly all students (92%) reported being satisfied with the relationship between themselves and their College Preparation Advisor:

[100] The percentage of students receiving counseling was significantly different across schools, according to GUIDES data: $\chi^2(5) = 31.2$, $p < 0.001$

37% were *strongly satisfied* and 55% were *satisfied* with the relationship; 8% reported being *dissatisfied* or *strongly dissatisfied* with the relationship (Table G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). Twenty-eight percent of students considered their College Preparation Advisor as their primary source of information when they needed personal advice, while 19% said they go to another source at their school (Table G.17, Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in satisfaction ratings for College Preparation Advisors.

College Preparation Advisors reported during site visits that they continued to speak with students in one-on-one sessions in Year 5. As a result of new Texas GEAR UP SG teams at High Schools I and J, the College Preparation Advisors reported that they met with more students earlier in the year for one-on-one sessions because they could focus their time on direct services to students instead of coordinating events and activities. The data reported through GUIDES confirms that High School J was successful in having College Preparation Advisors meet nearly all cohort students (98%). Despite starting the process of meeting with cohort students earlier in the school year, however, College Preparation Advisors at High School I ultimately met with the smallest percentage of students (62%) of any other high school in the cohort.

In one-on-one sessions with students, College Preparation Advisors continued to review individual transcripts with students to ensure they are on-track to graduate and help them understand the information that college admissions staff will be looking for in their transcript. Three College Preparation Advisors reported that they have been using a matrix—shared by one College Preparation Advisor—that shows the students' grade point average (GPA) and SAT score combination and how that compares to the average GPA and SAT scores at colleges across Texas. The three College Preparation Advisors noted that students found the matrix helpful for understanding the schools for which they are currently eligible and the SAT scores that they should work towards. The College Preparation Advisors also reported that they encouraged students to think more concretely about their plans for after high school—whether they plan to pursue education or go to work, what career path they would like to pursue, and the schools and programs they would like to apply to next year if they plan to pursue further education. College Preparation Advisors encouraged students to think about at least six schools they would like to apply to as Grade 12 students—"two safe schools, two target schools, and two reach schools."

Another common topic during one-on-one sessions with College Preparation Advisors was career and college major interests. It was noted that websites such as the Texas GEAR UP SG website and Big Future were helpful for providing students with resources to help students explore potential career interests and the majors needed for that career.[101] One College Preparation Advisor also reported that they use the Bureau of Labor Statistics website to provide students with job descriptions, salary information, and where students are likely to find jobs in the field.

Overall, College Preparation Advisors played an important and increasing role in supporting cohort students in their thinking and planning for college. College Preparation Advisors' one-on-

[101] For more information on Big Future, visit https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/.

one sessions helped to cement satisfying relationships with students and provided students with information about preparing for college and career.

FINANCIAL AID SUPPORT SERVICES

As Texas GEAR UP SG can play a valuable role in influencing how students understand the financial aspects of college, a variety of financial aid-specific support services were offered to cohort students in Year 5—including financial aid counseling/advising, mentoring, and other services. According to data reported in GUIDES, overall, 75% of cohort students received financial aid counseling and/or mentoring in Year 5 (Table F.22, Appendix F). Specifically, 75% of cohort students participated in counseling, 3% participated in mentoring, and 75% participated in counseling and/or mentoring. Participation in financial aid counseling and/or mentoring varied significantly by school.[102] Nearly all students (98%) in High School J participated in financial aid counseling and/or mentoring, whereas only 56% of students received financial aid counseling and/or mentoring at High School I (Table F.22, Appendix F). Participating cohort students experienced an average of 1.8 hours of financial aid counseling and/or mentoring in Year 5. The average hours of financial aid counseling and/or mentoring received by students varied significantly different across schools, ranging from 4.9 hours at High School J to 0.5 hours at High School L (Table F.22, Appendix F).[103]

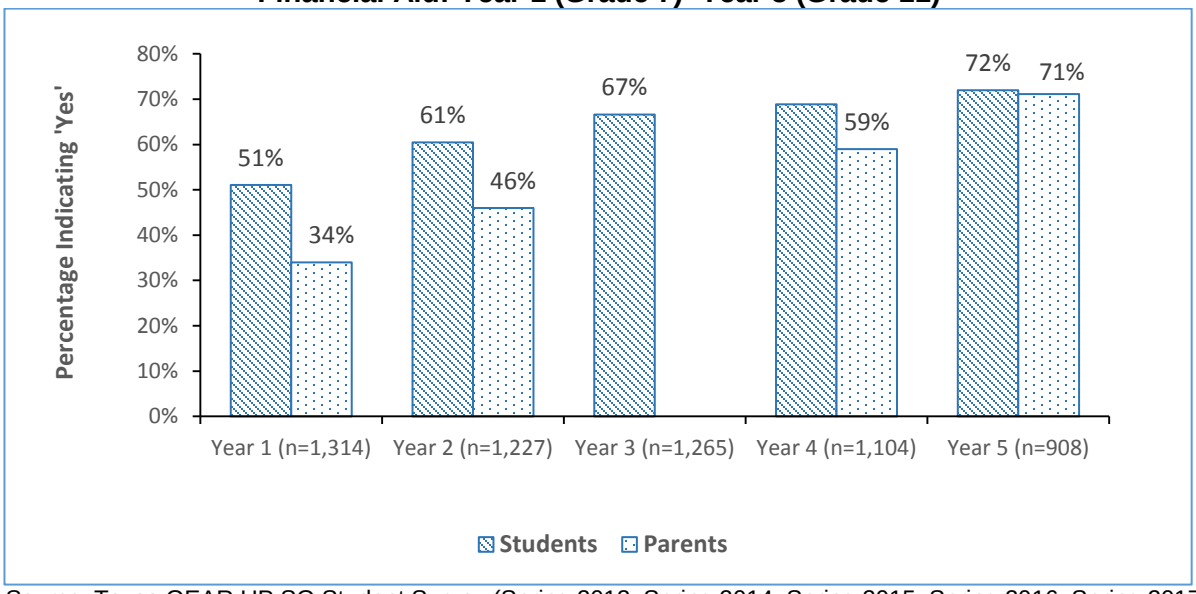
According to the 27% student survey respondents who reported participating in financial aid counseling/advising during the 2016–17 school year, 68% of respondents found the support services to be *mostly effective* or *very effective*; only 3% said it was *not effective* (Table G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). Financial aid counseling/advising received a mean effectiveness rating of 2.92 (*mostly effective*) among respondents who participated in the support service (Table G.33, Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in effectiveness ratings for financial aid counseling/advising.

In addition to financial aid counseling/advising, the Year 5 student and parent surveys also asked students and parents more broadly about whether anyone from their school or Texas GEAR UP SG staff had spoken with them about the availability of financial aid to help pay for college. Seventy-two percent of students and 71% of parents reported that someone from their school or Texas GEAR UP SG talked with them about the availability of financial aid to pay for college (Figure 4.2). The percentage of students who reported talking to someone about the availability of financial aid ranged from 53% at High School K to 89% at High School I (Table G.27, Appendix G).[104] Overall, this percentage has risen steadily since Year 2, when 61% of students and only 46% of parents said someone had talked with them about this topic (Figure

[102] The percentage of students receiving services related to financial aid was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 164.4$, $p < 0.001$.
[103] The average hours of financial aid services received by students was significantly different across schools: $F(5, 1291) = 80.8$, $p < 0.001$.
[104] In Year 5, across schools, there was a significant difference in the percent of students who reported that someone from their school or Texas GEAR UP SG talked with them about the availability of financial aid to pay for college: $\chi^2(5) = 79.3$, $p < 0.001$.

4.2).[105, 106] In Year 4, 69% of students and 59% of parents indicated that someone had talked with them about the availability of financial aid (Figure 4.2). The increasing percentage of students who reported having conversations with someone from their school about the availability of financial aid is particularly important considering that such discussions were found to positively correlate, to a low but statistically significant degree, with students' perceived knowledge about financial terms (Table 4.1). As the cohort moves into Year 6, it will be especially important for Texas GEAR UP SG staff and school staff to target the 28% of students who have not reported having such discussions in order to help boost all students' knowledge about financial aid.

Figure 4.2. Parents' and Students' Discussions with School or GEAR UP Staff About Financial Aid: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017); Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017)..
*The "n" provided is in reference to the student surveys; parent survey n's are as follows: Year 1=396, Year 2=457, Year 4=719, Year 5=346. Parent survey data from Year 3 is not included due to low response rates and was re-administered in Fall 2015 with the exception of one district.

Site visit data provide additional insights regarding financial aid support services offered to students in Year 5. Both students and College Preparation Advisors reported during site visits that they continued to talk about financial aid in one-on-one sessions. College Preparation Advisors reported that such sessions addressed topics such as types of financial aid—including Pell grants, loans, and scholarships. Texas GEAR UP SG staff across all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools also worked in Year 5 to create Federal Student Aid IDs for each student and parent who did not already have one. They anticipated that the completion of this activity in Year 5 would increase the efficiency of FAFSA completion in Year 6. Furthermore, Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported that they began to help students and their families prepare to apply for the

[105] The percentage of *students* who said someone spoke with them about the availability of financial aid to pay for college was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(4) = 170.9$, $p < 0.001$.
[106] The percentage of *parents* who said someone spoke with them about the availability of financial aid to pay for college was significantly different between Year 4 and Year 5: $\chi^2(1) = 15.4$, $p < 0.01$.

FAFSA and Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) (if qualified) in Year 6 by reminding them in Year 5 of the importance of financial aid, the information required for the application, and who would have access to the information provided on the application (e.g., school/Texas GEAR UP SG staff).

Table 4.1. Availability of Financial Aid Correlation with Student Knowledge

Survey Item	Knowledge Topic Area	Means		*Correlation Result*
Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about… ***The availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?***	Scholarships	Yes	3.06	*r*(882) = 0.22, *p* < 0.001
		No	2.65	
	Federal student loans	Yes	2.40	*r*(886) = 0.22, *p* < 0.001
		No	1.97	
	Federal work-study	Yes	2.04	*r*(877) = 0.26, *p* < 0.001
		No	1.52	
	Federal Pell grants	Yes	1.83	*r*(874) = 0.22, *p* < 0.001
		No	1.43	
	FAFSA	Yes	2.27	*r*(890) = 0.29, *p* < 0.001
		No	1.70	

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: The Means column lists the average level of knowledge reported by students for each of the topic areas. Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" are scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge; 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable; 3 – Knowledgeable; 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable. "Yes" and "No" refers to whether or not the student reported that someone from Texas GEAR UP SG spoke to them about the availability of financial aid.

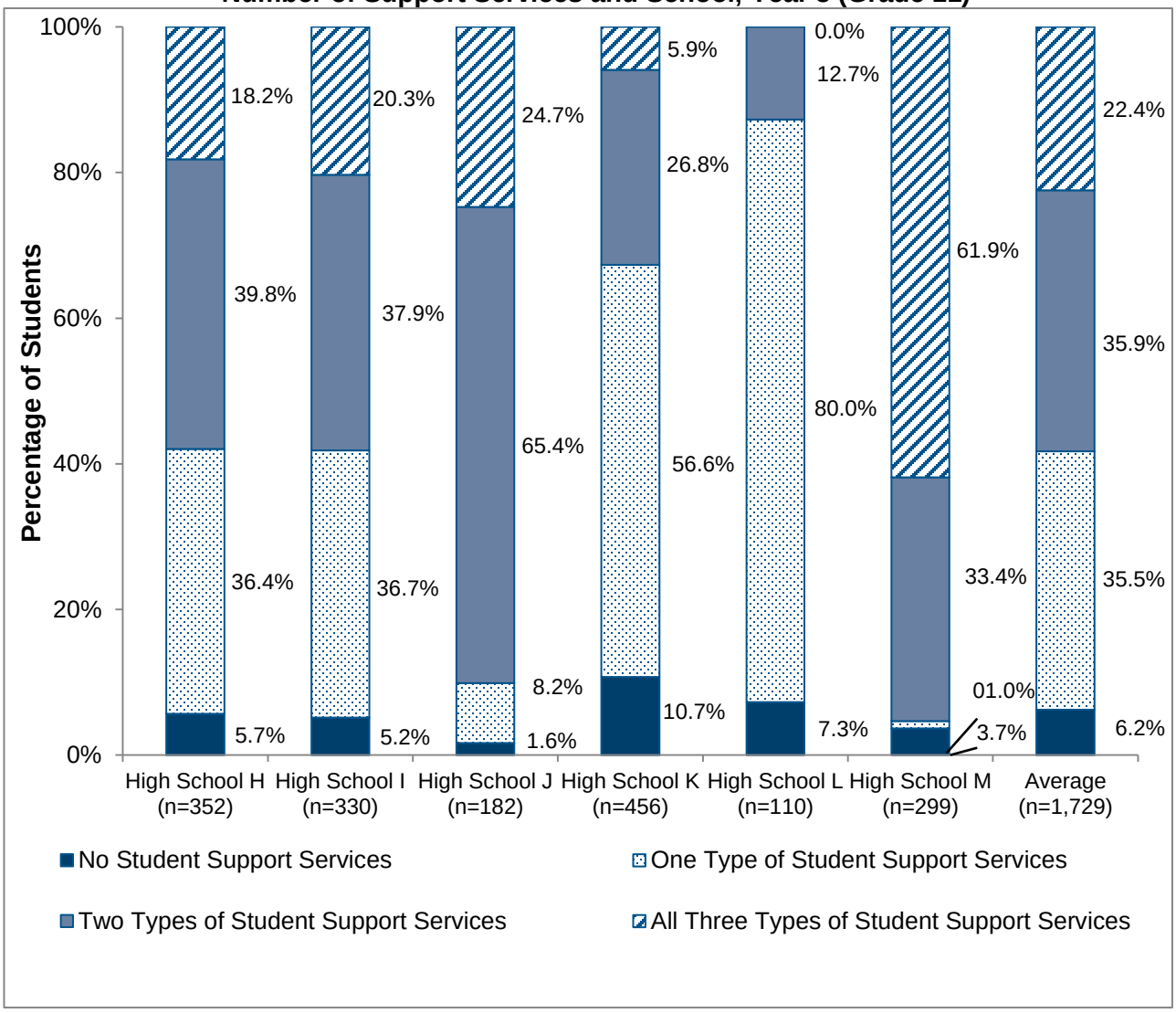
Overall, financial aid support services were implemented to high but varying degrees across schools. On average, the students who reported participating in financial aid counseling/advising on the student survey found it *mostly effective* in helping them prepare for college. Importantly, student discussions about the availability of financial aid with someone from their school were also found to positively correlate, to a low but statistically significant degree, with students' perceived knowledge about financial terms. While Texas GEAR UP SG staff are gearing up for financial aid applications in Year 6 and have started to prepare students and parents for that process, it will be critical for staff to carry those efforts through in Year 6.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN MULTIPLE STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

According to data reported in GUIDES for Year 5, 94% of all Grade 11 students participated in at least one of the three types of student support services (i.e., tutoring, mentoring, counseling; see Figure 4.3) and so continued to meet Project Objective 4.1, that 75% of students would receive student support services, as in the past. Additionally, 36% of students participated in two types of student support services and 22% of students participated in all three types of activities. All high schools each individually met Project Objective 4.1 of at least 75% of students participating in student support services. High School M had the highest percentage of students that participated in all three types of student support services (62%); whereas High School L

had no students that participated in all three types of student support services. Student participation in student support services differed significantly across schools.[107]

Figure 4.3. Percentages of Grade 11 Students Participating in Student Support Services by Number of Support Services and School, Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: Difference across schools: $\chi^2(15) = 647.2$, $p < .001$.

Project Objective 4.1 specifies that participation in student support services should be based on the results of teacher/counselor input and/or diagnostic data. The percentage of Grade 11 students who had participated in student support services based on the results of teacher/counselor input and/or diagnostic data was 91%, above the project objective goal of 75%. Table 4.2 shows how requests for student support services were broken out by each support service and documents the reasons for the request. As shown in the table,

[107] Student participation in student support services differed significantly across schools: $\chi^2(15) = 647.2$, $p < .001$.

teacher/counselor input was the most frequent reason for delivering a support service to students. Other reasons included student walk-in or parent request.

Table 4.2. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Student Support Services from Teacher/Counselor Input and Other Diagnostic Data, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Support Service	Teacher/ Counselor Input	Student Walk-In	Parent Request
Tutoring	81%	40%	<1%
Mentoring	91%	36%	4%
Counseling	94%	15%	15%

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: Percentages do not total 100% as students could receive support services for multiple reasons.

Continuing to refine this process through data-driven decisions and delivery of services to students in most need of specific supports may further enhance the potential impact of Texas GEAR UP SG and inform more sustainable practices, investing resources where they are most needed.

4.1.2 Educational Field Trips

Texas GEAR UP SG supported educational field trips for cohort students to promote college readiness. According to data reported through GUIDES, 24% of students participated in educational field trips in Year 5, however this varied by school (Table F.23, Appendix F). High School M reported the largest percentage of students participating in educational field trips, with 74% of students participating. In contrast, High School L had 0% of students participate in an educational field trip in Year 5.

According to the 66% of student survey respondents who reported participating in educational field trips, 73% of respondents found the activity to be *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; only 4% said it was *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G33, Appendix G). On average, the students who participated in educational field trips rated it as *mostly effective* (mean 3.03) in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college (Table G.33, Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in effectiveness ratings of educational field trips.

As educational field trips are helpful college preparedness activities, Texas GEAR UP SG staff should work to provide greater opportunities for students to participate—particularly at High Schools K and L, which had the lowest levels of participation in educational field trips.

4.1.3 College Visits

College visits are one strategy recommended by the federal GEAR UP program to develop postsecondary education awareness and readiness. College visits may be important because students who visit a campus may begin to perceive college as a place where they will (or will not) fit in. Because college visits provide opportunities for cohort students to acquire knowledge about college, participation in college visits also serves as one indicator regarding the cohort's progress toward meeting Project Objective 4.4 (By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, the necessary academic preparation for college), as described in more detail in Chapter 3.

Data reported in GUIDES showed that in Year 5, all schools hosted one or more college visits in which at least some students from each school participated. High School M offered Grade 11 students the most (21) college visits; High School L offered the fewest (7) and the remaining schools offered the following: High School H: 9, High School I: 12, High School J: 13, and High School K: 14. Overall, 49% of Texas GEAR UP SG students participated in at least one college visit, which is an increase of 11 percentage points over Year 4 (38%) (Table F.24, Appendix F).

Of the 63% of student survey respondents who reported that they participated in college visits/college student shadowing during the school year, 73% of students reported that college visits and college student shadowing were *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; only 2% said it was *not effective* (Table G.31 Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). On average, the students who participated in college visits and college student shadowing rated it as *mostly effective* (mean 3.06) in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college; this ranged from 2.72 at High School L to 3.24 at High School J (Table G.33, Appendix G).[108]

Not only did student survey respondents who participated in college visits/shadowing find this activity to be *mostly effective*, but student participation in college visits and college student shadowing was found to positively correlate, to a low but statistically significant degree, with knowledge of the importance and benefit of college as well as plans to take advanced courses (Table 4.3; Table G.31, Appendix G).

Table 4.3. College Visits and College Student Shadowing Correlation with Student Knowledge and Plans for Taking Advanced Courses

Survey Item	Knowledge Topic Area	Means		*Correlation Result*
Have you participated in this activity during this school year (2016-2017)? ***College visits/college student shadowing***	Importance/benefit of college	Yes	3.05	$r(831) = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.56	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in mathematics	Yes	2.78	$r(834) = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.37	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in ELA	Yes	2.88	$r(834) = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.50	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in Science	Yes	2.72	$r(831) = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.37	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in Social Studies	Yes	2.79	$r(832) = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.45	

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: The Means column lists the average level of knowledge reported by students for each of the topic areas. Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" are scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge; 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable; 3 – Knowledgeable; 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable. "Yes" and "No" refers to whether or not the student reported participating in this activity during the 2016–17 school year.

Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators and College Preparation Advisors provided additional insight on college visits across their districts and schools. Most college visits in Year 5 continued to include campus tours and meetings or presentations with institutional admissions staff. College Preparation Advisors from Districts 2 and 4 reported that students had opportunities to speak with students who attended the school visited, sometimes including alumni from their

[108] Across schools, there was a significant difference in effectiveness ratings for college visits and college student shadowing: $\chi^2(15) = 38.3$, $p < 0.001$.

respective high schools. It was also reported that students from High Schools H, I, J, and M received opportunities to speak with professors and observe classes during college visits.

School and Texas GEAR UP SG staff also described challenges with—and solutions for—ensuring more students participate in college visits. A College Preparation Advisor in District 2 reported that it was difficult to provide services and field trips to students who were failing (and may benefit the most from services such as college visits) because an administrator would not approve any failing student to miss class time for a field trip. High School J took a different approach; teachers there noted that while administrators would not normally approve failing students to miss class time, they required all cohort students be approved for any Texas GEAR UP SG field trip, despite their grades. Another district administrator required that 90% of the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students participate in a college visit. To help reach this goal, a College Preparation Advisor reported that Texas GEAR UP SG staff set sign-ups for a college visit to a local school as opt-out instead of opt-in; the College Preparation Advisor stated this method helped the program target students who would not have normally opted to participate. The Texas GEAR UP SG District 1 Coordinator reported that the tasks involved to meet Project Objective 4.4 (by the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, the necessary academic preparation for college) was easier to meet in Year 5 after they adopted a strategy in Year 4 by District 3 to conduct several college visits in one day with the entire cohort.

With more students participating in college visits in Year 5 than Year 4, school staff cited challenges regarding college visits; teachers at High School J and an administrator from High School I reported frustration regarding the frequency of classes missed by the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort to attend college visits. Additionally, an administrator from High School I reported that while the college visits may be helpful for some students, it can be difficult for the school or district to provide enough chaperones and coverage for teachers missing class time.

Overall, almost half of all cohort students participated in a college visit in Year 5, with the majority of student survey respondents finding the activity to be *mostly effective* in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college. Additionally, student participation in college visits and college student shadowing was positively correlated with knowledge of the importance and benefit of college as well as plans to take advanced courses. As such, Texas GEAR UP SG staff should arrange for more college visits (perhaps increasing the number of visits, the percentage of student attendance, and/or the number of universities participating) to help influence these key aspects of creating a college-going culture and academic preparation. Likewise, Texas GEAR UP SG should continue to promote a college-going culture, as such a culture may contribute to students' desire to participate in college visits and college student shadowing. In working to improve participation in college visits among cohort students, Texas GEAR UP SG staff should work across schools and districts to learn lessons from their peers regarding challenges associated with, and solutions for, increasing student participation in this important college preparedness activity.

4.1.4 Job Site Visits/Job Shadowing

Engaging in job site visits is also a recommended federal GEAR UP strategy and may provide students with relevant information about potential future jobs and careers, as well as the

education that is required to attain those jobs/careers. According to data reported in GUIDES, all schools reported that at least some students had engaged in job site visits and job shadowing in Year 5; High School L reported one activity, High School K reported three activities, High School I reported four activities, High School H reported seven activities, High School M reported eight activities, and High School J reported nine activities—for a total of 32 activities. When looking across schools, the most notable achievement was that High School M had 59% of students participate in a job site visit or job shadowing activity. Overall, participation was 40% across all schools, an increase of 19 percentage points over the overall participation rate in Year 4 (21%) (Table F.25, Appendix F).

According to the 37% of student survey respondents who reported participating in job site visit/job shadowing, 73% of respondents found the activity to be *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; only 3% said it was *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). On average, the students who participated in job site visits/job shadowing rated it as *mostly effective* (mean 3.02) in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college (Table G.33, Appendix G).

Site visit participants discussed job site visits and job shadowing activities across all four Texas GEAR UP SG districts. Participants at High Schools H, I, and J reported that job site visits were often organized by student endorsement. Texas GEAR UP SG staff at High Schools H, I, and M reported that the grant worked with local community alliances to organize a day devoted to job shadowing for the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort. Students provided positive feedback on their job shadowing activities and described the "hands-on" activities as more effective for learning about careers than conducting online research. In addition, a College Preparation Advisor from District 2 reported that their district offered virtual job shadowing opportunities using the Virtual Job Shadow website.[109]

Overall, the percentage of students participating in job site visits and/or job shadowing increased from Year 4 and participating student survey respondents found, on average, that these activities were *mostly effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college. Participating students valued the "hands-on" nature of the job shadowing activities in learning about different careers. Texas GEAR UP SG staff should work to engage more cohort students in participating in job site visit and/or job shadowing—perhaps using virtual job shadowing activities as needed to include more students—as the cohort moves into their final year of high school.

4.1.5 Summer Programs

In reporting implementation of student support services, the following project objective is relevant:

- Project Objective 4.2: Beginning in the second year, at least 30% of students will be involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level, ease transitions, and increase college awareness.

[109] For more information, please visit https://www.virtualjobshadow.com/.

This section includes findings about primary cohort students' participation in a variety of summer programs during summer 2016. Year 5 student survey data includes data from both the fall 2016 and spring 2017 survey administrations.

Overall, according to data reported in GUIDES, 46% of Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort students participated in summer programs offered in summer 2016, a decrease of 17 percentage points over Year 4 (63%) (Table F.26, Appendix F). Despite this decrease, Project Objective 4.2 was met in Year 5. The majority of students who participated in summer programs participated in student workshops (40%). To a lesser extent, students also participated in other activities over the summer, including the following: college tours (14%), parent/family workshops (10%), family events (3%), math/science educational field trips (3%), job/site visits (2%), and job shadowing (<1%). The availability of college tour activities during the summer increased in Year 5, with 46 college tours offered in Year 5 compared to 9 offered in Year 4. Additionally, 14% of students participated in college tours in Year 5, which represents a 10 percentage point increase from Year 4 when only 4% of students participated. Among the summer student workshops reported in GUIDES were academic enrichment workshops across a variety of subjects (e.g., digital media, engineering, culinary, health/medicine, STEM), athletic and band camps, postsecondary education and career readiness programs and camps (including Texas GEAR UP SG Summer Camp), as well as remedial and credit recovery programs.

Student survey data from the fall 2016 survey administration provide additional details regarding student participation in summer programs. Specifically, of the 27% of student survey respondents who reported participating in at least one summer program, 52% reported participating in a summer program in their school district and 51% reported participating in a summer program at a community college or university in Texas (Table G.34, Appendix G). The least frequently reported locations included another school district in Texas (5%) and a business or community organization in Texas (4%).

As in previous years, the most common reason students provided for attending summer programs was *I wanted to participate in a summer program(s)*, with 84% of respondents who participated in summer programs selecting this option as their reason for attending, an increase of 11 percentage points from the previous year (Table G.35, Appendix G). Similarly, the most common reason that students provided for not attending summer programs was *I did not want to participate in a summer program(s)*. In fall 2016, 36% of respondents who reported not participating in a summer program selected this as their reason, which represents a decrease of three percentage points from the previous year (Table G.36, Appendix G).

Data from the spring 2017 student survey administration also provide details regarding the perceptions of summer programs. Specifically, according to the 30% of student survey respondents who reported participating in 2016 GEAR UP summer programs, 77% of respondents found the activity to be *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; only 3% said it was *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). On average, the students who participated in one or more summer programs rated them as *mostly effective* (mean 3.12) in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college (Table G.33, Appendix G). In particular, summer programs were the highest rated Texas GEAR UP SG activity among students (Table G.33 Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in effectiveness ratings for the 2016 GEAR UP summer program.

Not only did student survey respondents report that summer 2016 programs were effective in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college, but student participation in summer programs was found to positively correlate, to a low but statistically significant degree, with the educational expectations, knowledge of separate college entrance topic areas, and knowledge of financial aid terms (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4. Summer Program Correlation with Education Expectations, College Entrance Knowledge, and Financial Aid Terms, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Survey Item	Knowledge Topic Area	Means		*Correlation Result*
Have you participated in this activity during this school year (2016-2017)? ***A 2016 GEAR UP Summer Program***	Educational expectations	Yes	4.61	$r(849) = 0.09$, $p < 0.05$
		No	4.38	
	SAT	Yes	3.03	$r(843) = 0.16$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.74	
	ACT	Yes	2.81	$r(832) = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.47	
	General requirements for college acceptance	Yes	2.83	$r(828) = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.46	
	Importance/benefit of college	Yes	3.04	$r(835) = 0.12$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.79	
	Scholarships	Yes	3.12	$r(830) = 0.14$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.87	
	Federal student loans	Yes	2.55	$r(833) = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.17	
	Federal work-study	Yes	2.24	$r(825) = 0.25$, $p < 0.001$
		No	1.75	
	Federal Pell grants	Yes	2.02	$r(823) = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$
		No	1.58	
	FAFSA	Yes	2.37	$r(837) = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$
		No	1.99	

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: The Means column lists the average level of knowledge reported by students for each of the topic areas. Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" are scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge; 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable; 3 – Knowledgeable; 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable. "Yes" and "No" refers to whether or not the student reported participating in the activity during the 2016–17 school year.

Participants in Year 5 site visits reported that students continued to participate in summer programs, including those facilitated by Texas GEAR UP SG staff and collaborators. College Preparation Advisors at High Schools H, I, and J reported that Texas GEAR UP SG staff took cohort students on a tour of colleges throughout Texas; the College Preparation Advisor at High School J said this opportunity opened many students' eyes to new majors and careers to consider. Students from Texas GEAR UP SG Districts 1, 3, and 4 reported that they participated in camps or events held on local and distant college campuses where they were able to stay in dorms and attend classes. The College Preparation Advisor from High School I reported that the overnight camps and college tours were helpful for parents who may be reluctant to agree to send their child to a school far away—by giving the parent and child a short opportunity to see what it will be like once the child is in college. Several students who participated in site visits also reported that they participated in, and enjoyed, the Texas GEAR UP SG summer camp hosted at St. Edward's University in Austin. Representatives from an organization that collaborated with the Support Center to coordinate the summer camp also reported that they

worked with the Support Center to host a leadership retreat for 40 Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students during the summer. The retreat provided the students with skills and strategies for becoming leaders on their campus and how to increase the college-going culture among their peers on their campus. Students described summer program activities, in general, as fun and helpful for preparing for postsecondary education.

Overall, while student participation in 2016 summer programs decreased in Year 5 in comparison to the previous year, a greater percentage of students participating in summer programs took advantage of college visits in summer 2016 than the previous year. In addition, cohort schools provided a greater number of opportunities for students to participate in college visits during summer 2016. Students reported during site visits that the college visits were valuable and expanded their knowledge of new or different majors and/or careers. Collaboration with community alliances and the Support Center supported the implementation and facilitation of the college visits.

4.1.6 Student Workshops/Events

Another GEAR UP implementation strategy is conducting workshops and events for students. The following project objective relates to this effort:

- Project Objective 7.2: By the end of the first year, information and workshops aimed at linking college attendance to career success will be available to 100% of cohort students and their parents.

Although Project Objective 7.2 was a Year 1 objective, the evaluation team has continued to track data on student workshops/events in subsequent years as an indicator of grant implementation. According to data reported in GUIDES, in Year 5, Texas GEAR UP SG high schools held a total of 253 workshops across all six schools (with a range of 14–76 events across schools), which represents a decrease of 2 workshops since Year 4 (255 student events/workshops) (Table F.27, Appendix F). High School J held the largest number of events at 76. Overall, the average number of participants across schools ranged from 29 at High School M to 66 at High School I. Across schools, the average length of the events was 1.6 hours, a decrease of 1.3 hours from Year 4. Considering that all schools offered several events to students, all schools continued to meet Project Objective 7.2 of 100% of students having access to events. In terms of student participation in workshops and events, overall, 92% of students participated in at least one event. Participation levels ranged from 90% at High School M to 100% at High School L (Table F.28, Appendix F).

According to data reported in GUIDES, students had opportunities to participate in workshops across a range of topics, delivered in a variety of formats, as described below:

- Students in all four districts participated in in-class workshops during which Texas GEAR UP SG staff and school counselors provided information about advanced course and dual credit opportunities as well as related graduation requirements.
- All districts reported that Texas GEAR UP SG provided workshops on local scholarship opportunities for students to begin to consider.

- Academic and skills-focused workshops were provided for students. Some examples include STEM-based workshops, art skill development, events that provided opportunities to learn about entrepreneurship, and audiovisual skills.
- Texas GEAR UP SG staff worked with students in workshops to build Apply Texas accounts and Federal Student Aid (FSA) IDs at all schools.
- Admissions staff from local colleges were invited by Texas GEAR UP SG staff to speak with cohort students about their respective schools, their entrance requirements, and costs.
- Each school also reported motivational workshops. Some examples include motivational speaker assemblies, in-class assignments to write about overcoming barriers to being successful in postsecondary education, and being first-generation students.

According to the 33% of student survey respondents who reported participating in school workshops regarding the benefits and options of college, 69% of respondents found the workshops to be *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; only 3% said they were *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). On average, the students who participated in workshops rated them as *mostly effective* (mean 2.94) in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college (Table G.33, Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in effectiveness ratings of school workshops.

Overall, the vast majority of cohort students attended workshops in Year 5. Of those who responded to the student survey, respondents found workshops to be helpful in helping them to succeed in school and prepare for college. As Texas GEAR UP SG staff plan for workshops to be held in Year 6, staff should consider the range of needs that cohort students will need as they apply for college and financial aid.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN FAMILY EVENTS

In addition to workshops/events targeting students only, schools were encouraged to offer family events for both students and parents to provide an opportunity for schools to support parents in engaging with each other and their children about postsecondary education. According to data reported in GUIDES data, the six cohort schools offered a combined 59 family events in Year 5, ranging from one to 20 events across schools (Table F.29, Appendix F). Overall, 20% of students participated in a family and/or parent event (Table F.30, Appendix F). High School J had the highest rate of student participation in parent/family events (42%) and High School L had the lowest rate of student participation (1%). Parental participation in these events is described in Section 4.2.

Among the family and parent events recorded in GUIDES were events that covered financial aid, soft skill development in students, and a review of college entrance assessments. Examples include:

- Multi-week parent leadership institutes at each of the six Texas GEAR UP SG schools during which parents had the opportunity to learn about working with their children to develop goals and support systems that will ensure postsecondary education success.
- Districts 1 and 4 reported that they hosted family events during which they reviewed fall 2016 PSAT scores and how to interpret the scores.

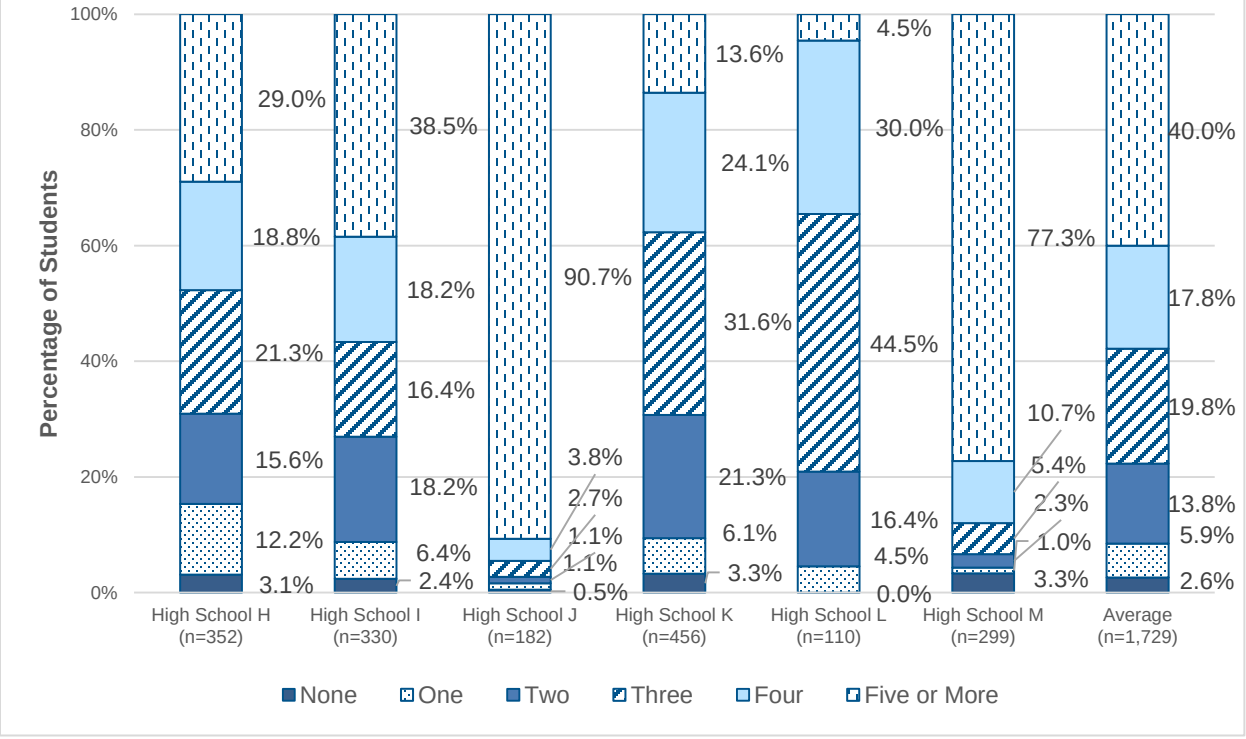
- Financial aid and financial literacy workshops across schools included presentations on documentation needed to apply for federal aid, how to search for aid, and how to save and budget to ensure postsecondary education affordability.

According to the 29% of student survey respondents who reported participating in family/cultural events, 62% of respondents found the workshops to be *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; only 4% said they were *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). On average, the students who participated in workshops rated them as *mostly effective* (mean 2.85) in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college (Table G.33, Appendix G). Across schools, there were no significant differences in effectiveness ratings of family/cultural events.

4.1.7 Student Participation in Multiple Texas GEAR UP State Grant Activities

In addition to the data presented by activity type (e.g., tutoring, mentoring) in prior sections, findings on participation in multiple activities illuminated other important trends. To understand student participation in multiple activities across schools, ICF examined how many students participated in more than one implementation activity. Specifically, ICF identified the following eight types of activities for consideration this analysis and then coded which students participated in each activity: tutoring, mentoring, counseling, college visits/shadowing, job site visit/shadowing, parent/family event, educational filed trips, and student workshops. Figure 4.4 shows the results of this analysis and includes the percentage of students who participated in zero, one, two, three, four, or five or more activities—at each school and overall.

Figure 4.4. Percentages of Students Participating in Any Implementation Activity by Number of Implementation Activities and School, Year 5 (Grade 11)



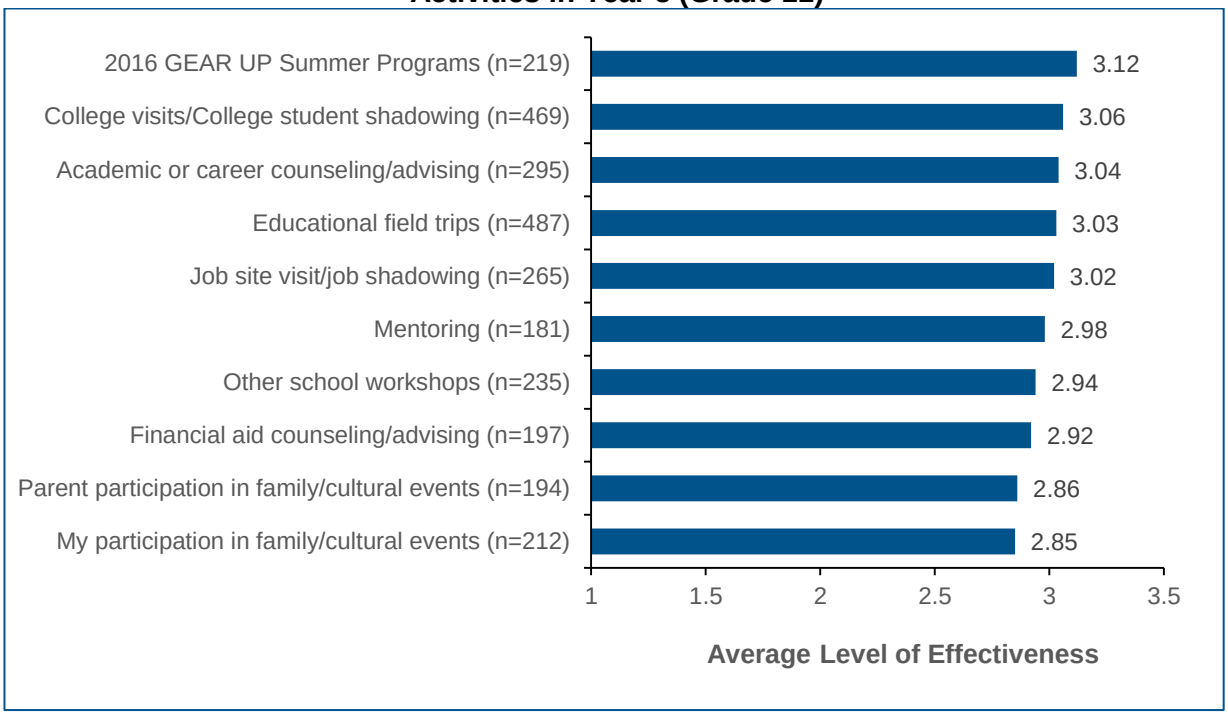
Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: Difference across schools: χ^2 (25) = 644.9, p < .001.
Implementation activities included the following eight categories: tutoring, mentoring, counseling, college tours/shadowing, job site visit/shadowing, parent/family event, education filed trips, student workshops.

According to GUIDES data, only 3% of cohort students did not participate in any Texas GEAR UP SG implementation activities in Year 5 (Figure 4.4). An additional 6% of cohort students participated in only one type of implementation activity, while approximately 92% of students participated in two or more types of implementation activities. Close to half of cohort students (40%) participated in four or more types of Texas GEAR UP SG implementation activities, a slight decrease from 45% in Year 4. In Year 5, nearly all types of implementation activities—including tutoring, mentoring, counseling, college visits, job site visits/job shadowing, summer programs, student workshops/events, and family events—were offered at all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools. Only one type of activity, educational field trips, was not offered at one of the cohort schools (High School L).

Although it is not certain whether any particular activity, as compared to engaging in a range of activities, is linked to desired outcomes, the Texas GEAR UP SG encourages schools to participate in a broad range of activities. While all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools were generally successful at implementing a mix of activities and events in Year 5, some schools could benefit by initiating a broader range of activities moving forward and others may benefit from engaging a higher proportion of students in the activities they already offer.

In addition to considering the range of Texas GEAR UP SG student activities offered by schools and levels of student participation in each, it is likewise important to consider the perceptions of those activities by the key stakeholders—cohort students. In the Year 5 student survey, survey respondents who noted participating in particular activities reported how effective they perceived each activity to be in helping them succeed in school/prepare to go to college. The surveys included questions prompting student respondents to rate the levels of effectiveness of the activities in which they participated. Lower scores indicate that students perceived the activity as being less effective in preparing them for college and, inversely, higher scores indicate that they perceived the activity as being more effective. Figure 4.5 showcases the findings of their ratings.

Figure 4.5. Student Perceptions on the Level of Effectiveness of Texas GEAR UP SG Activities in Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).

On average, students responding to these items found each type of activity in which they participated to be *mostly effective* (i.e., 2.85–3.12). Appendix G, Table G.32 shows average student perceptions of activities; the results for each response option are displayed in Table G.33. The average levels of perceived effectiveness were the highest for the following activities: 2016 GEAR UP summer programs, college visits, and academic career counseling/advising. The average levels of perceived effectiveness were lowest for family and cultural events.

In addition to questions about student participation in and levels of effectiveness of Texas GEAR UP SG activities, the Year 5 student survey also included questions regarding the types of information, support, or activities that students needed to be successful in school and prepared for college. Overall, according to student survey data, student respondents would like to receive more information pertaining to college entrance, such as financial aid/scholarships (69%), college entrance requirements (62%), and college entrance exams (47%) (Table 4.5). Also related to college, 63% of respondents said that they would like opportunities to participate in college visits. Almost one-quarter of students (22%) wanted to receive information in other languages, such as Spanish. As cohort students move into Year 6 (Grade 12), it is likely that they will continue to need additional information, support, and activities related to college entrance. Texas GEAR UP SG staff should work to ensure that information, support, and activities are offered in both Spanish and English in order to ensure that all students in the cohort are being reached.

Table 4.5. Students' Input on Needed Information/Support/Activities, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Information/Support/Activity	*n*=890
More information on financial aid/scholarships	69%
Opportunities to participate in college visits	63%
More information on college entrance requirements	62%
Information about taking college entrance exams	47%
Sports, activities, and clubs	44%
Information about endorsement options	43%
More information on GEAR UP program/how to participate	42%
Tutoring/Individualized care	40%
Information about dual credit courses where I can earn both high school and college credit	36%
More advanced classes	29%
Bilingual	22%
Other	6%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).

4.2 Participation in and Perceptions of Texas GEAR UP State Grant Activities for Parents

Parental participation in Texas GEAR UP SG activities is also encouraged in the federal GEAR UP model.[110] For Texas GEAR UP SG, the following project objective relates to this effort:

- Project Objective 7.3: Each year, at least 50% of cohort parents, including parents of current and former LEP students, will attend at least three college awareness activities.

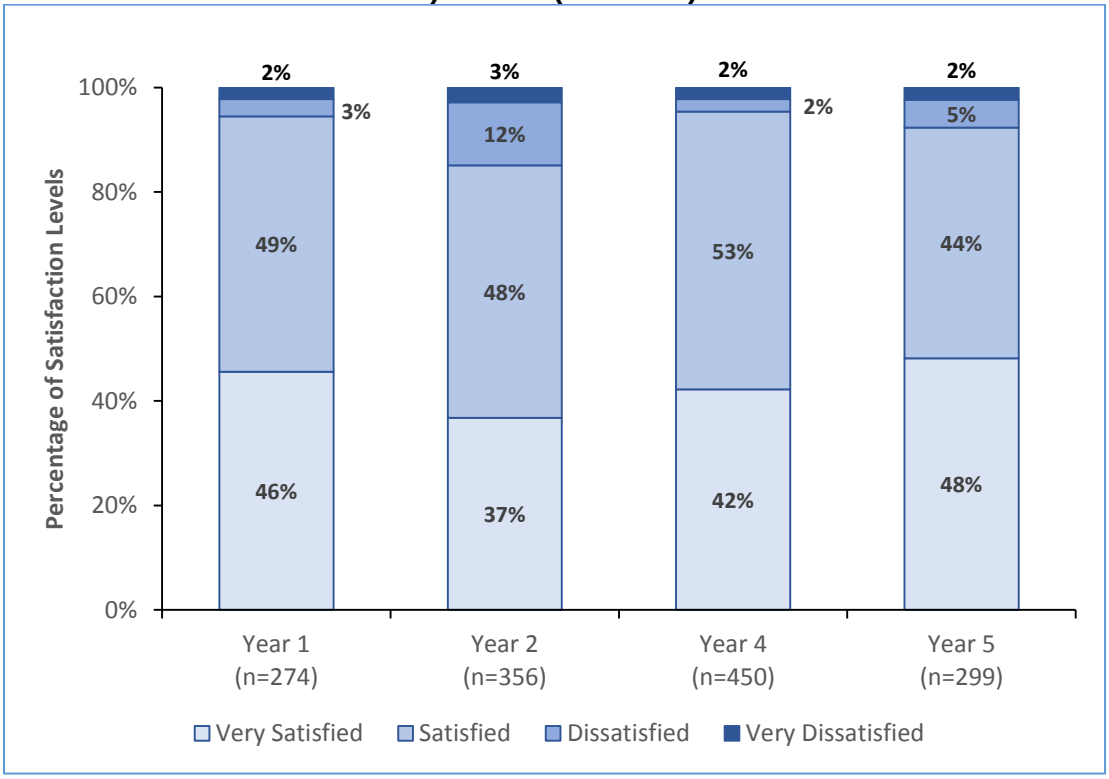
As was the case in prior years, no school in Year 5 was successful at achieving Project Objective 7.3, of 50% of cohort parents attending three or more college awareness activities. However, in Year 5, schools were more effective in getting parents to attend three or more events as compared to Year 4 (17% in Year 5 and 9% in Year 4) (Table F.31, Appendix F). It is important to note, in Year 5, all six high schools had at least some parents attend three or more events. High School M, where 45% of parents attended three or more events, had the highest parent attendance rate but still fell below the project objective goal. At the remaining schools, the following percentages of parents attended three or more events: High School H: 20%; High School I: 19%; High School J: 14%; High School L: 2%; and High School K: 2% (Table F.31, Appendix F). Overall, 38% of parents attended at least one event, an increase of 10 percentage points over Year 4 (28%); High School M again led on this measure (76%).

While schools continued to struggle with parent participation in Texas GEAR UP SG activities, this is not necessarily a reflection of parent perceptions of the grant overall. According to the parent survey, 82% of parents were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with the Texas GEAR UP SG program in Year 5: 39% said they were *satisfied* and 43% said they were *very satisfied* (Figure 4.6, Table G.37, Appendix G). This is an increase since Year 2 (85%), but a slight decrease from Year 4 (95%).[111] Parent satisfaction differed significantly by school, with 90% of parents

[110] While the term parent is used here given the context of the project objective, parental attendance is defined as any adult household member attending an event associated with the given student.
[111] Parent satisfaction with the GEAR UP program differed significantly over time: $\chi^2(9) = 45.4$, $p < 0.001$.

feeling *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with Texas GEAR UP SG at High School M and 64% feeling *satisfied* or *very satisfied* at High School K (Table G.37, Appendix G).[112] As detailed in Section 2.2, the Year 5 parent survey had a low response rate (23%), so these findings should be interpreted with caution.

Figure 4.6. Parent Satisfaction with Texas GEAR UP SG Overall: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)



Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017).
Notes: Percentages in Figure 4.6 reflect responses after removing respondents that selected the following response option: "Does not apply; I did not participate in any GEAR UP events this school year." Year 3 (Fall 2014 - Spring 2015) is not included because the parent survey response rate was too low to conduct analysis in spring 2015, so the evaluation team re-administered in fall 2015 during Year 4.

It is also helpful to consider how students viewed their parents' participation in parent and family activities. Of the 27% of student survey respondents who reported that their parents participated in family/cultural events during the school year, 62% of students reported that their parents' participation in such events was *mostly effective* or *very effective* in helping them succeed in school and prepare for college; 7% said it was *not effective* (Tables G.32 and G.33, Appendix G). On average, students rated their parents' participation in family/cultural events as *mostly effective* (mean 2.86) in helping them succeed in school/prepare for college.

During the Year 5 site visits, Texas GEAR UP SG staff discussed parent events hosted by Texas GEAR UP SG as well as their ongoing efforts to engage parents in the program. Districts 1, 3, and 4 reported that they continued to hold regular monthly parent meetings. Topics

[112] Parent satisfaction differed significantly by school: $\chi^2(15) = 47.6$, $p < 0.001$.

covered included financial aid, soft skills necessary for postsecondary success, upcoming testing and preparations, as well as stories from high school alumni. College Preparation Advisors across all schools also reported that they held one-on-one advising sessions with parents to review their child's transcript and any important upcoming events such as the SAT or TSIA.

Formal communication efforts between Texas GEAR UP SG staff and parents included emails, phone calls, texts, and social media posts in Year 5. Texas GEAR UP SG staff across all four districts reported that communication was most effective when authentic relationships were built between Texas GEAR UP SG staff and parents and when communication was consistent. Texas GEAR UP SG staff in District 1 reported that they relied on their Parent Liaison to build relationships as they are very familiar with many of the parents and families in the district and many already felt comfortable communicating with them. Parents and Texas GEAR UP SG staff in District 3 reported that they began participating more in the spring semester of Year 5 when they felt that Texas GEAR UP SG staff made the effort to be personable and empathetic to parents and their needs. District 4 Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported that sending notices and reminders for parent events early and closer to the time of the event was effective in making parents aware. Texas GEAR UP SG staff in District 2 reported that they would like to communicate more consistently with parents, but the lack of access to cohort parent email addresses made it difficult to directly contact parents and create visibility for the Texas GEAR UP SG team.

Site visit participants also provided insights on successes and challenges in facilitating parent engagement and participation in Texas GEAR UP SG. Texas GEAR UP SG staff at each district reported that they began working with the Family Engagement Trainer hired by the Support Center in Year 5. Site visit participants who reported working with her in Districts 1 and 3 stated that the Family Engagement Trainer offered ideas that were engaging; fresh content topics; and letter, email, and marketing material templates for reaching out to parents. A Texas GEAR UP SG staff member in District 2 reported that they would like to work more closely with the Family Engagement Trainer, but were instructed not to by the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator because the district planned a different approach to engage cohort parents. In addition, Districts 1 and 2 hired new Parent Liaisons to join their Texas GEAR UP SG teams. Texas GEAR UP SG staff and parents in both districts reported that parents received more information and communication for Texas GEAR UP SG since the hire of these staff.

The quality of the parent engagement raised concerns as reported by Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators 3 and 4. The Texas GEAR UP SG District 3 Coordinator reported that while their parent engagement data points to high engagement, the type of engagement may not provide enough information, resources, or answers to the questions parents have about their students' high school success or the postsecondary education entrance process. The new Texas GEAR UP SG District 4 Coordinator re-vamped the format of the parent meetings to include a rotation between three different sessions at each meeting in an effort to improve the quality of the parent programming offered by Texas GEAR UP SG. The Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator reported that they received positive feedback from parents and appreciated receiving new information and hearing a variety of information at each meeting.

Overall, while no Texas GEAR UP SG district had 50% or more cohort parents attend at least three parent events, the percentage of parents who attended at least one event did increase from Year 4 to Year 5. With this increase, it was noted by two Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinators that they had concerns about the quality of the parent events and interactions. Site visit participants reported that Texas GEAR UP SG staff continued to provide information at parent events that will help prepare both them and their child for postsecondary education. Overall, Texas GEAR UP SG staff should continue to offer or present information related to postsecondary education readiness and awareness, but consider prioritizing building relationships with the families of cohort students to ensure that parents are able to understand the specific needs of their students and are able to properly support their efforts to pursue postsecondary education.

4.3 Participation by Teachers in Professional Development Activities

Texas GEAR UP SG includes the following project objectives related to teacher PD:

- Project Objective 3.1: All core content teachers will have the opportunity to participate in training with regard to differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, and PBL.
- Project Objective 3.2: Teams of teachers at the middle and high schools will complete at least five days of vertical teams preparation and implementation each year.

Teacher PD opportunities are offered as a way to support the broad goal of improving academic rigor at participating schools. According to data reported in GUIDES, during Year 5, all districts offered Texas GEAR UP SG-supported PD for their teachers. In total, there were 181 PD sessions offered, ranging from 60 sessions at High School I to 3 sessions at High School L (Table F.32, Appendix F). A total of 328 teachers received PD in Year 5 (Table F.33, Appendix F). Differentiated instruction was the topic most often covered in Texas GEAR UP-SG-supported PD (110 events) and also the topic the most teachers (279) received in Texas GEAR UP SG-supported PD. The least-offered topic was financial literacy, with only one event attended by 16 teachers. Since High School L did not provide differentiated instruction and PBL PD, the cohort did not meet Project Objective 3.1 in Year 5.

Site visit data provided added detail regarding PD in Year 5. In Year 5, the Educator Outreach Coach, hired by the Support Center, provided sessions and trainings on classroom management, behavior management, collaborative learning, differentiation, and PBL. In addition the Educator Outreach Coach interacted with teachers during Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and classroom observations. While most teachers who participated in site visits were unaware about whether or not they received PD that was sponsored or funded by Texas GEAR UP SG, many teachers and administrators were familiar with the Educator Outreach Coach hired by the Support Center. Some teachers reported that they recognized her name, but did not recall interactions with her or any strategies discussed with her. Other teachers provided very positive feedback about her, as they have in the past. Teachers and administrators in Districts 1, 3, and 4 felt she gave useful feedback and provided excellent resources that could be immediately implemented in classrooms. Only a few teachers and administrators were unfamiliar with or had never worked with the Educator Outreach Coach.

In looking ahead to Year 6, Texas GEAR UP SG should continue to offer teacher PD opportunities on a broad range of topics because they are an important opportunity for teachers to sustain rigor and increased academic success in all students in Texas GEAR UP SG schools. This should include topics that also help them to facilitate a college-going culture on their high school campus, such as financial literacy.

4.3.1 Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction is a strategy in which teachers provide varied instructional methods to meet students' diverse needs. According to data reported in GUIDES, five of the six high schools provided differentiated instruction PD to teachers in Year 5. High School L is the only school that did not offer PD on differentiated instruction. Overall, of the 328 teachers who received PD in Year 5, 279 teachers—or 85%—received PD in differentiated instruction at 110 different events across all cohort schools in Year 5, making this type of PD the most common PD topic delivered to teachers during the 2016–17 school year (Tables F.32 and F.33, Appendix F).

4.3.2 Advanced Instructional Strategies

Advanced instructional strategies includes PD related to pre-AP and AP courses, the SpringBoard® curriculum for ELA and mathematics, and other topics concerned with academic rigor.[113] According to data reported in GUIDES, all high schools provided at least some advanced instructional strategies PD to teachers in Year 5. Across the cohort of schools, 205 staff members received advanced instructional strategies PD at 61 events in Year 5 (Tables F.32 and F.33, Appendix F). High School M offered the most advanced instructional strategies PD events to teachers (24), while High School L provided the fewest PD events on the topic (1).

4.3.3 Vertical Teaming

Vertical teaming is a strategy that allows schools to align instruction across grade levels, increase academic rigor, achieve sustainability, and ease the academic transition from middle school to high school and between grades. According to data reported in GUIDES, only four of the six high schools provided PD on vertical teaming (High School K and L did not provide PD on the topic) in Year 5. In contrast, all high school provided vertical teaming PD in Year 4. Across the cohort of schools, 74 staff members received vertical teaming PD at 25 events in Year 5 (Tables F.32 and F.33, Appendix F). Only High School M held at least five vertical team events, the target of Project Objective 3.2. Overall, the Project Objective 3.2 was not met in Year 5.

Teachers in High Schools H, I, K, and L reported on site visits that despite efforts made by school and district administrators to consistently implement vertical teaming initiatives, no formal vertical teaming took place. School staff at High Schools J and M reported that vertical teaming typically takes place in PLCs and departments and is led by instructional coaches and master

[113] SpringBoard® is the College Board's print and online program for a customizable pathway integrating rigorous instruction, performance-based assessment, and professional learning. More details about this program are available at http://springboardprogram.collegeboard.org.

teachers respectively. A teacher from High School K reported that it is difficult to receive guidance on vertical teaming even within the high school with such high administrator and teacher turnover.

4.3.4 Project-Based Learning

PBL is a teaching method that prompts students to develop skills and gain knowledge through work on a project that explores a real-life problem or challenge. According to data reported in GUIDES, five of the six high schools provided PBL PD to teachers in Year 5. Across the cohort of schools, 112 staff members received PBL PD at 31 events in Year 5 (Tables F.32 and F.33, Appendix F). High School I provided the most PBL PD events in Year 5, with a total of 11 events, while High School L did not offer any PBL PD events.

4.3.5 Texas Guaranteed Student Loan Corporation Financial Literacy

TG is a Texas GEAR UP SG collaborator that provides financial literacy instruction to the cohort.[114] Specifically, TG offers a train-the-trainer financial literacy program, provides financial literacy materials to cohort students, serves as a direct point of contact for parents with financial literacy questions, and delivers customized presentations at the request of schools or Texas GEAR UP SG staff. Only one school (High School J) provided their train-the-trainer financial literacy program to Texas GEAR UP SG staff.

During the Year 5 site visits, two College Preparation Advisors reported that they did not use TG materials because they felt the material did not provide any new information that is not already provided by Texas GEAR UP SG. In addition, the College Preparation Advisors expressed that they felt the material was not engaging or exciting for the students.

4.4 Participation by Community Stakeholders in Texas GEAR UP State Grant

Community alliances can play critical roles in helping schools with tutoring, mentoring, job site visits/job shadowing, and college visits. TEA established the following two project objectives for the Texas GEAR UP SG with regard to community alliances:

- Project Objective 8.1: All participating districts will form business alliances that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.
- Project Objective 8.2: Participating campuses will form alliances with governmental entities and community groups to enhance the information available to students regarding scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness.

Similar to Year 4, all six of the Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort schools worked to establish alliances within their community with local/city government entities, businesses, and educational institutions in Year 5, meeting Project Objectives 8.1 and 8.2. Site visit data about community alliances specified some of the ways in which high schools collaborated with these community

[114] TG, formerly known as Texas Guaranteed, changed their name to Trellis in fall 2017. For more information, please visit http://www.trelliscompany.org/.

groups. Many of the organizations that Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported working with at their respective schools provided college access support to targeted students, such as seniors or low-income students. Since the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students served by these organizations was only a small sub-set of total students served, Texas GEAR UP SG staff did not feel that the organizations had much overlap or duplication of services. A College Preparation Advisor in District 2 noted, however, that it would be helpful to collect data from other organizations when they provide advising or mentoring services to any Texas GEAR UP SG cohort student.

Community alliances included organizations based on- and off-campus. On-campus organizations, including Advise Texas and CIS, provided support by helping to chaperone college and job site visits and assisting with events and workshops. Districts 3 and 4 discussed their collaborations with off-campus organizations in the community that provided support for job shadowing activities and job site visits.

Each district reported that they also continued to hold advisory council meetings, but participation and engagement varied across districts. Texas GEAR UP SG staff, school administrators, and students participated in advisory councils in all four districts, but District 2 reported that they lacked participation from parents and community alliances. The Texas GEAR UP SG District 4 Coordinator reported finding it difficult to define the role of the advisory council and the role each member should play; the Coordinator felt the advisory council could play an important role in sustainability, but the district was not invested enough in the grant to make sustainability a focus of everyone's time during the meetings.

Overall, Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported that they continued to work with community alliances, both on their high school campuses and in the local communities. These organizations provided support to Texas GEAR UP SG programming and services, such as job site visits, events, and workshops.

5. Statewide Services

In addition to the data already presented in previous chapters focused on Texas GEAR UP SG activities that occurred within the GEAR UP high schools, additional implementation data are available related to statewide initiatives. That is, the Texas GEAR UP SG seeks to impact students not just at the GEAR UP schools, but also through the provision of guidance, information, and resources related to college access, readiness, and success for all Texas districts and communities. TEA has identified the following project objectives related to statewide services:

- Project Objective 7.1: By the end of the first year, the state office will make information regarding college options, preparation, and financing will be made available to students, parents, and educators throughout the state.
- Project Objective 9.1: Annually increase the number of educators participating in GEAR UP professional learning, including through Project Share and face-to-face trainings.[115]
- Project Objective 9.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 40% of Texas school districts will have utilized at least one Texas GEAR UP statewide resource, including materials and PD.

Texas GEAR UP SG includes collaboration between TEA and various organizations—the Texas GEAR UP technical assistance provider, UT-IPSI Support Center; FOCUS Training, GeoFORCE, AMS, Signal Vine, and Raise Achievement These collaborators are part of the program to play a crucial role in meeting the Texas GEAR UP SG statewide goals.

Under TEA's direction, these organizations (the Support Center and AMS Pictures, in particular) develop and disseminate supplemental statewide materials, support the statewide coalition of GEAR UP grantees, and plan and implement the annual Texas statewide GEAR UP conference. Other collaborators also have statewide missions.

The following sections include descriptions of the statewide services provided by TEA and its collaborators in Year 5.

5.1 Texas GEAR UP SG Website

As in prior years, in Year 5, the Texas GEAR UP SG website (http://www.texasgearup.com) continued to include resources such as interactive lessons, guides, and college planning toolkits (such as grade-level guides). Enhancements to the site in Year 5 included a new college and career video series that features lesson plans for teachers and counselors (developed by Raise Achievement) to incorporate into college and career readiness lessons. Plans for adding financial aid information and resources for parents were also started in Year 5.

AMS Pictures reported that 31% of districts had accessed the Texas GEAR UP SG website during the Year 5 reporting period (March 31, 2016–February 28, 2017), which is an eight percentage point increase from Year 4 (23%). Page views also increased in Year 5 to 195,649

[115] Project Share—now Texas Gateway—is an online communication and teaching platform that is available to teachers statewide. For more information, please visit https://www.texasgateway.org/

from 124,853 in Year 4 with 68% of Year 5 page views coming from new sessions. In an interview, AMS Pictures noted that they are on track to meet Project Objective 9.2 at the end of Year 5. They added that they marketed the website on social media to increase awareness and also attended non-GEAR UP conferences with the purpose of networking and sharing the website with new district and school administrators.

During Year 5 site visits, College Preparation Advisors described how they used the website with cohort students. High Schools H, I, K, and L used the career interest inventory section of the website with students to help steer career exploration discussions; the College Preparation Advisor from High School J reported that they felt the inventory was often not accurate and thus preferred other resources. College Preparation Advisors from High Schools H, I, J, and L reported that they found the list of Texas colleges and universities provided on the website to be an excellent resource for students to use when researching postsecondary education options to consider.

5.2 Texas Gateway: Providing Statewide Teacher Professional Development Opportunities

To provide statewide teacher PD, TEA provided resources through an online communication and teaching platform that is available to teachers statewide—Texas Gateway (formerly Project Share). Usage data on Texas Gateway were not available in Year 5. Accordingly, the evaluation team was not able to track whether or not the cohort was on track to meet Project Objective 9.1 in Year 5.

5.3 Statewide Coalition of GEAR UP Grantees

As detailed in the Annual Implementation Reports published to date (O'Donnel, et al., 2013; Briggs et al., 2015; Briggs et al., 2016; Spinney et al., 2018), the statewide coalition of GEAR UP grantees is intended to promote statewide collaboration and study critical GEAR UP topic areas. The Texas GEAR UP Coalition is a membership organization of GEAR UP partnership grant directors in Texas, state grant leadership, and key state collaborators. According to the Year 4 APR, the Texas GEAR UP State Grant Evaluation Coalition met quarterly to "share and leverage resources to positively impact students' lives, while also providing leadership and unified voice at the local, state and national level."

5.4 Statewide GEAR UP Conference

As in prior years, TEA and the Texas GEAR UP SG Support Center delivered an annual statewide GEAR UP conference in Year 5 to promote GEAR UP practices statewide. Approximately 277 GEAR UP professionals attended the 2016 Texas GEAR UP conference (approximately 265 attended in 2015). According to TEA's APR to ED, sessions at the statewide GEAR UP conference were rated very highly by participants. Participants' favorite sessions included the plenary presentation by Dr. Juliet Garcia and the newly introduced Counselor Institute, which provided training on college admissions and financial aid to GEAR UP staff.

6. Implementation Conclusions and Next Steps

6.1 Key Implementation Findings

- **Progress in Advanced Course Taking**. According to data reported in GUIDES, in Year 5, just over half (56%) of the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort was enrolled in at least one advanced course, an increase of one percentage point from Year 4. The percentage of cohort students enrolled in four advanced courses decreased from 27% in Year 4 to 14% in Year 5. Across all schools, the content area in which students were most likely to be enrolled in an advanced course was ELA. In addition, as reported in GUIDES, approximately 73% of the cohort, including 68% of LEP students, had completed a pre-AP or AP course prior to Grade 11, indicating that the cohort had already met Project Objective 2.2 (requiring 60% of the cohort, including LEP students, to complete a pre-AP or AP course) prior to the end of Year 5.
- **Progress with Student Support Services**. Project Objective 4.1 required that at least 75% of students participate in at least one type of student support service, including tutoring, mentoring, and/or counseling by the end of Year 2. In Year 5, all three services were offered at each school and an average of 94% of the cohort received at least one service, an increase of three percentage points from Year 4. Counseling was the service most often received (93%) and increased by six percentage points from Year 4. On average, almost half (44%) received tutoring services, which is a decrease of seven percentage points from Year 4. Over one-third of students (38%) received mentoring services in Year 5, compared to 32% in Year 4. In addition to these three core services, approximately 80% met with their College Preparation Advisors, an eight percentage point increase from Year 4, and 75% of cohort students received financial aid counseling and/or mentoring in Year 5.
- **PSAT, SAT, ACT, and TSIA Completion**. Almost three-quarters (74%) of students participated in the PSAT in Year 5 according to data reported in GUIDES. For the fall 2016 PSAT administration, the overall mean PSAT score was 866; only 14% of students met the College Board College and Career Readiness Benchmark Combined Score (970). Data on SAT or ACT participation had not yet been recorded in GUIDES by the end of the Year 5 reporting period (February 28, 2017). Most (87%) of students reported on the survey that they had taken or planned to take the SAT by the end of Grade 11. When asked about the ACT on the survey, 18% of students reported that they had already taken it and an additional 48% said they planned to take it by the end of Grade 11. According to data reported in GUIDES, of the 27% of students who had taken the TSIA in Reading, 48% of those who had taken it passed and of the 23% of students who had taken the TSIA in Mathematics, 24% had passed.
- **Postsecondary Planning Progress**. According to student survey data, the percentage of students who aspire to pursue a four-year degree or higher decreased from 72% in Year 4 to 70% in Year 5; further, the percentage of students who expect to pursue a four-year degree or higher decreased from 60% in Year 4 to 57% in Year 5. However, most (91%) of students agreed or strongly agreed that attending college is important for their future, a three percentage point increase from Year 4. Of the student respondents who reported participating in GEAR UP in Year 5 (92% of all respondents), over half (62%) said the Texas

GEAR UP SG program activities have helped them decide to go to college after graduation, which is an increase of one percentage point since Year 4. The most often selected reason for not continuing education after high school continued to be wanting to work (58%). While 72% of students and 71% of parents reported that they had spoken with Texas GEAR UP SG staff about financial aid, 80% of students overestimated the cost of attending a four-year public college in Texas.

- **PD Progress**. Texas GEAR UP SG schools offered an overall total of 181 PD events for differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, PBL, financial literacy, GEAR UP, and vertical teaming, ranging from 3 to 60 events across all six schools. This is a decrease from 207 events in Year 4. Trainings in Year 5 for differentiated instruction were offered most often (110 events). Overall, 328 teachers participated in PD across all six schools. In addition, the Support Center continued to provide PD to all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools through an Educator Outreach Coach. The coach worked directly with teachers and administrators and site visit findings reveal that the strategies, trainings, and feedback provided by the coach were helpful.

Another way to summarize Year 5 implementation, as was done in prior years, is to create a high-level view of each school's mix of implementation of various activity types. This summary builds on the work of identifying a mix of implementation strategies intended to involve a range of stakeholders (e.g., students, parents, teachers, community, and statewide collaborators). For the purposes of this high-level view, each school was considered as having engaged in, or not engaged in, each type of activity. There were 22 activities tracked in Year 5. Table 6.1 summarizes Texas GEAR UP SG strategies implemented by each school in Year 5.[116] While none of the middle schools implemented all of the activities tracked in prior years and just two high schools (High School J and High School M) implemented all 19 strategies in Year 4, in Year 5, four high schools (High Schools H, I, J, and M) implemented all 22 strategies. The remaining high schools came close to implementing all 22 strategies, however; High Schools K and L implemented 20 and 19 out of the 22 possible strategies, respectively. The strategies that were not implemented across all schools included parent college visits, educational field trips and vertical teaming events. Parent college visits were only implemented by High Schools J and M in Year 4, but were implemented by High Schools H, I, J, and M in Year 5. All schools implemented vertical teaming events in Year 4, but only High Schools H, I, J, and M implemented vertical teaming in Year 5. All schools implemented educational field trips in Year 4, but only High Schools H, I, J, K, and M did so in Year 5. As with earlier indicators regarding the mix of implementation, this summary does not take into account quality, quantity, or the effect of the given implementation activity.

[116] Three new strategies were added to the table in Year 5: PSAT Participation, SAT/ACT Participation, and TSIA Participation.

Table 6.1. Overview of Texas GEAR UP SG Implementation Strategies by School Year 5 (Grade 11)

	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M
Implementation Strategies						
Advanced Course Enrollment	X	X	X	X	X	X
Pre-AP/AP Course Enrollment	X	X	X	X	X	X
PSAT Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X
SAT/ ACT Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X
TSIA Participation	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dual Credit Enrollment	X	X	X	X	X	X
Summer Programs	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Support Services: Tutoring	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Support Services: Mentoring	X	X	X	X	X	X
Student Support Services: Counseling/Advising	X	X	X	X	X	X
College Visits	X	X	X	X	X	X
Job Site Visits/Job Shadowing	X	X	X	X	X	X
Educational Field Trips	X	X	X	X		X
Student Workshops/Events	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent Events	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent Counseling/ Advising	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent Event on College Preparation/Financial Aid	X	X	X	X	X	X
Parent College Visit	X	X	X			X
Teacher Professional Development	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vertical Teaming Events	X	X	X			X
Community Alliances	X	X	X	X	X	X
Use of Statewide Services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total Number of Strategies Implemented (Out of 22)						
	22	22	22	20	19	22

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017; fall 2016 and spring 2017 site visit data; Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: An "X" indicates that a school reported implementing the strategy, although it does not capture the level of implementation (such as the number of students served) for each strategy. AP = advanced placement.

In addition, Table 6.2 includes indicators regarding whether each school has met or is on track to meet relevant project objectives. That is, based on available data, the school is likely to meet the given project objective within the expected timeframe given their current progress. Notably, of the 18 project objectives included in Table 6.2, all schools were are track to meet (or continue meeting) a range of 9–11 objectives, depending on the school. No schools were on track to meet Project Objectives 2.3, 5.1, 7.3, and 7.4. Table 6.2 displays how specific schools are doing regarding each objective. In order to meet near-term academic preparation objectives (Project Objectives 1.2, 2.3, 5.2, 5.3, 7.4), each Texas GEAR UP SG high school will need to increase their emphasis on advanced course taking/completion and preparation for college entrance exams (both test-taking and successful scores). In addition, each Texas GEAR UP SG high school will also need to expand college admissions and financial aid training opportunities to teachers and counselors in order to adequately prepare students for the college application process and meet Project Objective 7.4.

Table 6.2. School Progress Meeting Project Objectives, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Project Objectives	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M
1.2 - By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement, will meet or exceed the state average.	X	X		X	X	X
2.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all participating high schools will make opportunities available for each student to complete 18 hours of college credit (through AP, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment) by the time he or she graduates from high school.	X	X	X	X	X	X
2.2. By the end of the project's fifth year, 60% of the cohort, including limited English proficient (LEP) students, will complete a pre-AP or AP course.	X			X	X	X
2.3: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 50% of cohort students will graduate with college credit earned by AP exam or through dual credit.						
3.1: All core content teachers will have the opportunity to participate in training with regard to differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, and PBL.	X	X	X	X		
3.2: Teams of teachers at the middle and high schools will complete at least five days of vertical teams preparation and implementation each year.	X	X	X			X
4.1: By the end of the second year, at least 75% of the 8th grade students will be involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program based on results of teacher/counselor input and diagnostic data.	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.2: Beginning in the second year, at least 30% of the students will be involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level, ease transitions, and increase college awareness.	X	X	X	X	X	X
4.3: By the end of the project's third year, the on-time promotion rate of cohort students will exceed the state average.					X	
4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, the necessary academic preparation for college. [a]			X			
5.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all cohort students will complete the ACT Aspire or the Preliminary SAT. By the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT.						
5.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of students meeting criterion on the ACT/SAT will meet or exceed the state average.					X	
5.3: The number of students who graduate college ready in mathematics and English will meet or exceed the state average. [b]	X		X		X	X
7.2: By the end of the first year, information and workshops aimed at linking college attendance to career success will be available to 100% of cohort students and their parents.	X	X	X	X	X	X
7.3: 50% of parents will participate in at least three Texas GEAR UP SG events each year.						
7.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, teachers and counselors will complete training in the college admissions and financial aid process.						
8.1: All participating districts will form business alliances that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.	X	X	X	X	X	X
8.2: Participating campuses will form alliances with governmental entities and community groups to enhance the information available to students regarding scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness.	X	X	X	X	X	X

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017; fall 2016 and spring 2017 site visit data.

Note: An "X" indicates that a school is making reasonable progress toward an objective, although it does not capture the completion or attainment of an objective.

[a] High schools were marked as making progress toward Project Objective 4.4 if students participated in at least on in-person college visit and one of the following: met or exceeded the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) in both English Language Arts (ELA) (>=351) and Mathematics (>=350), completed one or more Mathematics courses beyond Algebra II, enrolled in a coherent sequence of CTE courses as part of a four-year plan of study, or at the of the fifth year students' personal graduation plan includes the Foundation High School Program with a Multidisciplinary endorsement.

[b] The state average of students who will graduate college ready as indicated by the Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) in 2015–16, was 22.6% for ELA and 18.1% for mathematics.

6.2 Facilitators and Barriers to Texas GEAR UP State Grant Implementation

Data from prior implementation reports (Spinney et al., 2018; Briggs et al., 2016; Briggs et al., 2015; O'Donnel et al., 2013) about facilitators and barriers primarily came from site visits and/or parent survey data. This section primarily relies on site visit data, with data from GUIDES (reported through February 28, 2017) as well as student and parent surveys to supplement findings.

6.2.1 Facilitators to Implementation

The parent liaisons in Districts 1, 2, and 3, whose positions were devoted to engaging parents and leading parent events, were described by parents and Texas GEAR UP SG staff as potential vehicles for providing tailored information or access to information that parents would not have normally sought. The parent liaisons in Districts 1 and 3 are parent cohort members and already have established informal relationships with other cohort parents and other members of the community. This provided them more visibility among other cohort parents who may not have been aware of Texas GEAR UP SG in the past or were reluctant to approach other Texas GEAR UP SG staff with whom they were unfamiliar. As the person designated to provide parents with information and resources, parent liaisons may be more likely to build relationships with parents that facilitate trust between parents and the program. Further, this trust may prove to be valuable when parents are asked to provide personal information, such as tax and income information, for financial aid applications.

A College Preparation Advisor reported appreciating opportunities from the Support Center to collaborate with other College Preparation Advisors in Year 5 and found the extended collaboration and sharing of resources to be helpful. Specifically, two College Preparation Advisors mentioned that they began using a matrix shared by another College Preparation Advisor that compared student GPAs and SAT scores with acceptance requirements of several universities in Texas. Both said that the matrix was a helpful visual for determining the schools that accepted their current scores and grades. College Preparation Advisors reported that they had time during the summer to meet together at a college counseling conference and at the Texas GEAR UP SG summer camp. One College Preparation Advisor described this time together as helpful for connecting with one another.

Potentially as a result of the perceived effectiveness and availability of college visits through the Texas GEAR UP SG (Figure 4.5), cohort students reported increased knowledge of postsecondary education in the student survey and site visits (Figure 3.5). Additionally, student participation in college visits and college student shadowing was positively correlated with knowledge of the importance and benefit of college as well as plans to take advanced courses (Table 4.3). This finding may also serve to facilitate two long-term goals of the grant—for more students to enroll in postsecondary education and graduate with college credit earned by AP exam or through dual credit. College Preparation Advisors from Districts 2 and 4 reported that during Year 5, students had opportunities to speak to and/or shadow college students, sometimes including alumni from their respective high schools. Students and Texas GEAR UP

SG staff also reported that students from High Schools H, I, J, and M received opportunities to speak with professors and observe classes during college visits. Most college visits in Year 5 continued to include campus tours and meetings or presentations with institutional admissions staff.

A collaborator noted in an interview that “local voices” (i.e., school and district administrators) who are bought into the grant and who are embedded within the schools are critical in making the Texas GEAR UP SG work. Texas GEAR UP SG staff at School I continued to express frustration at the lack of buy-in from their school and district administrators. However, the District 1 and 2 Coordinators reported that their school and district administrators were very engaged with the grant and committed to ensuring that the grant succeeds in their respective districts. The administrator in District 1 regularly attends Texas GEAR UP SG staff meetings and the District Coordinator explained that this level of engagement ensures that the administrators are well-informed on the goals of the Texas GEAR UP SG and the strategies the team is putting in place to work towards meeting those goals. The District 2 Coordinator noted that despite school and district administrators starting their positions in Year 5, they have ensured that the District Coordinator is involved in leadership meetings and able to provide input on how the Texas GEAR UP SG may provide the district with services that are tailored to their needs as well as receive feedback on how the district can support the grant.

6.2.2 Overcoming the Barriers Described in Prior Years

Teachers of the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort reported in Year 4 that the push from grant and district staff to increase enrollments in AP courses and meet Texas GEAR UP SG Project Objective 2.2 (Project Objective 2.2. calls for 60% of the cohort to complete a pre-AP or AP course by Year 5) led to an increase of students they perceived to be academically unprepared for advanced level courses. Due to decreased readiness, some teachers felt it was necessary to decrease the rigor of their advanced courses and make accommodations that met the variety of readiness levels. The one percentage point decrease from Year 4 to Year 5 in the percentage of cohort students not enrolled in any advanced courses may suggest that schools and/or Texas GEAR UP SG did not, or were unable to, move students initially enrolled in AP or other advanced courses to on-level courses that may be better suited for their readiness and preparedness levels. While teachers in Year 5 made similar comments during site visits regarding the increased enrollment and lack of perceived preparedness, some teachers said they continue to maintain high rigor and expectations of all students in their advanced classes, despite the variation in levels of readiness.

Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff indicated in Year 4 that the lack of appropriate Texas GEAR UP SG staff in their districts was a barrier to meeting specific requirements of the grant. As noted Appendix E, each of the Texas GEAR UP SG districts hired new Texas GEAR UP SG staff and/or transitioned staff within their respective teams. Feedback regarding the new data clerk and parent liaison staff in Districts 1 and 2 was very positive from other Texas GEAR UP SG staff and noted to be assets to successful implementation of the grant. The increase in percentage of parents who attended at least one event may be due to the increased efforts to contact more parents by the parent liaison. It was also reported by some College Preparation Advisors that they felt that they were able to be more focused on their student and parent direct

service tasks in Year 5 with the new staff brought in because they were no longer leading planning and data collection tasks.

6.2.3 Continued and New Barriers to Implementation in Year 5

Teachers continued to perceive a lack of student motivation to succeed in high school as a barrier to high student outcomes. Teachers felt that since students were not motivated to learn on their own, it can be difficult to implement curriculum like PBL "which depends on self-motivation," according to some teachers. Other teachers said that their students were motivated to earn good grades that are needed for college acceptance; however, they were not motivated to learn the material in a way that would allow them to apply the knowledge in other lessons and produce high quality work. Several teachers across Texas GEAR UP SG school districts also mentioned that the amount of class missed by cohort students for Texas GEAR UP SG meetings and field trips became troublesome for some students because they were not motivated to pick up missed work or seek tutoring for missed lessons. A teacher at School H said that the frequent missed class time was more worrisome for her than the missed work.

Both Texas GEAR UP SG staff and school staff continued to report that parental engagement was very difficult to facilitate. As reported earlier, no school was successful at achieving Project Objective 7.3 (50% of cohort parents attend three or more college awareness activities) according to GUIDES. However, the percentage of parents who attended three or more activities did increase from 9% in Year 4 to 17% in Year 5 (with Schools H, I, J, and M all reporting that at least 14% of parents attended 3 or more activities), potentially due to the addition of staff fully devoted to engaging parents in activities and Texas GEAR UP SG staff's work with the new Family Engagement Trainer at the Support Center. Concerns about the quality of "authentic relationships" between parents and Texas GEAR UP SG staff were discussed by District Coordinators on site visits in Districts 3 and 4. While both Texas GEAR UP SG Coordinators felt the content provided to parents was of high quality, they were unsure whether parents explored the information further after initial receipt or understood how to apply it in their efforts at home to prepare their child for postsecondary education.

Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported that they were frustrated by the limited buy-in for the grant from administrators and staff. While the level of buy-in affects the current level of implementation and the success of the grant, Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported that they were also concerned with how it would affect the sustainability of the strategies and activities initiated by Texas GEAR UP SG after the grant leaves the school. The effects on current implementation included the lack of prioritization on approving and planning for field trips and encouragement of school staff to facilitate of college-going culture among all students. Regarding sustainability, some Texas GEAR UP SG staff mentioned that administrators have not actively planned for or looked for guidance on how to implement some Texas GEAR UP SG strategies because their focus was on meeting grant goals instead of developing quality services that may be duplicated.

6.3 Potential Promising Practices

SESSION ROTATION AT PARENT AND FAMILY EVENTS

Texas GEAR UP SG staff in District 4 noted that they incorporated a variety of short sessions into parent meetings during Year 5 and had parents rotate in small groups throughout the meeting to different groups. This new format allowed parents to participate in smaller groups and hear about a variety of topics during the meeting. A College Preparation Advisor in the district said that the grant staff received positive feedback from parents regarding the new format and felt the parents appreciated the breaks between sessions and the variety of information and presenters. The Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator in District 4 was hopeful that the new format of rotating sessions would allow Texas GEAR UP SG staff to begin to develop more authentic relationships with parents in the district so that they are able to receive more tailored services based on their needs.

EXTENDED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Support Center's Educator Outreach Coach continued to work in the Texas GEAR UP SG schools during Year 5 and provided PD trainings on classroom management, how to incorporate technology into lessons, and differentiated instruction. Districts cited different ways that teachers and administrators worked with the coach, including classroom observations with feedback provided to administrators and teachers as well as training sessions with instructional coaches and master teachers. The Support Center reported that after large turnovers in teaching staff between Year 4 and Year 5 across all Texas GEAR UP SG schools, they determined that they should prioritize working with new teachers. Administrators said they appreciated the effort the coach and Support Center made to receive input from the instructional staff at the schools to ensure that the coach's PD was tailored to the needs of the teachers and students at the school.

TEXAS GEAR UP SG STAFF TO STREAMLINE SERVICES PROVIDED

Texas GEAR UP SG staff in Districts 1 and 2 were hired in Year 5 to focus on tasks including parent engagement and GEAR UP-related data collection and entry. College Preparation Advisors in both districts commented that these additional members of their Texas GEAR UP SG teams allowed them to focus more of their time on engaging with and providing more services for students because they are no longer leading or devoting significant time to developing parent engagement strategies and collecting data for services administered by the grant.

6.4 Recommended Next Steps

Several important next steps for Texas GEAR UP SG implementation were identified, and the following next steps are recommended:

PROVIDE TARGETED SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

As students begin to consider realistic options for postsecondary education after Year 6 and make decisions on the appropriate education programs to pursue, Texas GEAR UP SG staff should consider targeting students based on interest and academic fit when recruiting students and parents for activities such as college visits, educational field trips, and summer

programming. The interests of students may be best determined through individual discussions between Texas GEAR UP SG staff or other school staff and students as well as feedback on participation in previous activities. Academic fit may be best determined by grades, teacher and counselor feedback and TSIA pass rates or SAT scores. Targeting students using these or similar indicators may provide students with useful information to make more informed decisions about their postsecondary education and career plans. It may also ensure that students across the cohort are given opportunities to participate in Texas GEAR UP SG activities and their time engaging with Texas GEAR UP SG is efficiently used.

DEVELOP GUIDANCE ON COLLABORATION BETWEEN TEXAS GEAR UP SG STAFF AND STAFF FROM OTHER COLLEGE ACCESS PROGRAMS

College access programs, such as Advise TX, are available on each of the Texas GEAR UP SG campus and each provide postsecondary education readiness and awareness services similar to those provided by Texas GEAR UP SG. However, many of the other programs target mostly or only students in Grades 11 and/or 12 and provide services that help students select and apply to postsecondary education schools and find and apply for financial aid. Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff explained that they invited some programs to family events so that they may share information about their resources and programs with parents of Texas GEAR UP SG students. While Texas GEAR UP SG staff acknowledged that they will likely work closely with these programs in Year 6, they were not able to provide many details regarding their plans to ensure timely and efficient advising and services. Guidance from TEA and the Support Center on how to align efforts between Texas GEAR UP SG and other college access programs and how to ensure that the quality of resources and services provided by the other programs meets the expectations of the Support Center and TEA may be helpful for Texas GEAR UP SG staff. Effective communication and collaboration between Texas GEAR UP SG staff and staff of other programs may facilitate higher quality services to prepare cohort students to be successful in postsecondary education and sustain initiatives and practices implemented by Texas GEAR UP SG.

ENCOURAGE MORE FREQUENT VERTICAL TEAMING ACTIVITIES

The overall total number of vertical teaming PD events reported in GUIDES decreased from 61 in Year 4 to only 25 in Year 5 and only Schools H and I increased the number of events from Year 4 to Year 5. Additionally, the total number of teachers who received at least one vertical teaming PD opportunity decreased from 255 in Year 4 to 74 in Year 5. As noted in the case studies, some teachers explained that they conduct informal vertical teaming within their PLCs or within their department, but not often in more formal settings. Vertical teaming to align instructional strategies may be a strategy for districts to implement more often as a way to increase the academic readiness of students, thus increasing the rigor applied in advanced courses. Consistent vertical teaming activities also help districts sustain academic rigor throughout students' secondary education and ultimately increase the sustainability of the Texas GEAR UP SG.

PART III: TEXAS GEAR UP STATE GRANT BUDGETS AND EXPENDITURES

7. Analysis of Texas GEAR UP State Grant Budgets and Expenditures

The following chapter includes an analysis of how TEA and the schools budgeted and expended funds for Texas GEAR UP SG in state fiscal year (FY) 2016 (September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016), as well as budgeted data for FY 2017 (September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017). There are three key areas of analyses for both time points: (1) the overall Texas GEAR UP SG as managed by TEA, (2) the overall budget and spending data from the four Texas GEAR UP SG school districts, and (3) the districts' cost categories (i.e., payroll, professional and contracted services, supplies and materials, other operating costs, capital outlay). At a basic level, the budget and expenditure data provide an accounting of how federal grants are utilized by the Texas GEAR UP SG. In addition to the data throughout these sections providing early information from which to begin to analyze costs over the course of the project, the data will also contribute to eventually understanding the sustainability of project outcomes after funding ends. That is, understanding how funds are utilized at the state and district levels and examining those trends within cost categories will inform projections about how services might be continued after grant funding from this award concludes. The following evaluation questions related to costs are addressed in this chapter:

- For what services and activities do grantees use grant funds each year and over the entire time period of the grant?
- To what extent were grantees able to secure matching funds?
- For what services and activities do grantees use matching funds each year and over the entire time period of the grant?
- How did schools budget for Texas GEAR UP SG in Year 5?

7.1 Overall Texas GEAR UP Budget and Expenditures

In the fourth year of the Texas GEAR UP SG (FY 2016), TEA received $5 million from ED; this is the same amount received in FY 2015. In addition, a requirement of the federal grant is to match all expenditures of the federal funds, dollar for dollar, through local district grantee funds, in-kind contractor contributions and allowable state funds each year of the grant cycle.

Table 7.1 provides an overview of how TEA allocated and expended federal GEAR UP grant funds for state FY 2016. Projects on which TEA expended the highest percentage of funds included the following: product development (32%), technical assistance (29%), and grants to districts (28%); TEA expended the highest percentage of funds in the same three categories in FY 2015. Product development reflects the significant investment made by TEA in the Texas GEAR UP website (http://www.texasgearup.com), which became available statewide by the end of FY 2013; FY 2016 included continued revisions and expanded content. In some FY 2016 cases, expended amounts reflect a slightly lower amount than the allocated funds. For example,

the expended amount for "technical assistance" reflects 94% of funding allocated and "grants to districts" reflects 87% of the funding allocated. Progress in district implementation in Year 4 is reflected by 90% of allocated funds in the "grants to districts" category being expended, which was the same (90%) in Year 3 (Spinney et. al., 2018). TEA continued to expend the full amount of allocated funding in Year 4 for product development, Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation, and Texas Education Agency direct and indirect administrative costs.

Table 7.1. Texas GEAR UP SG Award Funds and Matching Contributions, Fiscal Year 2016

Categorical Cost Data for Year 4					
Category	**Grant Funds Budgeted[a]**	**Grant Funds Allocated[b]**	**Grant Funds Expended**	**Grant Funds Unexpended[c]**	**Matching Contributions**
Grants to Districts	$1,458,000	$1,505,053	$1,315,725	$189,328	$1,377,461
Technical Assistance (UT-IPSI)[d]	$1,457,000	$1,457,000	$1,371,224	$85,776	$165,096
Product Development (AMS Pictures)	$1,510,000	$1,831,622	$1,510,000	–	$249,658
Texas GEAR UP SG Evaluation	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	–	–
Texas Education Agency Direct and Indirect Admin Costs[e]	$325,000	$325,000	$325,000	–	–
TOTAL	$5,000,000	$5,368,676	$4,771,950	$275,104	$1,792,214

[a] The Grant Funds Budgeted column indicates the budgeted funding breakdown for Year 4 federal funds ($5,000,000).
[b] The Grant Funds Allocated column includes actual allocations (e.g., awards, contracts, grants) and includes carryover funds from the prior year.
[c] Total FY 2016 Grant Funds Unexpended column accounts for both budgeted funds that were not allocated and allocated funds that were not expended.
[d] Provided by UT-IPSI: The University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Public School Initiatives.
[e] Includes salaries and wages, employee benefits, travel, materials and supplies, and other Texas Education Agency (TEA) direct and indirect administrative costs.
[f] TEA matches 100% of the remaining expenditures with state-funded program expenditures on the Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate® Test Program.

Table 7.2 provides information about how TEA budgeted to use funds in FY 2017. ED awarded $5 million to TEA to implement Year 5 of the Texas GEAR UP SG. This award, in addition to carryover from prior years, was set up in the agency's FY 2017 budget. Funds were allocated to projects from this budget (combining funds originating in Year 5 with any funds carried over from previous years). The total amount allocated for FY 2017 projects was $5,277,759. Projects to which TEA allocated the highest percentage of funds included the following: technical assistance (39%), grants to districts (28%), and product development (21%). Funds budgeted for technical assistance included the salaries for College Preparation Advisors and activities such as the GEAR UP state conference, which was also the case for FY 2016.

Table 7.2. Texas GEAR UP SG Award Funds, Fiscal Year 2017

Categorical Cost Data for Year 5		
Category	**Grant Funds Budgeted[a]**	**Grant Funds Allocated[b]**
Grants to Districts	$1,459,000	$1,459,000
Technical Assistance (UT-IPSI)[c]	$1,930,000	$2,070,000
Product Development (AMS Pictures)	$990,630	$1,128,389
Texas GEAR UP SG Evaluation	$250,000	$250,000
Texas Education Agency Direct and Indirect Admin Costs[d]	$370,370	$370,370
TOTAL	$5,000,000	$5,277,759

[a] The Grant Funds Budgeted column indicates the budgeted funding breakdown for Year 5 federal funds ($5,000,000).
[b] The Grant Funds Allocated column includes actual allocations (e.g., awards, contracts, grants) and includes carryover funds from the prior years.
[c] Provided by UT-IPSI: The University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Public School Initiatives.
[d] Includes salaries and wages, employee benefits, travel, materials and supplies, other Texas Education Agency direct and indirect administrative costs.

7.2 School Districts' Expenditures in Fiscal Year 2016

In the Year 4 Annual Implementation Report (Spinney et al, 2018), expenditure data for FY 2016 were not yet available. Grantee districts may report expenditures to the TEA expenditure reporting system at any time during the grant period until final expenditure reporting is due, which occurs in September of the fiscal year following the end date of the award period. Some districts may reconcile expenditures toward the end of the year, and some districts have large end-of-year and summer program expenditures that show up later in the year. Most districts have accounting processes that allow for the gap between reporting and receiving the drawdown to TEA's expenditure system. The update for Year 4 is particularly important because the data at the time of the Year 4 report did not include the funds spent. As depicted in Table 7.3, overall, the four districts spent 95% of their grant funds, compared to the previous year in which districts overall spent only 90% of their budgeted funds. Only one district (District 4) spent less than 90% of their budgeted funds. In Year 4, all districts again met the requirement of matching 100% of the expended funds. FY 2016 grant funds remaining after the districts reported their final expenditures were carried over by TEA into the next fiscal year and redistributed across FY 2017 GEAR UP project activities.

Each year, the districts are required to reapply for funds and receive a new notification of grant award (NOGA) that reflects their total budget for the fiscal year. In Year 5 (FY 2017), TEA budgeted for subgrants from the Texas GEAR UP SG totaling just under $1.5 million to four school districts to serve students in six high schools during the 2016–17 school year (aligning with the state FY 2017, which was September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017).

Table 7.3. Texas GEAR UP SG School District Percentage of Awarded Amounts Expended and Matched, Fiscal Year 2016

School District	Fiscal Year 2016 Percentage of Award Amount Expended	Fiscal Year 2016 Percentage Matched
District 1	100.0%	100%
District 2	92.0%	100%
District 3	99.0%	100%
District 4	86.6%	100%
TOTAL	95.2%	100%

Source: Texas Education Agency-reported drawdowns through the end of the Year 4 grant cycle for Fiscal Year 2016 as of October 31, 2016. District Notice of Grant Awards for Fiscal Year 2017 (as amended where relevant).

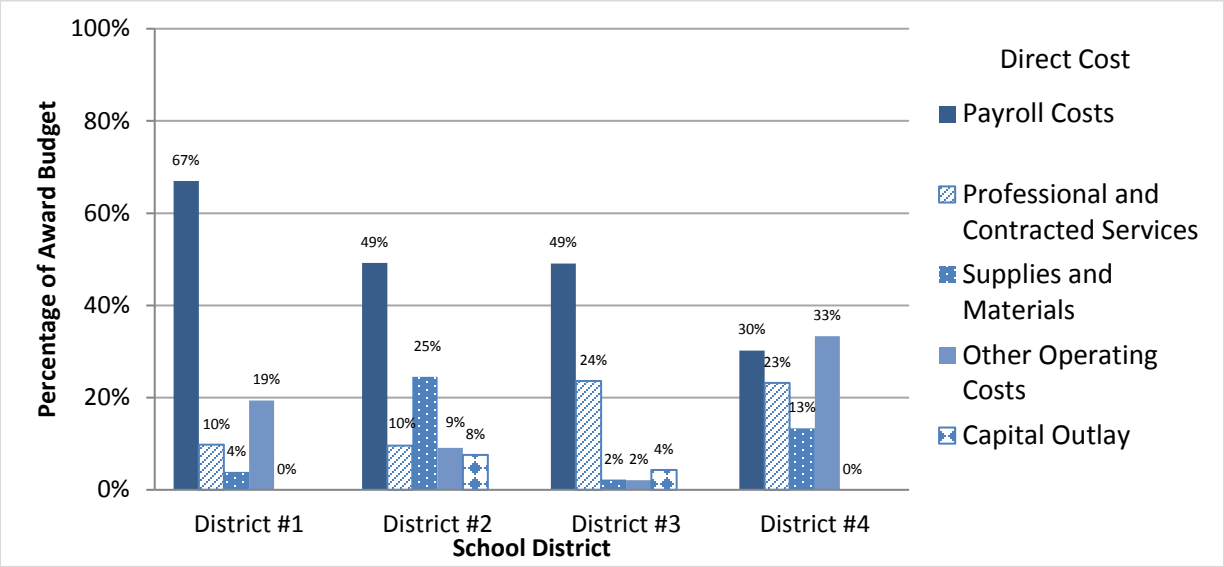
7.3 Description of District Budget and Expenditures in Fiscal Year 2016 by Cost Categories

This section presents budgets and expenditures for subgrant awards to the four school districts broken out by five federal APR cost categories: payroll, professional and contracted services, supplies and materials, other operating costs, and capital outlay. Understanding where districts are spending their grant funds will be important in projecting sustainability based on which of those are recurring expenses (such as payroll and contracted services) that may be difficult to continue without additional funds.

7.3.1 Fiscal Year 2016 Final Expenditures

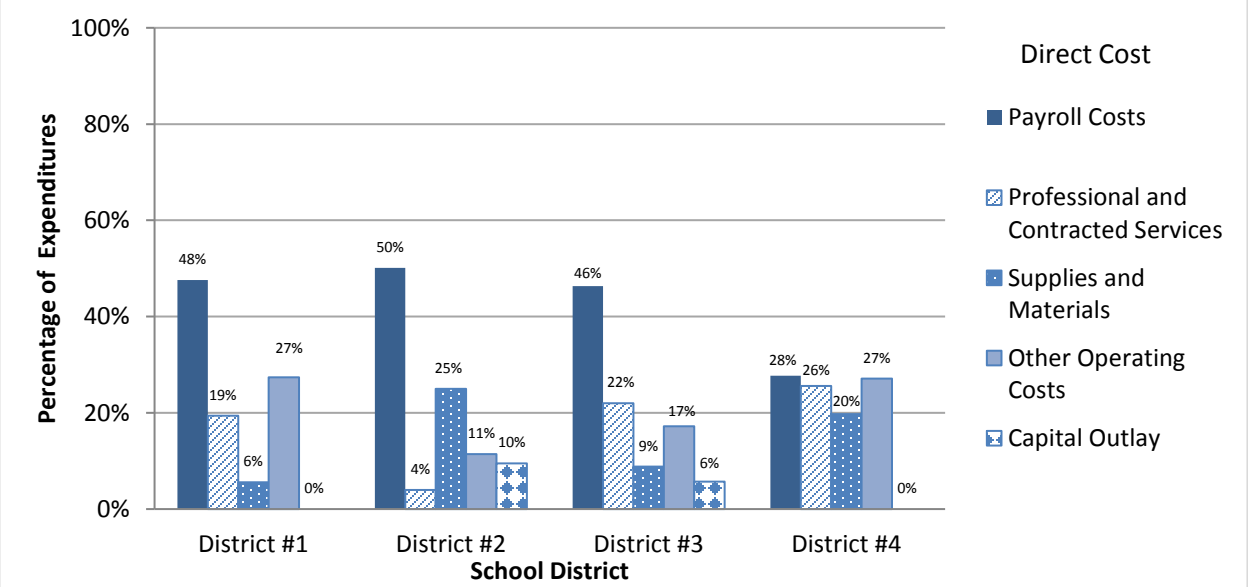
Figures 7.1 and 7.2 show updated information for FY 2016 (Year 4), including the budgeted amounts by cost category reported in the Year 4 Annual Implementation Report (Spinney et al., 2018), as well as new data on the expenditures by cost category. Comparisons between planned and actual expenditures offer some information about whether districts used funds as originally planned or as amended where relevant. For example, although Districts 1, 3 and 4 only budgeted 4%, 2%, and 13%, respectively, of their funds for supplies and materials, the districts ended up spending 6%, 9%, and 20% of expended funds in this cost category. In addition to supplies and materials, there were many areas in Year 4 in which districts' expenditures were greater than their originally budgeted funds. For example, Districts 1, 2, and 3 had expenses for other operating costs that exceeded budgeted amounts (19% budgeted, 27% expended in District 1; 9% budgeted, 11% expended in District 2; and 2% budgeted, 17% expended in District 3). District 3 also spent above-budgeted amounts in capital outlay (4% budgeted, 6% expended). In addition, District 4 spent above-budgeted amounts in professional and contracted services (23% budgeted and 26% expended).

Figure 7.1. Percentage of Texas GEAR UP SG Award Budget by Direct Cost Category, Fiscal Year 2016



Source: District Notice of Grant Awards for Fiscal Year 2016 (as amended where relevant): District 1: March 31, 2016; District 2: July 9, 2015; District 3: October 26, 2015 (amended on March 17, 2016, April 15, 2016, and May 25, 2016); and District 4: October 20, 2015 (amended on April 15, 2016, and May 11, 2016).

Figure 7.2. Percentage of Texas GEAR UP SG Expenditures by Direct Cost Category, Fiscal Year 2016 Update



Source: Source: Texas Education Agency-reported final drawdowns through October 31, 2016.
Note: Totals may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Additional expenditure analyses included looking within the cost categories given in which the percentage of grant funds varied widely across districts (Figure 7.2). All four districts (1, 2, 3, and 4) spent the highest portion of grant funds on payroll costs (48%, 50%, 46%, and 28%, respectively). As discussed in greater detail in earlier Annual Implementation Reports (O'Donnel et al., 2013; Briggs et al., 2015; Briggs et al., 2016; Spinney et al, 2018), payroll costs included

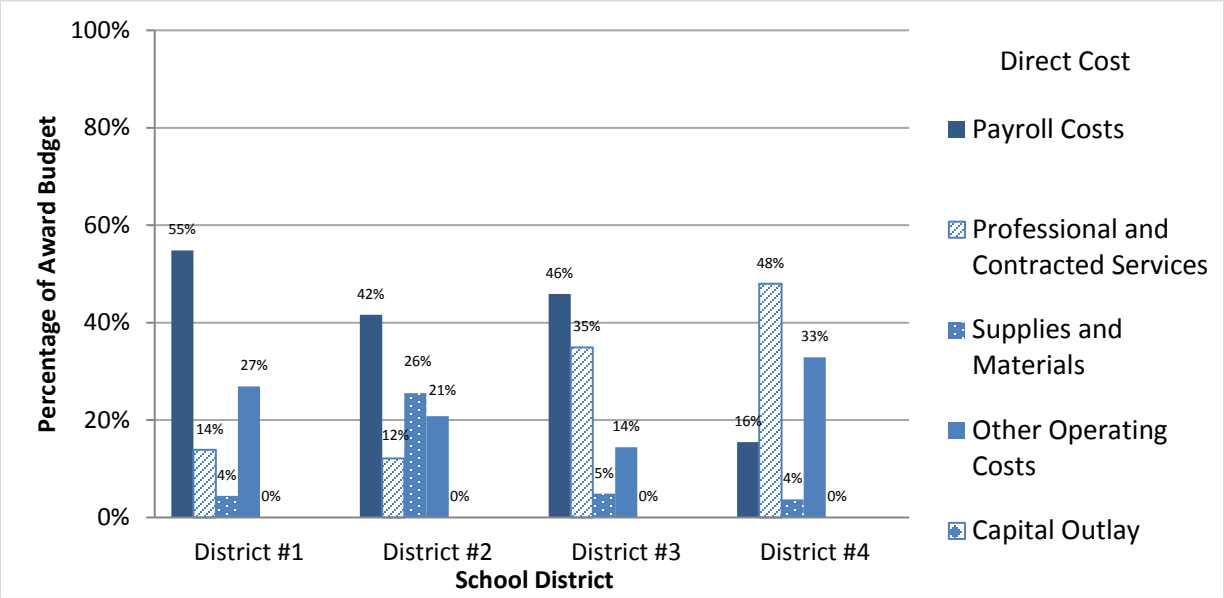
funds for project management, project coordinators, project directors, tutors, and parent coordinators.

District 4 drew down the highest percentage for professional and contracted services (26%), similar to the previous year, compared to other districts. Examples of professional and contracted services, as described in previous Annual Implementation Reports, included staff development, student services, and parent outreach. In looking at expenses for supplies and materials (for items such as tablets and graphing calculators), District 2 drew down the highest percentage at 25%. In comparison, Districts 4 and 3 drew down 20% and 9%, respectively. The lowest percentage in this category was in District 1 with 6%. District 4 spent slightly higher in this category in Year 4 (20%) compared to the previous year (16%), perhaps reflecting the same or an increased need for investment in consumables, such as test preparation materials. For other operating costs (including expenses for employee conferences and student college visits), District 1 and District 4 drew down the highest percentage with 27% for both, compared to District 3 and District 2 with 17% and 11%, respectively. Two of the four districts (District 2 and 3) drew down funds in the capital outlay cost category in Year 4, each expending 10% and 6%, respectively. In Year 4, Districts 1, 2 and 3, also spent a high proportion of their funds on payroll (48%, 50%, and 46%, respectively).

7.3.2 Fiscal Year 2017 Budgeted Funds

Figure 7.3 shows information for FY 2017 budgeted amounts. In three districts, payroll costs were the highest percentage of the budget, accounting for nearly half of their planned spending (District 1: 55%, District 2: 42%, and District 3: 46%)—a trend similar to the FY 2016 budgeted amounts (Figure 4.1). In Year 5, budgeted items in this cost category continued to include funds for data entry clerks and parent liaisons. Qualitative data from the Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation point to the value of both of these roles in supporting implementation and achieving grant goals, particularly related to parent engagement. In contrast, District 4 only planned to spend 16% in this category, a 14 percentage point decrease from amounts budgeted in Year 4. Instead, District 4 planned to spend nearly half of their funds (48%) on professional and contracted services, a 25 percentage point increase from Year 4 (23%). Districts 1, 2, and 3 also budgeted for a larger percentage of their grant funds for professional and contracted services in FY 2017 as compared to FY 2016. Budgets for supplies and materials varied across districts from the lowest budget of 4% (District 1 and 4) to the highest budget of 26% (District 2). Operating costs also varied from 14% (District 3) to 33% (District 4). Although some districts expended funds for capital outlay in Year 4, none of the four districts budgeted Texas GEAR UP SG funds for this expense for Year 5.

Figure 7.3. Percentages of Texas GEAR UP SG Award Budget by Direct Cost Category, Fiscal Year 2017



Source: District Notice of Grant Awards for Fiscal Year 2017 (as amended where relevant): District 1: July 15, 2016 (amended April 18, 2017); District 2: July 27, 2016 (amended on January 6, 2017 and May 8, 2017); District 3: July 27, 2016 (amended on September 30, 2016); and District 4: July 15, 2016 (amended on September 22, 2016, February 24, 2017, and June 23, 2017).

7.4 Summary

ED will award a total of $33 million to implement the Texas GEAR UP SG initiative, which was provided to TEA in annual $5 million awards for the first six years, and $3 million dollars in Year 7. TEA budgets those funds in a manner that follows federal and state required accounting processes. This section included a look at budgeted awards compared to the final data on expenditures in FY 2016, including analyses within cost categories and comparisons between planned and actual expenses. The following chapter ties the prior chapters together by summarizing the findings, offering recommendations, and pointing to next steps.

PART IV: CONCLUSIONS

8. Summary of Findings, Recommendations, and Next Steps

Year 5 of Texas GEAR UP SG implementation reflects opportunities and challenges in offering various program components in high schools. This chapter provides a summary of findings organized by key evaluation research questions. Progress on TEA project objectives for the Texas GEAR UP SG is presented where appropriate. Findings are based on the following sources:

- GUIDES data submitted by Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort schools, reflecting summer 2016 through February 28, 2017
- Site visits conducted by the evaluation team with each Texas GEAR UP SG school in fall 2016 and again in spring 2017
- Student survey data collected in fall 2016 and spring 2017 and parent survey data collected in spring 2017
- Telephone interviews with TEA and its collaborators conducted in April 2017

Additional details related to the findings summarized here were presented in Chapters 2–8 and in the appendices. As noted in earlier chapters, readers are cautioned against interpreting outcome findings as having been caused by the Texas GEAR UP SG program. Although, in many cases, it is the intent of the program to contribute to outcomes, it is not possible to determine with certainty that the program, in fact, caused a change. In order to make cause-and-effect statements, random assignment of schools and/or students to participate in Texas GEAR UP SG is required; random assignment was not possible for this evaluation. The forthcoming comprehensive report will examine outcomes in more detail, including the relationship between implementation and outcomes. The focus here is on understanding Year 5 implementation and the perceptions of that implementation.

8.1 Overall Implementation and Perceptions of Implementation

How was Texas GEAR UP SG implemented overall and at each of the participating schools? To what extent did implementation change over time?

- What were students', parents', teachers', and school staffs' perceptions of Texas GEAR UP SG implementation to date?

Student participation in a variety of Texas GEAR UP SG activities increased from Year 4 to Year 5 by 13 percentage points. Almost half (58%) of all Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students participated in at least four Texas GEAR UP SG activities. School J had the highest percentage of students participating in five or more activities (90%); over three-quarters (77%) of School M students also participated in five or more activities.

In examining a mix of implementation, each school was considered as having engaged in at least 19 of the 22 implementation strategies tracked in Year 5; four schools engaged in all 22

strategies. As with the earlier indicators of mix of implementation, this summary does not take into account quality, quantity, or the effect of the given implementation activity. This information serves as an indicator as to whether each school is on target to meet various project objectives. With that in mind, it is promising that advanced course enrollment, tutoring, mentoring, counseling, parent events, college visits, and student workshops all continued to occur at all Texas GEAR UP SG high schools in Year 5.

Although it is not certain whether any particular activity, as compared to engaging in a range of activities, is linked to desired outcomes, the Texas GEAR UP SG encourages schools to participate in a broad range of activities. While all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools were generally successful at implementing a mix of activities and events in Year 5, schools could benefit by initiating a broader range of activities moving forward and others may benefit from engaging a higher proportion of students in the activities they already offer.

8.1.1 Advanced Course Taking

Data reported in GUIDES in Year 5 indicated that just over half of the Texas GEAR UP SG Grade 11 primary cohort of students (56%) were enrolled in at least one advanced course, an increase of one percentage point from Year 4. In Year 5, 14% of all students (*n*=1,729) were enrolled in four or more advanced courses, a decrease of thirteen percentage points from Year 4 (27%). This decline may be due to fewer available pre-AP and honors-level course options in Grade 11, in comparison to AP course options. Despite this decline, schools achieved Project Objective 2.2. Students who participated in site visits at each school reported that they found their advanced courses to be challenging; 68% of student survey respondents rated their AP courses as challenging or extremely challenging. Similar to what some teachers reported in Year 4, teachers in Districts 3 and 4 perceived some students to be misplaced in pre-AP and AP courses due to Texas GEAR UP SG goals. An administrator in High School K reported that students do not want to be academically challenged so are reluctant to enroll or take the initiative to seek out advanced courses; she further described the reluctance as a cultural barrier for the school to overcome.

In addition to pre-AP and AP enrollment, students had the opportunity to enroll in dual credit courses to earn college credit. According to data reported in GUIDES, 11% of cohort students were enrolled in dual credit courses in Year 5 and 2% had completed a dual credit course. Almost two-thirds of student survey respondents reported that they learned about dual credit courses from their College Preparation Advisor and/or other college access staff. Student focus group participants said they found it challenging to manage their time to complete the heavy workload of a dual credit courses and maintain expectations of their instructors; however, they felt that the dual credit courses would help to better prepare them for postsecondary education.

8.1.2 Student Progress Toward High School Graduation

The same percentage of students (93%) were pursuing an endorsement as part of their graduation plans in Year 5 as in Year 4, according to data reported in GUIDES. The most popular endorsement area among cohort students was Business and Industry (33% of cohort students selected this endorsement). According to student survey data, 62% of students were on track to graduate with an endorsement. At least some students in all four districts who

participated in focus groups indicated that they successfully changed their endorsement or would like to change their endorsement. Additionally, students at each school indicated that they do not plan to study a subject area related to their endorsement in postsecondary education.

As a marker for the students who were on track to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement, in Year 5, 39% of Grade 11 students with an endorsement had completed Algebra II prior to Grade 11 and an additional 40% were currently enrolled in the course in Grade 11. In addition, over half (55%) of student survey respondents reported that they are on track to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement. Students on site visits provided a mix of understandings and plans regarding this distinction. Some students said their class was ineligible to graduate with distinguished level of achievement while others were unsure what it referred to and the requirements to graduate with it.

8.1.3 Postsecondary Assessment Progress

As of Year 5, 74% of students had taken the PSAT in Grades 9, 10 or 11, which falls short of the goal in Project Objective 5.1 that 100% of cohort students would take the assessment by the end of Year 4. Administrators and Texas GEAR UP SG staff indicated on site visits that some students may not have participated in the PSAT because the school was unable to make necessary accommodations or students were absent the day the PSAT was administered during the school day. The mean cohort score for the fall 2016 administration was 866, 143 points below the average of Grade 11 students throughout the U.S. who participated in the assessment at the same time. Students on site visits reported that they felt more confident and prepared to participate in the PSAT during Year 5 after having participated in Year 4. Most (87%) student survey respondents reported that they took or planned to take the SAT during the 2016–17 school year. Schools in Districts 1, 3, and 4 all hosted SAT School Days which allowed cohort students to participate in the SAT during a school day. GUIDES data indicated that approximately one-quarter of students participated in the TSIA in Reading and TSIA in Mathematics (27% and 23% respectively) in Grades 9, 10, or 11. Of those who participated, 48% passed the TSIA in Reading and 24% passed the TSIA in Mathematics.

Similar test preparation strategies were put in place by Texas GEAR UP SG across assessments. College Preparation Advisors reported on site visits that they continued to promote the use of Khan Academy as a tool to prepare and also made test preparation booklets available for students. Opportunities to attend workshops and boot camps to review assessment content and test-taking strategies during lunch, after school, and on the weekends were also available to students.

8.1.4 Student Knowledge About College and Postsecondary Planning

In Year 5, student survey data showed that 57% of students expected to obtain a four-year college degree or higher (a decrease of three percentage points from Year 4), but 70% aspired to do so (a decrease of two percentage points from Year 4). Site visit participants said that factors such as cost, programs and majors available, and distance from family, location of the school, class size, and acceptance of dual credits are all factors that considered by students and parents when considering postsecondary education options. According to student survey data, 40% of students said Texas GEAR UP SG staff/events helped them to think about their

postsecondary education plans, a two percentage point increase since Year 4; 25% of students reported the same about the Texas GEAR UP website.

When asked about their level of knowledge of the importance/benefit of college, 68% of student survey respondents rated themselves as *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable*, an increase from 64% in Year 4. Additionally, 56% of students rated themselves as *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* of the general requirements for college acceptance. When parents were surveyed, 52% reported that they felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about financial aid and the costs/benefits of pursuing secondary knowledge and 57% felt *knowledgeable* or *extremely knowledgeable* about the general requirements for college acceptance.

8.1.5 Student Understanding of Financial Aspects Related to Postsecondary Education

Overall, nearly three-fourths of student survey respondents (72%) reported that they had engaged in a discussion with Texas GEAR UP SG staff about financial aid during Year 5. Of the five financial aid terms which students were asked about their level of knowledge of on the survey, the highest knowledge mean score was for scholarships (mean 2.9); the lowest was Federal Pell Grants (mean 1.7). Students who participated in the site visits reported that they received scholarship information most often from their College Preparation Advisors when discussing financial aid and postsecondary education costs—which may help to explain why student survey respondents were more knowledgeable about scholarships than other financial aid terms. The percentage of student survey respondents who reported that they *probably* or *definitely* will be able to afford to attend a public 4-year college decreased from Year 4 to Year 5 by three percentage points (43% to 40% respectively). The percentage of parents who reported on surveys they *probably* or *definitely* will be able to afford for their child to attend a public four-year college decreased from Year 4 to Year 5 by eight percentage points (85% to 77% respectively).

8.1.6 Implementation of and Perceptions about Student Support Services

The majority (94%) of students received at least one of the three student support services –- counseling, tutoring, or mentoring—which points to the continued achievement of Project Objective 4.1. Counseling was the support service in which most students participated during Year 5 (93%); the percentage of students who participated in counseling increased by six percentage points from Year 4 to Year 5. According to data reported in GUIDES, approximately 80% of students across all schools met with their College Preparation Advisor. The percentage of students who participated in mentoring also increased six percentage points from Year 4 to Year 5 (32% to 38% respectively). Almost half (44%) of students participated in tutoring services in Year 5. Approximately three-quarters (75%) of students received counseling and/or mentoring services related to financial aid in Year 5; the average number of hours received was 1.8.

8.1.7 Parental Participation in and Perceptions about Events

As in prior years, none of the Texas GEAR UP SG schools met Project Objective 7.3, which calls for at least 50% of cohort parents to attend at least three college awareness activities. However, more schools were closer to achieving this objective in Year 5 compared to Year 4 (17% and 9% respectively). Most schools continued to host regular parent meetings which covered topics such as financial aid, soft skills necessary for postsecondary success, and upcoming testing preparation activities. More College Preparation Advisors also reported that they met with parents one-on-one in Year 5 than in previous years. This time was often used to review transcripts and upcoming assessments such as the SAT or TSIA.

8.1.8 Teacher Participation in Texas GEAR UP State Grant Professional Development

All schools continued to be on track in Year 5 to meet Project Objective 3.1. Across all six Texas GEAR UP SG schools, a total of 181 PD sessions supported by Texas GEAR UP SG were offered to teachers on advanced instructional strategies, differentiated instruction, PBL, vertical teaming, financial literacy, and GEAR UP. A total of 328 unique teachers participated in these PD sessions. Differentiated instruction was the PD most often reported to have occurred (110 sessions). Financial literacy PD was the least offered (one session). According to data reported in GUIDES, PBL and vertical teaming PD were the only other PD opportunities not available at all schools. The Educator Outreach Coach from the Support Center also continued to work with the Texas GEAR UP SG schools; teachers who worked with her provided positive feedback and reported that their time with her was valuable.

8.1.9 Participation by Community Stakeholders in Texas GEAR UP State Grant

All six schools continued to establish new and maintain existing business, community, and government alliances in their community in support of Project Objectives 8.1 and 8.2. Many of the organizations that Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported working with in Year 5 were other college access programs located on their respective high school campuses (e.g., Advise Texas, CIS, LEARN, Breakthrough). Such organizations provide targeted supports to students, such as seniors or low-income students. Other community alliances provided support for college visits, job site visits, and assistance with events and workshops.

8.1.10 Statewide Services

TEA continued to work on statewide Project Objectives 7.1, 9.1, and 9.2, which are related to college readiness. AMS Pictures continued to update the Texas GEAR UP website in Year 5 to provide supplemental statewide materials for students and parents.[117] AMS Pictures also continued to support efforts in the development of Texas Gateway, which provided PD resources for teachers. Texas GEAR UP SG staff, school staff, parents, and teachers also participated in the Texas GEAR UP conference in Year 5, delivered by the Support Center.

[117] See www.texasgearup.com.

Additionally, College Preparation Advisors reported that they found time and opportunities to collaborate with one another to be useful for sharing resources (e.g., a matrix of GPAs and SAT scores needed to be accepted by Texas universities), and connecting with one another.

8.1.11 Grant and School District Budgets and Expenditures

Final expenditures from the FY 2016 budget of $5 million ($5.4 million allocated with the inclusion of carryover funds) was just over $4.8 million, an amount supplemented by 100% matching funds. Of the $4.8 million, $1.5 million was expended on product development, reflecting the continued investment made by TEA to update the Texas GEAR UP website (http://www.texasgearup.com) through a contract with AMS Pictures.

TEA awarded almost $1.5 million to the districts in Year 5. In examining district spending updates for FY 2016, the four districts expended approximately 95% of their grant funds (compared to 90% in FY 2015). All districts met the 100% match requirement. Districts also expended their budgets in FY 2016 in ways that differed somewhat from the planned budgets. For example, the following districts spent below-budgeted amounts on payroll: District 1 (67% budgeted, 48% expended), District 3 (49% budgeted, 46% expended), and District 4 (30% budgeted, 28% expended).

The $5 million that TEA received from ED to implement the Texas GEAR UP SG in FY 2017 was supplemented with 100% matching funds. In FY 2016, TEA allocated the highest percentage of funds including the following: technical assistance (39%), grants to districts (28%), and product development (21%).

8.1.12 Facilitators and Barriers

What facilitators and barriers were associated with implementation of strategies?

For implementation to be successful, it is important to understand any potential facilitators and barriers to participation. When describing successes related to parent engagement in Year 5, it was reported that engaging and dependable parent liaisons were an important component of developing quality relationships with cohort parents and initiating engagement with other parents. Findings related to students' postsecondary education plans may provide insight into another potential facilitator—student knowledge of postsecondary information. Student participation in college visits and college student shadowing was positively correlated with knowledge of the importance and benefit of college as well as plans to take advanced courses (Table 4.3). An additional potential facilitator identified for successful implementation was "local voices" (i.e., school and district administrators) who are bought into the grant and who are embedded within the schools. District Coordinators who reported engaging school and district administrators said that the administrators were familiar with grant goals as well as the strategies put in place to work towards those goals.

Teachers who participated in site visits continued to report that they perceived some students to lack the motivation to succeed in high school. Teachers also reported that some students were only motivated to receive grades that will lead to a transcript desirable for higher education, not to learn the material or self-satisfaction for producing high quality work. Further, some teachers were worried about frequent missed class times for Texas GEAR UP SG meetings and events

as they perceived some students to lack the motivation to make up missed work. Though parent engagement documented in GUIDES improved in some aspects, parental engagement continued to be a concern in Year 5 as no school met Project Objective 7.3. Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff also expressed that they were concerned that the limited interactions Texas GEAR UP SG staff have with many parents did not lead to "authentic" relationships that would facilitate higher quality engagement. Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff also reported on site visits that they were frustrated by limited buy-in for the grant from administrators and school staff. The current level of buy-in, they reported, negatively affected implementation in Year 5 and will also likely affect sustainability of Texas GEAR UP SG initiatives.

8.1.13 Potential Best Practices

What practices implemented by grantees are perceived by grantees (students, parents, and staff) to be effective, and therefore a potential best practice?

Three Texas GEAR UP SG activities/initiatives implemented during Year 5 were identified as potential promising practices worthy of continued follow-up in the future. Parent and family events that allow attendees to rotate sessions and hear information about a variety of topics in short periods of time were cited as successful by Texas GEAR UP SG staff. This format allowed parents to interact with Texas GEAR UP SG staff in small, less intimidating settings and to have time to break up information-heavy sessions. The extended PD provided by the Support Center's Educator Outreach Coach provided schools with the opportunity to tailor the trainings and resources for teacher PD based on the needs of the teachers and school. Finally, utilizing dedicated Texas GEAR UP SG staff for parent engagement and data entry were cited as helpful for streamlining efforts for successful implementation.

8.2 Recommendations for Implementation

Based on the range of data analyzed to date, three key recommendations or next steps with regard to program implementation in Year 5 are presented here. Collectively, these include the following:

- Provide targeted services for students. Texas GEAR UP SG staff should consider targeting students based on interest and academic fit when recruiting students and parents for activities such as college visits, educational field trips, and summer programming. The interests of students may be best determined through individual discussions between Texas GEAR UP SG staff or other school staff and students as well as feedback on participation in previous activities. Academic fit may be best determined by grades, teacher and counselor feedback and Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) pass rates or SAT scores.
- Develop guidance on collaboration between Texas GEAR UP SG staff and staff from other college access programs. Guidance from TEA and the Support Center on how to ensure that efforts between Texas GEAR UP SG and other college access programs are not duplicated and the non-GEAR UP resources and services are of a high quality may be helpful for Texas GEAR UP SG staff. Effective communication and collaboration between Texas GEAR UP SG staff and the staff of other programs may facilitate higher quality

services to prepare cohort students to be successful in postsecondary education and sustain initiatives and practices implemented by Texas GEAR UP SG.

- Encourage more frequent vertical teaming activities. Vertical teaming to align instructional strategies may be one strategy for increasing the academic readiness of students, thus increasing the rigor of advanced courses. Consistent vertical teaming activities may also help districts sustain academic rigor throughout students' secondary education.

8.3 Next Steps in the Evaluation

The evaluation will continue in the 2017—18 school year, when the Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort is in Grade 12. The Year 6 annual implementation report will continue to focus on implementation (district and statewide); mix of implementation strategies; and the perceptions of students, parents, staff, and administrators regarding the program. Site visits and student surveys in fall 2017 will focus on summer programming; parent surveys in spring 2017 will focus on ED required parent items. Site visits and student surveys in spring 2018 will focus on implementation during the school year.

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APPENDIX A: Evaluation Questions and Project Goals

A.1 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Evaluation Questions

Table A.1 provides an overview of the evaluation questions addressed in this Year 5 implementation report. Additional research questions will be addressed in the future. The list of evaluation questions will be expanded as appropriate to each report. In addition, several of the research questions described below focus on understanding when and how implementation changes. For this report, the focus is on Year 5 of implementation only.

Table A.1. Texas GEAR UP SG Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions
1. Implementation of Texas GEAR UP SG Strategies and Identification of Potential Best Practices
1.1 To evaluate implementation of GEAR UP strategies intended for teacher professional development (PD) to improve academic rigor (AR) and data-driven instruction (DDI)
1.1.1 When and to what extent did grantees implement PD strategies?
1.1.2 When and how did grantees provide PD regarding vertical team preparation and implementation to MS and HS teachers? Were appropriate teachers from all schools on the vertical team able to attend the PD?
1.1.3 What are perceptions of teachers who attend given PD regarding: training itself, impact on teacher practice, and impact on vertical alignment, as appropriate to training?
1.1.4 What facilitators and barriers can be identified to implementing PD opportunities? If barriers to implementing were identified, to what extent were grantees able to overcome such barriers and how? Do grantees anticipate and are they able to overcome barriers in following years?
1.1.5 In what ways do GEAR UP trained teachers report implementing data driven strategies? Differentiated instruction? PBL?
1.1.6 How do training opportunities remain consistent / change over time in order to be appropriate for a) teachers who have not yet had the opportunity to attend training? b) Teachers who attended trainings in prior year?
1.2 To evaluate implementation of student support services GEAR UP strategies
1.2.1 What types of information were utilized to identify students for participation in student support services implementation activities?
1.2.2 When and to what extent did grantees implement student support services strategies with students? What percentages of students are identified for student support services based on first six weeks of school as compared to at other times in school year?
1.2.3 What are perceptions of students, parents, and staff of student support services implementation strategies?
1.2.4 What facilitators and barriers can be identified to implementing student support services strategies? If barriers to implementing were identified, to what extent were grantees able to overcome such barriers and how? Do grantees anticipate and are they able to overcome barriers in following years?
1.2.5 Each year of the grant, what types of information are grantees making available to students? How do grantees inform students about opportunities to learn about college attendance and career success? How many activities are held for students to attend? How and to what extent do grantees provide information to students regarding what information is available through the state office?

Evaluation Questions
1.2.6 By the end of each year, how many students (%) participate in each type of college readiness activity conducted by the grantees? How many activities does each student attend? What patterns of participation can be identified?
1.2.7 What are students' levels of understanding regarding a range of topics linked to understanding college and career readiness (e.g., college aspirations/expectations, college options, being college ready at each grade level, financing college)? Do students report having gained knowledge over the year based on information and activities provided by the grantee? Change over years of the evaluation?
1.3 To identify potential best practices
1.3.1 What practices implemented by the grantees might be identified as potential best practices based on short-term outcomes? What outcomes, if any, exist that support any long term impact of early implementation of potential best practices?
1.3.2 What practices implemented by grantees (students, parents, staff) are perceived by grantees to be effective, and therefore a potential best practice?
1.3.3 What individual strategies and/or mix of strategies are related to achieving desired GEAR UP outcomes? Are perceptions of potential best practices aligned with analysis based on outcomes? If not, what might explain such gaps?
2. Family, School and Community Impact
2.1 To evaluate the impact of GEAR UP on families (parents)
2.1.1 Each year of the grant, what types of information are grantees making available to students' families? How do grantees inform families about opportunities to learn about college attendance and career success? How many activities are held for parents to attend? How and to what extent do grantees provide information to parents regarding what is available through the state office?
2.1.2 By the end of each year, how many parents (%) attend each type of activity conducted by the grantees? How many activities does each parent attend?
2.1.3 Each year it is measured, what are parents' levels of understanding regarding a range of topics linked to understanding college and career readiness (e.g., college options, being college ready at each grade level, financing college)? Do parents report having gained knowledge over the year based on information and activities provided by the grantee? To what extent does parent knowledge change over the course of the grant?
2.1.4 What information or opportunities do parents' perceive to have been most relevant in informing them regarding college and career readiness?
2.1.5 What barriers and facilitators do schools and parents report regarding participation in college readiness activities? If barriers were identified, to what extent were grantees able to overcome such barriers and how? Do grantees anticipate and are they able to overcome barriers in following years?
2.2 To evaluate the impact of GEAR UP on school curriculum (academic rigor)
2.2.1 At the end of each year of the grant, how many hours of college credit are students in each school able to earn (i.e., through AP, dual credit or concurrent enrollment)?
2.2.2 How many grantees (%) have made available at least 18 hours of college credit that students can earn while in high school?
2.2.3 What facilitators and barriers can be identified to making college credit available to students and to student participation in college credit earning courses? If barriers to implementing were identified, to what extent were grantees able to overcome such barriers and how? Do grantees anticipate and are they able to overcome barriers in following years?
2.3 To evaluate the impact of GEAR UP on community alliances
2.3.1 At the end of each grant year, how many partnerships have schools formed with business alliances? In what ways and how often have business partners offered opportunities for career exploration to students?

Evaluation Questions
2.3.2 At the end of each grant year, how many partnerships have schools formed with government entities? Community groups? In what ways and how often have partners offered opportunities for career exploration to students? Opportunities to provide information regarding scholarships, financial aid, college awareness and readiness?
2.3.3 What are the perceptions of the school and of the community partners regarding the partnership as it relates to meeting GEAR UP goals? What facilitators and barriers to partnerships are reported? If barriers were identified, to what extent were grantees able to overcome such barriers and how? Do grantees anticipate and are they able to overcome barriers in following years?
3. Statewide Impact
3.1 To evaluate the impact of GEAR UP on statewide availability of information and professional learning opportunities
3.1.1 By the end of year 1, what types of information regarding college readiness have been made available through the state? Are there any topics relevant to college readiness not yet available?
3.1.2 What steps if any has the state office taken to communicate to schools and families about information available?
3.1.3 Each year, how many GEAR UP professional learning opportunities are made available to educators (e.g., Project Share, face-to-face)? How many educators, including those not at current GEAR UP campuses, are participating in such opportunities?
3.1.4 At the end of year 6, how many school districts (%) have utilized at least one Texas GEAR UP statewide resource (i.e., materials, professional development)?
4. Cost and Sustainability Outcomes
4.1 To evaluate use of GEAR UP funding
4.1.1 At the end of each year and over the course of the grant, how do grantees report using grant funds? Matching funds? What changes over time occur in how funding is used?
4.2 To evaluate sustainability of GEAR UP implementation
4.2.1 To what extent are grantees able to sustain activities initiated with the GEAR UP cohort with following cohorts of students? Are some types of activities easier to sustain than others? How does cost factor into sustainability? To what extent do grantees prioritize sustaining activities perceived to be best practices? 4.2.2 What facilitators and barriers can be identified to sustaining GEAR UP activities? Do perceptions of these change over the course of the grant funding?

A.2 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Project Goals and Objectives

Project objectives that were addressed in even a preliminary manner were presented within the report. The following is a list of all project objectives outlined by Texas Education Agency (TEA) in the federal grant proposal.

Table A.2. Texas GEAR UP SG Project Goals and Objectives

Project Objectives
Project Goal 1 – Improve instruction and expand academic opportunities in mathematics and science
Project Objective 1.1: By the end of the project's second year, 30% of cohort students will have completed Algebra I in the 8th grade. By the end of the project's third year, 85% of students will have completed Algebra I.
Project Objective 1.2 - By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of cohort students graduating on the Foundation High School Program plus Endorsement or at the distinguished level of achievement, will meet or exceed the state average.

Project Objectives
Project Goal 2 – Increase access to and success in quality advanced academic programs.
Project Objective 2.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all participating high schools will make opportunities available for each student to complete 18 hours of college credit (through AP, dual credit, or concurrent enrollment) by the time he or she graduates from high school.
Project Objective 2.2: By the end of the project's fifth year, 60% of the cohort, including limited English proficient (LEP) students, will complete a pre-Advanced Placement (AP) or AP course.
Project Objective 2.3: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 50% of cohort students will graduate with college credit earned by AP exam or through dual credit.
Project Goal 3 – Provide PD for strong data-driven instruction.
Project Objective 3.1: All core content teachers will have the opportunity to participate in training with regard to differentiated instruction, advanced instructional strategies, and PBL.
Project Objective 3.2: Teams of teachers at the middle and high schools will complete at least five days of vertical teams preparation and implementation each year.
Project Goal 4 – Provide a network of strong student support services to promote on-time promotion and academic preparation for college.
Project Objective 4.1: By the end of the second year, at least 75% of the 8th grade students will be involved in a comprehensive mentoring, counseling, and/or tutoring program based on results of teacher/counselor input and diagnostic data.
Project Objective 4.2: Beginning in the second year, at least 30% of the students will be involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level, ease transitions, and increase college awareness.
Project Objective 4.3: By the end of the project's third year, the on-time promotion rate of cohort students will exceed the state average.
Project Objective 4.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, 70% of GEAR UP students will have knowledge of, and demonstrate, necessary academic preparation for college.
Project Goal 5 – Promote high school completion and college attendance.
Project Objective 5.1: By the end of the project's fourth year, all cohort students will complete the ACT Aspire or the PSAT. By the end of the project's fifth year, all cohort students will complete the SAT or ACT.
Project Objective 5.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, the percentage of students meeting criterion on the ACT/SAT will meet or exceed the state average.
Project Objective 5.3: The number of students who graduate college ready in mathematics and English will meet or exceed the state average.
Project Objective 5.4: The cohort completion rate will meet or exceed the state average.
Project Objective 5.5: More than 50% of cohort of students will enroll in postsecondary education in the fall after high school graduation.
Project Goal 6 – Support first-year college retention.
Project Objective 6.1: The student retention rate for the second semester and the second year of college will meet or exceed the state average.
Project Objective 6.2: At the end of the project's seventh year, the number of students on track to complete college will exceed the average postsecondary completion rate.
Project Goal 7 – Provide postsecondary information and opportunities.
Project Objective 7.1: By the end of the first year, the state office will make information regarding college options, preparation, and financing will be made available to students, parents, and educators throughout the state.
Project Objective 7.2: By the end of the first year, information and workshops aimed at linking college attendance to career success will be available to 100% of cohort students and their parents.

Project Objectives
Project Objective 7.3: Each year, at least 50% of cohort parents, including parents of current and former LEP students, will attend at least three college awareness activities.
Project Objective 7.4: By the end of the project's fifth year, teachers and counselors will complete training in the college admissions and financial aid process.
Project Goal 8 – Build and expand community partnerships.
Project Objective 8.1: All participating districts will form business alliances that support higher student achievement and offer opportunities for career exploration.
Project Objective 8.2: Participating campuses will form alliances with governmental entities and community groups to enhance the information available to students regarding scholarships, financial aid, and college awareness.
Project Goal 9 – Promote college readiness statewide.
Project Objective 9.1: Annually increase the number of educators participating in GEAR UP professional learning, including through Texas Gateway and face-to-face trainings.
Project Objective 9.2: By the end of the project's sixth year, at least 40% of Texas school districts will have utilized at least one Texas GEAR UP statewide resource, including materials and PD.

APPENDIX B: Evaluation Design, Methods, and Analysis

The current report is focused on implementation of Texas Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) State Grant (SG), and understanding the overall evaluation design helps the reader understand the logic of the data being collected.

B.1 Longitudinal Design

One important aspect of the evaluation design is to study Texas GEAR UP SG longitudinally. The Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation is based on a cohort model design. Texas GEAR UP SG services were first provided to Grade 7 students in participating districts during the 2012–13 school year and will continue through the first year of enrollment at a postsecondary institution (the 2018–19 school year). There are two additional cohort groups of interest for the purposes of the evaluation that will be included in forthcoming comprehensive reports. First, one of the comparison groups is a retrospective comparison group of the students who are one-grade level ahead of the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort—the students at the Texas GEAR UP SG schools who were in Grade 8 in the 2012–13 school year. Examining trends in outcomes in this cohort as compared to the targeted cohort allows Texas Education Agency (TEA) to better understand how the program has potentially created change at the school level. Similarly, the 2012–13 Grade 7 cohort is the primary target for Texas GEAR UP SG implementation, but it is hoped that future cohorts of students will also benefit through sustained implementation of the program with new Grade 7 students. Therefore, the evaluation team will compare outcome data from the follow-on cohorts as well. For example, the third year of implementation includes data on completion of Algebra I in Grade 8 for three cohorts of students (i.e., Grade 8 in the 2012–13 school year [comparison retrospective cohort], Grade 8 in the 2013–14 school year [target cohort], and Grade 8 in the 2014–15 school year [comparison follow-on cohort]). The potential cohorts of interest are presented in Table B.1.

Table B.1. Texas GEAR UP SG Cohorts of Data Collected During the Seven-Year Grant

	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	First Year of College
Retrospective Cohort	Baseline: Prior to GEAR UP	Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Grant Year 6
Cohort 1	Baseline: Grant Year 1	Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Grant Year 6	Grant Year 7
Cohort 2	Baseline: Grant Year 2	Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Grant Year 6	Grant Year 7	
Cohort 3	Baseline: Grant Year 3	Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Grant Year 6	Grant Year 7		
Cohort 4	Baseline: Grant Year 4	Grant Year 5	Grant Year 6	Grant Year 7			
Cohort 5	Baseline: Grant Year 5	Grant Year 6	Grant Year 7				
Cohort 6	Baseline: Grant Year 6	Grant Year 7					
Total number of cohorts for data in each grade	7	7	6	5	4	3	2

B.2 Quasi-Experimental Design

In addition to comparisons that will be made based on longitudinal aspects of the design, the ICF team will utilize a quasi-experimental design (QED). The Texas GEAR UP SG schools were not selected randomly to participate, ruling out a true experimental design. Still, it is important to understand outcomes within the Texas GEAR UP SG schools in comparison to outcomes elsewhere. Specifically, outcomes at the Texas GEAR UP SG schools will be compared to: a) statewide averages (where possible); and b) outcomes in comparison schools selected based on propensity-score matching (PSM) to be as similar as possible to Texas GEAR UP SG participating schools. A student-level PSM is not necessary given that the Texas GEAR UP SG is a school-wide approach (i.e., all students in Grade 7 in the 2012–13 school year had opportunities to participate); if appropriate comparison schools are selected that level of matching may be sufficient. However, it is anticipated that a student-level PSM will be conducted as well in order to best argue the comparability of the Texas GEAR UP SG schools/students to comparison schools/students.

B.2.1 Propensity Score Matching

PSM is the optimal method for establishing an equivalent comparison group in non-experimental studies. PSM refers to a class of multivariate methods for constructing comparison groups based on pairing study subjects, in this case schools, based on what is known about those subjects. Propensity scores represent the estimated probability that a program participant is assigned to an intervention based on observable variables. The evaluation team and Texas GEAR UP SG program staff determined the criteria for matching Texas GEAR UP SG and non-

Texas GEAR UP SG comparison schools with various characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, free/reduced lunch status, grade level, academic achievement in reading and mathematics at baseline, special education/limited English proficiency (LEP) status, completion rates, parent education level). By using PSM to identify a very close non-Texas GEAR UP SG match (or multiple matches) for each Texas GEAR UP SG school, it is possible to estimate the value-added effect of the Texas GEAR UP program. That is, if two schools are found to be similar on a range of characteristics, but students at only one school receive the GEAR UP "treatment," then any potential differences in outcomes may be attributable to GEAR UP participation. Seven middle schools (one per Texas GEAR UP SG school) were selected for the comparison group based on PSM.

Specific details regarding the PSM are in the forthcoming comprehensive report. The information presented here represents an overview of the PSM. ICF conducted a school-level PSM using an Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) and Common Core Data. Each GEAR UP school was matched with one comparison school (nearest-neighbor method). Final determinations were based on the extent to which balance on covariates between intervention and control sample is achieved. Three aspects of the PSM are described here.

Ratio. A fixed 1-to-1 ratio was used; each GEAR UP school was paired with one comparison school.

Algorithm. The nearest-neighbor method is one of the most straightforward and fast algorithms. Exact matching was required only for a limited subset of variables, particularly, school's grade span and campus urban-centric locale.

Distance metric. The propensity score is an extremely useful metric distance that summarizes many covariates in a single measure. The propensity score is based on a logistic regression of an indicator of group membership on all the covariates for which balance is desired. For this school-level regression, being in the GEAR UP group is a relatively rare occurrence (i.e., only seven cases). This can limit the utility of the propensity score as a balancing score in the present application. However, there are alternative distance metrics that can be used, including Mahalanobis distance; robust Mahalanobis distance; weighted Mahalanobis distance where the weights are determined to maximize balance (Diamond and Sekhon, 2013). All the alternatives will be explored, and the final choice will be based on the covariate balance they achieve.

B.3 Methodology

The Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation is utilizing a mixed-methods approach in order to best address the evaluation questions with the data available at a given point in time during the evaluation; a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods is being used to best address the range of evaluation questions. The use of multiple methods to collect, analyze, and synthesize information related to Texas GEAR UP SG allows for checks and balances across methods. Multiple methods allow for the triangulation of results, producing an in-depth assessment of Texas GEAR UP SG's effectiveness and providing greater confidence in evaluation findings. Much of the data that were collected, as described in the data sources section that follows, are quantitative in nature. Evaluators collected additional qualitative data through open-ended survey items and site visit interviews and focus groups, allowing the story of Texas GEAR UP

SG implementation and impact at each school/district to be told. Findings based on data collected through the range of perspectives are compared against one another throughout reporting of findings.

B.4 Data Sources and Data Collection

Evaluators used several data sources for this report, including data reported through the GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System (GUIDES), extant data provided by TEA, student and parent survey data, and site visit data. The following sections provide an overview of each data source, including the process of collecting data that were included in this report.

B.4.1 Annual Performance Reporting Data

During the 2012–13 school year, the ICF team worked with TEA to develop an appropriate tool for collecting annual performance data. Beginning in 2013–14, TEA's collaborator for technical assistance, The University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Public School Initiatives (UT-IPSI), contracted with a provider of a system to collect Texas GEAR UP SG annual performance data. The general strategy was similar to that used in Year 1 and Year 2, but grantees were eventually able to enter annual performance data in an ongoing manner; 2014–15 annual performance reporting was similar. In Year 3, TEA added an additional organization, Community TechKnowledge (CTK), to support data collection using GUIDES, a customized tool to collect Texas GEAR UP SG data. TEA continued to use GUIDES during the 2016–17 school year.

In order to broadly understand what is collected through GUIDES, we have retained prior years' description here. Annual performance data are aligned with requirements for the U.S. Department of Education (ED) APR, submitted by TEA each year in April. Districts are asked to report on implementation and participation at the student level in Texas GEAR UP SG activities from the time of the prior report through the end of March of the current implementation year. For example, districts indicated student enrollment in advanced courses; student participation in tutoring, mentoring, and counseling; and student participation in any Texas GEAR UP SG events held at the campus. Districts also indicated if the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) participated in any events targeted for parents. Districts provided a description of each Texas GEAR UP SG student and parent event held at their school. In addition, districts provided information on teacher participation in professional development (PD) opportunities related to the Texas GEAR UP SG and on community alliances formed to date. Appendix C has a description of all data that Texas GEAR UP SG grantees were requested to submit in GUIDES.

B.4.2 Extant Data

Extant data refers to data that TEA already collects. TEA provides these data to the evaluation team as appropriate. The following extant data were used in writing this report:

TEA's Texas GEAR UP SG Grant Application and District Applications. TEA provided its application to the federal government, district applications provided by each Texas GEAR UP SG school, and all in-place TEA agreements. These documents were reviewed in order to better understand the Texas GEAR UP SG grant in general and for specific information regarding

planned implementation priorities. This review occurred prior to survey and site visit protocol development in order to inform the process.

Texas Academic Performance Report (TAPR). TAPR is an updated version of TEA's AEIS. TAPR contains campus-level performance information about every public school and district in Texas. TAPR also provides extensive profile information about staff, finances, and programs. The evaluation also includes AEIS data from the 2009–10 school year, as data from this year informed the selection of schools for participation in Texas GEAR UP SG.

B.4.3 Student and Parent Surveys

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) requires that GEAR UP grantees survey students and parents at least every two years, with an additional requirement that programs survey at least 80% of their students and at least 50% of their parents at these intervals.[118] Texas GEAR UP SG students and parents were first surveyed in spring 2013.[119] In fall 2013 and fall 2014, students were surveyed, primarily with respect to participation in and perceptions of summer 2014 implementation activities. Both students and parents were surveyed in spring 2014 and spring 2015. Due to the low parent response rates in spring 2015, parents were surveyed again in fall 2015, as described in the Year 3 Annual Implementation Report (Briggs et al., 2016). Students were also surveyed in fall 2015 and again in spring 2016. Similar to Year 4, in Year 5 all surveys used during the 2016–16=7 school year are provided in Appendix D. Surveys undergo several layers of review and required approval by both ICF's Institutional Review Board (IRB) and TEA's Data Governance Board (DGB).[120] Although student surveys were available only online, parent surveys were available online and in paper format upon request. Schools collected the data independently following instructions provided by the evaluation team as required by IRB.[121] Students and parents could choose to take the survey in either English or in Spanish. Survey data were collected anonymously.

The ED has identified items that must be included on the surveys (i.e., five items each on the student and parent survey). From this basic foundation, GEAR UP programs are free to add additional questions. Items were selected for inclusion in the Texas GEAR UP SG surveys from surveys developed by members of the ICF evaluation team with prior experience evaluating GEAR UP programs and based on sample surveys (i.e., CoBro Consulting, 2010). Content areas on the survey were finalized with TEA and included information regarding such items as: a) student/parent satisfaction with the program and program activities; b) student/parent

[118] These requirements no longer apply to the Texas GEAR UP SG surveys as of the end of Year 4, but are continued to be used as benchmarks for the evaluation team.
[119] Federal GEAR UP requirements are for biannual collection of survey data. Survey collection was not required in Year 1. Year 1 surveys were conducted because the evaluation team believes they provide an important baseline to better understand Texas GEAR UP SG outcomes. Surveys will undergo minor revisions as needed to reflect appropriate Texas GEAR UP SG implementation and goals prior to each submission.
[120] IRB approval was received to use passive consent from parents for student participation in the surveys. Parents were notified that the survey was planned and asked to inform the school if they did not want their child to participate. Students also provided their own assent for participation in the surveys.
[121] The surveys took about 20 to 30 minutes for students to complete. Ideally student surveys would take no more than 15 to 20 minutes. If appropriate, future survey versions will be shortened.

questions on educational expectations and aspirations; and (c) student and parent knowledge regarding postsecondary education, including financial knowledge. Spring 2017 surveys included additional items about endorsements, graduation plans, advanced placement or dual-credit classes, and college entrance exam test preparation. Understanding what information parents and students had learned and retained that Texas GEAR UP SG districts provided is important in determining whether students/parents have attained a base of knowledge about college that made the prospect of college attendance less daunting financially and personally.

B.4.4 Telephone Interview with Texas Education Agency and Collaborators

To best understand the role of various collaborators and progress at the state level, the ICF team developed interview protocols and conducted interviews with the Texas GEAR UP SG state director at TEA and with appropriate personnel from each of the statewide TEA collaborators in spring 2017 (see Appendix D for interview protocols). The interview with the TEA Texas GEAR UP SG director provided information regarding the process of managing the Texas GEAR UP SG grants to districts, and coordinating with the state technical assistance office to ensure that grant activities are implemented and meeting suggested targets. In addition, questions were asked regarding any changes in the project objectives for the Texas GEAR UP SG, the level of school buy-in from districts, frequency of contact with districts and schools, the status of TEA's work with collaborators and statewide initiatives, and factors that have facilitated or hindered GEAR UP implementation this past year.

Representatives from four of the six collaborators interviewed in Year 4 returned, along with two new collaborators who had not participated in prior years. In total, seven collaborator interviews took place in March 2017, including the Support Center. All collaborators had a single interview with two evaluation staff members. During the interviews, collaborators were asked to describe their organizations as well as their organizations' roles in the Texas GEAR UP SG. They were also asked about their relationship with TEA, with the individual Texas GEAR UP SG schools, and with other TEA collaborators. Collaborators also provided information regarding progress on implementation of activities, planned future activities, and barriers and facilitators of implementation.

B.4.5 School Site Visits

Site visits are an important feature of the Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation. To ensure that relevant and useful information was gathered on these site visits, protocols specific to multiple types of stakeholders were developed. Eight protocols were developed to gather data from stakeholders. These protocols were for Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator interviews, College Preparation Advisor interviews, high school administrator interviews, middle school administrator interviews, teacher focus groups, student focus groups, parent focus groups, and community alliance interviews/focus groups. The content of the protocols was aligned to Texas GEAR UP SG project objectives, relative to implementation in Year 5. Generally, the protocols explored knowledge and understanding of the Texas GEAR UP SG, participation in and perceptions of implementation activities, barriers and facilitators to participation in Texas GEAR UP SG implementation activities, perceptions of stakeholders regarding promising practices, and awareness of issues related to postsecondary education. Focus groups were structured to

provide ample time for participants to express their views about the program and specific activities within it. The student focus group protocol was designed using classroom discussion strategies (e.g., brainstorming) to encourage participation by all students.

Site visits were completed at each of the six Texas GEAR UP SG high schools in fall 2016 and spring 2017. The evaluation team made copies of interview and focus group protocols available to schools (see Appendix D) prior to participating in the visit. Telephone calls and emails were used to communicate with each site regarding the visit and to develop a site visit schedule. Schedules varied by school based on the availability of participants, but all schools were asked to schedule time for separate interviews with the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator, College Preparation Advisor, and administrator at the school, as well as focus groups with students, parents, teachers, and community alliances. The team customized materials for specific sites based on information reported through GUIDES on activities and events for students, parents, and teachers.

A few of the general highlights regarding these visits are provided here. The Appendix E case studies provide more details. Each site visit varied somewhat in order to be appropriate to the individual school.

School Administrator Interviews. The ICF team designed interview protocols for administrators (principals, assistant principals, vice principals, and school counselors), school-site College Preparation Advisors, and Texas GEAR UP SG coordinators. In most cases, interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. At each school, an interview was requested with both an administrator as well as school-site GEAR UP SG staff. In a few cases, administrators participated in focus groups together. Overall, ICF conducted interviews with 14 school/district administrators and 40 Texas GEAR UP SG staff members (including tutors, data clerks, and parent liaisons).

Teacher Focus Groups. ICF conducted teacher focus groups at all of the high schools in the Texas GEAR UP SG. Due to classroom coverage issues, the size and duration of focus groups varied widely. The typical teacher focus group had an average of three teachers and lasted approximately 45 minutes. Many schools scheduled teachers for focus groups during their planning periods or open times so they did not have to find substitutes for teachers to attend. Teachers participated in interviews rather than focus groups if they were unavailable at the same time as other teachers. Teachers were asked about knowledge of Texas GEAR UP SG, perceptions of the program at their school, and current and planned Texas GEAR UP SG-sponsored PD and workshops. For those teachers with day-to-day involvement with the program, ICF inquired about specific activities and their perceived effectiveness along with perceptions of program buy-in among teachers, parents, and students. Overall for fall 2016 and spring 2017, ICF conducted teacher focus groups with 47 participants.

Student Focus Groups. Focus groups with students were held at each school to examine student knowledge of the program and of higher education, their participation in program activities, and their perceptions of GEAR UP's effectiveness. Student focus groups averaged four to eight participants. Overall, 66 students participated in focus groups.

Parent Focus Groups. ICF conducted focus groups with parents at all sites. The purpose of these focus groups was to examine parent knowledge of the program and of higher education,

their participation in program activities, and their perceptions of effectiveness. Although none of the six schools requested a translator, one parent focus group at one school needed to be translated by a member of the Texas GEAR UP SG staff team. Overall, 33 parents participated in focus groups. The typical parent focus group averaged three participants.

Community Alliance Interview/Focus Groups. In setting up the site visits, all sites were asked about current relationships with community alliances to the Texas GEAR UP SG; time was allotted in the schedule to interview community alliances if available. Overall, 18 representatives from community organizations participated in an interview or focus group.

B.5 Data Security and Cleaning

The ICF team received all data provided by TEA via a secure, password protected environment. In Year 5, all surveys were administrated electronically, via Survey Monkey, using ICF's secure, password protected account. Once received by ICF all electronic data were stored on a protected server accessible only to team members who have signed TEA's access to confidential data form.

Upon receipt of the GUIDES data in June 2017, ICF reviewed the data and asked TEA to follow up with schools for clarification regarding some responses. The survey data were examined for missing values, outliers, and response patterns. Once all cleaning steps were completed, a final clean data set was prepared for use in analyses.

B.6 Data Analytics

B.6.1 Descriptive & Change Statistics: Implementation Analysis

As noted in Chapter 1, the data available to date reflect a somewhat shortened period of implementation of the program. The majority of the analyses included descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, averages, ranges). In some cases, the same data were examined in two different ways. For example, on the surveys, perceived effectiveness of strategies was provided as one of four categories. These data were presented as a percentage indicating a given category or as average effectiveness by numbering the categories from 1 (not effective) to 4 (very effective). Averages were then provided both by individual activity and summarized across activities, as appropriate.

STUDENT GROUP ANALYSES

In many cases, comparisons by student groups remained descriptive in nature. Where appropriate, crosstabs (chi-square analyses comparing frequency distribution by group) and analysis of variance (ANOVA)—comparing means by group—were conducted and significant differences between groups were noted. As noted, some analyses were conducted on both GUIDES and survey data. ANOVAs were utilized only to compare means across schools. These analyses were also used to explore change over time.

School/district was the key grouping variable used in this report. Information on providing implementation was also grouped by provision type (i.e., virtual vs. face-to-face). In the forthcoming comprehensive report, students were grouped in several ways including gender,

race/ethnicity, LEP status, and special education status. Students were grouped by participation or not in advanced coursework (e.g., are students in advanced courses more or less likely than those who are not to be tutored in that subject). Parent participation was also examined relative to the student characteristics (e.g., were students with special needs or in advanced courses more or less likely to have parents participating in GEAR UP events).

LEVEL/MIX OF IMPLEMENTATION

As more outcomes become available, it will be of interest to continue exploring whether specific implementation activities are associated with outcomes and/or if it is some level (amount) or mix of implementation that is related to outcomes. Findings will be reported in forthcoming comprehensive reports. Annual implementation data were explored to begin to understand potential strategies for developing mix of implementation variables. The strategy used was to provide descriptions of early patterns of mix of implementation at the school level.

B.6.2 Analysis of Site Visit Qualitative Data

Findings from the qualitative analyses were cross-referenced with findings from quantitative analyses to more completely answer evaluation questions of interest. The evaluation team utilized qualitative analytic software (ATLAS.ti) to code transcribed interview data with program-specific codes.[122] In addition, Appendix E provides case study summaries.

DATA REVIEW

Evaluators conducted detailed coding of qualitative data using keyword searches and, in some cases, reviewing entire transcripts to look for specific themes (such as facilitators or barriers). The site visit team also conducted extensive content analysis to identify themes as well as similarities/differences across the sites.

CASE STUDIES

Case studies were developed for each of the four districts. School-level case studies were not utilized in order to maintain the confidentiality that was assured to participants in the evaluation site visits. The purpose of these case studies was to describe implementation from the various perspectives of those who participated in the site visits. These case studies also identified any notable differences across the schools as well as emerging promising practices and challenges for each district.

B.6 References

Diamond, A., & Sekhon, J. S. (2013) Genetic matching for estimating causal effects: A general multivariate matching method for achieving balance in observational studies. *Review of Economics and Statistics, 95*(3), 932–945. Retrieved from http://sekhon.berkeley.edu/papers/GenMatch.pdf.

[122] ATLAS.ti is a qualitative analytic software. More information about the product can be found at http://atlasti.com/.

APPENDIX C: Texas GEAR UP State Grant Annual Performance Reporting Data Requested from Grantees, 2016–17

As described in Appendix B, the ICF team worked with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop an appropriate tool for collecting annual performance data for the 2012–13 school year. Beginning in 2013–14, TEA's collaborator for technical assistance, The University of Texas at Austin's Institute for Public School Initiatives (UT-IPSI), contracted with a provider of a system to collect Texas GEAR UP SG annual performance data. The general strategy was similar to that used in Year 1 and Year 2, but grantees were able to enter annual performance data in an ongoing manner; 2014–15 annual performance reporting was similar. Instructions were provided to each Texas GEAR UP SG school to assist them in providing required APR data in the GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System (GUIDES), the data collection system developed by UT-IPSI.

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
Student Profile	
First Name[1]	Enter student's full legal first name
Middle Name	Enter student's full legal middle name
Last Name[1]	Enter student's full legal last name
Date of Birth[1]	Enter DOB in following format: MM/DD/YYYY
Phone Number(s) [1]	Enter as: XXX-XXX-XXXX
Gender[1]	Male or Female
School Year[1]	Select current school year from 2013–14, 2014–15, etc.
Address[1]	Street address, city, state, zip
Race[1]	Select or type from following list (dropdown in GUIDES): • American Indian or Alaska Native – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliations or community recognition. • Asian – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippine Islands. • Black or African American – A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. • Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii or other pacific islands such as Samoa and Guam. • White – A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, North Africa, or the Middle East. • Two or more races • Race Unknown
Ethnicity[1]	Select or type from the following: • Yes, Hispanic or Latino – A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. • No • Ethnicity Unknown

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
Unique ID[1]	10-digit number unique to all students in Texas
Local ID[1]	Variable-length-digit number at district level. May change if student moves across districts.
Limited English Proficiency Status[1]	Select the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) Limited English Proficient (LEP) status indicator code from the drop down list as follows: • **0 Not LEP** • **1 Identified As LEP** • **F Student Exited from LEP Status – Monitored 1 (M1)** – student has met criteria for bilingual/English Speakers of other Languages program exit, is no longer classified as LEP in PEIMS, and is in his or her first year of monitoring as required by 19 TAC §89.1220(l) and is not eligible for funding due to the fact that they are not LEP • **S Student Exited from LEP Status – Monitored 2 (M2)** – student has met criteria for bilingual/English Speakers of other Languages program exit, is no longer classified as LEP in PEIMS, and is in his or her second year of monitoring as required by the 19 TAC §89.1220(l) and is not eligible for funding due to the fact that they are not LEP
Grade[1]	Enter current grade in school (7, 8, 9, 10, etc.)
School[1]	Select from: • Kennedy High School • Memorial High School • Estacado High School • Manor High School • New Manor Tech High School • Somerset High School
Early College High School[2]	Is the student part of Manor Early College High School (Yes/No)
District[1]	Select from: • Edgewood ISD • Manor ISD • Lubbock ISD • Somerset ISD
Eligible for Free- or Reduced- Price Lunch[1]	Select Yes or No
Special Education[1]	Select Yes or No to indicate if currently identified as special education
Education Plan/Program[1](required only if special education is YES) [2]	Does the student have an Individualized Education Plan? • Yes or No
At-risk of dropout status[1]	Yes or No
Status of enrollment[1]	Select Active or Inactive
Academic Milestones	
Degree Plan[2]	Endorsements: • Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) • Business & Industry • Public Services • Arts & Humanities • Multidisciplinary Studies • No Endorsements • Not on Foundation

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
Change "promoted to next grade" to "At the end of the school year, student is **ELIGIBLE** to be promoted to next grade" [1, 2]	Yes/No
Special Note[2]	Open-ended text field to describe why a student is not enrolled in any course, or is missing course outcome, or is missing promotion.
Completed Algebra I in any previous year? [2]	Yes or No
Completed a Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) or AP course in any previous year? [2]	Yes or No
ACT Score[2]	Numeric Score Not taken
SAT Score[2]	Numeric Score Not taken
PSAT Score[2]	Numeric Score Not taken
ACT Aspire Score[2]	Numeric Score Not taken
Course Listing	
District[1]	District the student linked from student profile
School Year[1]	School Year linked from student profile
Grade Level[1]	Grade linked from student profile
Following fields are asked for each course	
Course Name[1]	Open-ended text field
Course/Section Number[1]	Open-ended text field Unique identifier for each course. Does not include section identifier.
Is the course an advanced[1] course?	Yes/No "Advanced Courses" are classes that are identified as above grade level by the student's school. Most honors, pre-AP, and AP courses are considered Advanced, but that is dependent on the grade level of the student. (ex. Grade 9 student enrolled in Algebra 2 is considered an advanced course)
Course Hours (Aug – Mar) [1]	Numeric; decimal in terms of hours (0.5); Advanced Courses only Calculated by the campus for each student in each advanced course section and entered as: [Maximum seat time in hours for the course for the reporting period] – [total excused and unexcused absences in hours by course section number] – [total time in hours a student was not enrolled during the reporting period] – [number of hours lost for that course due to school closure]
Course Hours (Apr – Aug) [1]	Numeric; decimal in terms of hours (0.5); Advanced Courses only Calculated by the campus for each student in each advanced course section and entered as: [Maximum seat time in hours for the course for the reporting period] – [total excused and unexcused absences in hours by course section number] – [total time in hours a student was not enrolled during the reporting period] – [number of hours lost for that course due to school closure]
Course Completion[1]	Yes/No
If AP course completed and student completed AP	Numeric (1-5) AP Exam not taken

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
exam, what was the exam score? [2]	
Semester/Trimester 1 Score[1, 2]	Numeric
Semester/Trimester 2 Score[1, 2]	Numeric
Trimester 3 Score[1, 2]	Numeric
Exam/State Assessment Tracking	
Grade Level[1]	Grade linked from student profile
Following fields are asked for State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness *(STAAR) Math, STAAR Reading, STAAR Writing, and fields will be added as relevant to the year in which the cohort is.*	
Date/Month Exam is taken[1]	DD/MM/YYYY or MM/YYYY
Raw Score[1]	Numeric
Scale Score[1]	Numeric
Level of Performance[1]	Level I: Unsatisfactory Level II: Satisfactory at the Phase-in Standard Level II: Satisfactory at the Recommended Standard Level III: Advanced
Type of Assessment[1]	STAAR STAAR – Modified STAAR – Alternate STAAR – Linguistically Accommodated
For students that take the following exam only	
Month/Year taken - Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System (TELPAS)	DD/MM/YYYY or MM/YYYY
Proficiency Level – TELPAS Reading	Beginning Intermediate Advanced Advanced High
TELPAS Reading Raw Score	Numeric
TELPAS Reading Scale Score	Numeric
Proficiency Level – TELPAS Writing	Beginning Intermediate Advanced Advanced High
Proficiency Level – TELPAS Speaking	Beginning Intermediate Advanced Advanced High

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
Proficiency Level – TELPAS Listening	Beginning Intermediate Advanced Advanced High
TELPAS Composite Scale Score	Numeric
TELPAS Composite Rating	Beginning Intermediate Advanced Advanced High
Absence Tracking	
School Year[1]	Linked from Student Profile
Total Unexcused Absences – Quarter 1[1]	Numeric
Total Excused Absences – Quarter 1[1]	Numeric
Total Unexcused Absences – Quarter 2[1]	Numeric
Total Excused Absences – Quarter 2[1]	Numeric
Total Unexcused Absences – Quarter 3[1]	Numeric
Total Excused Absences – Quarter 3[1]	Numeric
Total Unexcused Absences – Quarter 4[1]	Numeric
Total Excused Absences – Quarter 4[1]	Numeric
Total Unexcused Absences	Numeric
Total Excused Absence	Numeric
Total Absences	Numeric
Student Enrollment/Withdrawal Tracking	
Date of Action[1]	MM/DD/YYYY; date when enrollment or withdrawal occurs
Type of Action[1]	Left School Enrolled mid-year Changed District Moved up a grade
If Left School, Reason?	Out of District Out of State Left School System Home Schooling Incarcerated Enrolled in Other TX School Other [SPECIFY]
If changed district, specify	Edgewood ISD Lubbock ISD Manor ISD Somerset ISD Other [SPECIFY]

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
Notes	Open ended text field
Discipline Referrals	
Date of Incident[2]	Date on which discipline infraction occurs – mm/dd/yyyy
Disciplinary Action Taken	Expulsion (01 – 05) Suspension (06) Partial Suspension (25-26) Placement (07, 13-14) Truancy (16-17) Continuation (08-12)
Event Tracking For Students	
Name of Event	
Date of Event	Date when Event occurs
Attended[1]	Yes/No
Hours Spent at Event[1]	Numeric
Educator Profile	
First, Middle, and Last Name[1]	Full legal first, last, and middle name
School	School educator is primarily associated with
District[1]	District educator is associated with
Local ID[1]	District-level numeric identifier for each teacher.
Unique ID[1]	State-level numeric identifier for each teacher.
Grade Level[1]	Indicate the grade level educator is teaching. When possible, indicate an individual grade level based on primary responsibilities. • Grade K-4 • Grade 5 • Grade 6 • Grade 7 • Grade 8 • Multiple Middle School grade levels • Grade 9 • Grade 10 • Grade 11 • Grade 12 • Multiple High School grade levels • Not Applicable (District/ School Administrator)
Content Area[1]	Select from the following which best describes the content taught by this teacher: • Mathematics • ELA • Science • Social Studies • Not a content area teacher (Middle/ High School) • Not applicable (Elementary)
If a content area teacher, does the teacher teach any courses that are eligible for college credit? [2]	Yes/No
If Not a Content Area teacher, specify role[2]	If Content Area is “Not a Content area teacher” is selected, open-ended text field to specify job title
Program Type	Select all that apply from: • Regular Education

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
	• Special Education • Bilingual/English Speakers of other Languages Education • Career and Technical Education • Gifted and Talented Education • Not Applicable (Administration)
Status	Active/Inactive
Event Tracking for Educators	
Name of Event[1]	
Date of Event[1]	Date when Event occurs
Attended[1]	Yes/No
Hours Spent at Event[1]	Numeric, please round to the nearest half hour, using decimal format (one and a half hours = 1.5)
Parent Profile	
Parent First, Middle, and Last Name[1]	Full legal name of the parent
Parent ID[1]	The Parent ID is a self-constructed value based on their child's Unique ID.
School[1]	School their child is currently enrolled in
District[1]	District their child is currently enrolled in
Student[1]	Student(s) the parent is associated with
Email	Email ID of the parent
Event Tracking for Parents	
Name of Event[1]	
Date of Event[1]	Date when Event occurs
Attended[1]	Yes/No
Hours Spent at Event[1]	Numeric
Grant Events: Student Services	
Students[1]	Link to students
Date for Service[1]	Enter date in the following format: MM/DD/YYYY
Did Parents participate in service? [1, 2]	Yes/No
Parents	Link to parents
College Prep Advisors[2]	Link only to College Prep Advisors from "Other Contacts" list
Service Type[1]	**Select one from the following:** 1. Tutoring/Homework Assistance 2. Mentoring Counseling/Advising/Academic Planning/Career Counseling
If tutoring, what subject?	Select: • Mathematics • Science • English and Language Arts • Social Studies Required only if Tutoring is selected above.
If counseling/ advising or mentoring, did it cover financial aid?	Select Yes or No Required only if Counseling or Mentoring is selected as Service Type so it is a sub-set of Counseling or Mentoring services.

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
Delivery method for activity[1]	For the activity above, please indicate if it was delivered in-person or virtual.
Number of Hours (per day)[1]	Enter number of hours the activity occurred – round to the nearest whole hour (Enter 15 min increments as 0.25, enter ½ hour increments as "0.5"), so four and half hours would be entered as "4.5"and four hours and 45 min will be entered as "4.75"
Explain why number of hours per day for this service exceeds 4 hours[2]	Open-text field
Reason for Service[1]	Planning/justification for services: Indicate how the decision was made to have student be involved in tutoring/homework assistance: **Select ONE reason:** • Teacher/counselor input • Diagnostic data • Teacher/counselor input AND Diagnostic Data • Student Request/walk-in • Parent request/walk-in
Events Planning	
Name of the Event[1]	Text field. Unique event identifier
Description of Event	Open text field
Date of the Event[1]	Event Date mm/dd/yyyy
Date Event Planning Started[1]	Date event record is created for planning purposes
District[1]	Linked to relevant cohort district(s)
School[1]	Linked to relevant cohort school(s)
GEAR UP Partner	Linked to relevant GEAR UP Partner(s)
Type of Event[1]	Select one from following: • College Tour • College Student Shadowing • Family Event • Student Workshop • Parent Workshop • Job/Site Visit • Job Shadowing • Math Educational Field Trip • English Language Arts Educational Field Trip • Science Educational Field Trip • Other Educational Field Trip • Educator Professional Development (PD) • Other Educator Event
Is the event a summer program? [2]	Yes/No
If Summer Program, select one: [2]	Choose from: • Academic Enrichment (This may include transition across grade levels, college going content – college enrollment, etc.) • Remedial Services (This may include study skills, organization skills, tutoring, etc.)
If Student or Parent Workshop is selected, please specify	Select one from the following if Student or Parent Workshop selected as Event Type: • Advisor Introduction • Academic Program

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
	• Applications and Admissions College • Applications and Admissions Pre-College • Achievement Appreciation • Application Drive • Assembly • Cafeteria Visit • Career Exploration • College Knowledge • College Fair • Essays and Personal Statements • Financial Literacy • GEAR UP Evaluation • Sporting Events • Test Preparation • Test Registration Drive • Skills focused[2] • Texas GEAR UP website[2]
If Educator PD Content	Mark all that apply: • Differentiated Instruction • Advanced Instructional Strategies • Project Based Learning • Vertical Teaming • Financial Literacy • GEAR UP Specific
Event Status[1]	Select from: • Planning • Planned • Reviewed • Attendance Pending • Reported • Cancelled • Not Applicable
Event Length[1]	Total number of cumulative hours over all event dates.
Event Description[1]	Text field; description of the event including agenda attached.
Delivery Method[1]	Select from: • In-person • Virtual
Is the Event funded by district's GEAR UP funds?[1, 2]	Yes/No
If yes, what is the estimated event cost? [2]	Amount in $
If no, source of funds? [2]	Text field
List of primary cost items[2]	
Scope[1, 2]	Select from: • School-wide • Cohort-only • Partial Cohort
Group[1, 2]	Mark all that apply: • Students

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
	• Parents • Educators • Other Contacts
Final Agenda upload (PDF) [2]	File upload link
Government Performance and Results Act Goals Fulfilled[1, 2]	Mark all that apply: • Government Performance and Results Act Goal 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of GEAR UP students. • Government Performance and Results Act Goal 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education. • Government Performance and Results Act Goal 3: Increase the educational expectations and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing
Registered Students[1]	Link to students attending
Registered Educators[1]	Link to educators attending
Registered Parents[1]	Link to parents attending
Registered Other Contacts[1]	Link to GU Partner staff attending
Non-Cohort Attendance	Enter attendance for following grades: • K-4 - • Grade 5 - • Grade 6 - • Grade 7 - • Grade 8 - • Grade 9 - • Grade 10 - • Grade 11 - • Grade 12 -
Following fields were developed by the Project Manager during Advisor Training and are required for Advisor monitoring, district planning and audit, and general Event Planning purposes. Most fields are not mandatory. These were also added to in case districts requested specific fields that were useful to them for planning purposes	
Standards of Service[1, 2]	Mark all that apply: • Student Contact • Family Contact • Parent Contact • Field Trip • Summer Programming • Classroom Observations • Before/After School Programs • College Clubs • Lunch Programs

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
	• Community Service • PD
Food Provided[2]	Yes/No
How is the food provided? [2]	Text field
Transportation Type[2]	Select one: • School Bus • Coach Bus • School Van • Private Van
Translator Required[2]	Yes/No
Setup/Breakdown procedures[2]	Text field
Visitor protocol distributed[2]	Yes/No
Feedback received from parents[2]	Yes/No
Reminder calls made	Yes/No
Thank-you letters distributed[2]	Yes/No
Internal Meetings	
Name of the Meeting[1, 2]	Name of the meeting according to the agenda.
Jurisdiction[1, 2]	Select from: • GEAR UP State Level • District Level • School Level GEAR UP State Level meeting do not include any districts or schools and are strictly either internal UT-IPSI meetings or meetings with/between GEAR UP Partners. District or School level is defined as per the scope of the meeting and the attendees involved.
Type of Meeting[1, 2]	Select from: • Planning and Review • Grant Assistance • Advisory Council • Public Inquiry • Advisor PD • Districts Educator PD • Statewide Educator PD • UT-IPSI PD • Outreach Activities • State Office Assistance and Coordination • Program Administration **Planning and Review -** defined as planning for the future or review/ monitoring discussions either within district or with UT-IPSI. **Grant Assistance** – defined as questions from districts and guidance/guidelines provided by UT-IPSI including data assistance. **Advisory Council** - defined as advisory council meetings organized by districts

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
	Public Inquiry - defined as responses to phone, email, and website inquiries from public or vendors/ partners/etc. (UT-IPSI use only) **Advisor PD** – defined as bi-annual training provided by UT-IPSI to Advisors (UT-IPSI use only). **District Educator PD** - defined as any PD training provided by UT-IPSI staff to cohort districts. **Statewide Educator PD** - defined as any PD training organized/ provided by UT-IPSI staff for statewide programs or non-cohort districts. **UT-IPSI PD** - PD received by UT-IPSI staff (UT-IPSI use only) **Outreach Activities** - Meetings or any communication made to facilitate GEAR UP activities with potential partners. **State Office Assistance and Coordination** - includes meetings and assisting TEA, ICF, and AMS. **Program Administration** - Contractual oversight and initiation, business services, travel, purchasing, etc.
Districts involved[2]	Link to districts involved in this meeting
Schools involved[2]	Link to schools involved in this meeting
GEAR UP Partner(s) involved? [2]	Link to GEAR UP Partners attending this meeting.
Date of the Meeting[1, 2]	Date – mm/dd/yyyy
Type of Contact[1, 2]	Select from: • Email • Phone Call • In-Person • Web Conference
Hours spent[1, 2]	Hours in increments of 15 minutes and entered as 0.25 e.g. 30 minute meeting is 0.5 and 2 hour 45 minutes meeting is 2.75
Notes[1, 2]	Text field for brief content and description of meeting
Attach Agenda or Meeting Minutes[2]	Upload PDF/Word file
Educators participating[2]	Link to Educator profiles that attend this meeting
Other Contacts participating[2]	Link to Other Contact profiles that attend this meeting
Parents participating[2]	Link to Parent profiles that attend this meeting
GEAR UP Partners	
Partner Name[1]	Full Name of the organization or entity
Type[1]	Select from: • Educational Institution • Non-Profit Organization • Community Organization • Faith-based Organization • Professional Association • Business • Government

Data element (as it appears in GUIDES)	Definition
	• School/District • Volunteer Group • GEAR UP Program
Local Education Agency (LEA)?[1, 2]	Is the organization a local education agency?
Institution of Higher Education (IHE)?[1]	Is the organization an Institution of Higher Education?
If IHE, what type?	Select from: • Four-year Public University/College • Four-year Private University/College • Two-year Private Community College • Two-year Public Community College • Historically Black College or University • Hispanic Serving Institution • Tribally Controlled Colleges & Universities • Native Hawaiian-Serving Institutions • Alaska Native Serving Institution
District partnering with? [2]	Linked to District(s) partnering with
School partnering with? [2]	Linked to School(s) partnering with
Address, City, State, and Zip	Full address of the main office of the organization
Email, Phone and Fax	Email, Phone and fax number of the partner
Website	Website of the partner
Summarize the partner's specific support and commitment to the project[2]	Text field
Partner Identification and Cost Share Form Completed? [2]	Yes/No
Other Contacts	
Name[1, 2]	Full legal name of the person
Title[1, 2]	Official job title or role at the GEAR UP Partner organization
GEAR UP Partner associated with[1, 2]	Link to the GEAR UP Partner
Email[2]	Email ID
Office Phone Number[2]	Phone number xxx-xxx-xxxx
Status[1]	Select from: • Active • Inactive

[1]This item is required

APPENDIX D: Evaluation Instruments

This appendix includes copies of the instruments that were used to collect data that are presented in this report. In fall 2016, parents were surveyed, and in spring of 2017 only students were surveyed. In addition to student and parent surveys, site visits were conducted to interview various stakeholders in all districts during both fall 2016 and spring 2017.

D.1 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Student Survey: Fall 2016

GEAR UP Student Survey, Fall 2016

Reminder: You may have completed a similar survey in fall 2015 for GEAR UP. We will be asking just a few questions this fall to learn about summer programs and your high school career. In spring 2017, we will ask you additional questions to learn about your thinking and understanding about GEAR UP.

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the impact of the Texas Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) program at your school. Because you are enrolled in a GEAR UP school in 2016-17, we would like to include you in the study of the Texas Education Agency GEAR UP program. As part of this important research, you are being asked to complete a survey which should take approximately 20-30 minutes. Please answer the following questions about your school experiences, future education plans and opinions about GEAR UP.

Your parent or guardian has been informed that you will be asked to complete this survey and will let your school know if they would not like you to participate. Filling out this survey is voluntary and you may choose to skip questions or stop taking the survey at any time. Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and all findings will be reported by summarizing data across students – individual responses will not be reported. Your name will not be on the survey and ICF will not share your individual responses with your teachers, administrators, other students or your parents/legal guardians. The study presents minimal risk to you. If you feel uncomfortable/upset during or after the survey and want to talk with someone, please let someone at your school know or see your guidance counselor. Study participation helps build knowledge in the state and nationally about how to support students to prepare for postsecondary education. Where appropriate, GEAR UP grantees can use the information learned to adjust GEAR UP programming.

If you have any questions about the study or your rights as a study participant, you or your parent/legal guardian can call Thomas Horwood, ICF International at (703) 934-3000.

Student Assent

By clicking on the button below, you will be provided with the information on the assent form and informed that completing the survey indicates that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to *participate* by completing the on-line survey. If you need to stop the on-line survey before completing it and return to it at a later time, you will be able to do so.

WHERE ATTENDED SCHOOL IN PAST

1. Did you attend any of the following middle schools when you were in Grade 8 (2013-2014)?

○ Brentwood	○ Decker	○ Dunbar College Prep Academy	○ E.T. Wrenn
○ Gus Garcia	○ Manor	○ Somerset	○ Did not attend any of the schools listed when I was in Grade 8 (2013-2014)

2. Did you attend any of the following high schools last year (2015-2016, Grade 10)?

○ Estacado High School	○ John F. Kennedy High School	○ Manor High School	○ Manor New Tech High School
○ Memorial High School	○ Somerset High School	○ Did not attend any of the schools listed last year when I was in Grade 10 (2015-2016)	

SUMMER PROGRAM(S) 2016

3. Did you participate in a summer 2016 program?

a. Yes *(continue to question 4)*
b. No *(skip items 4-10 and go to question 11 [NOTE to DGB: skip logic will take to correct question])*

4. How many summer 2016 programs did you attend?

a. 1
b. 2
c. 3
d. 4 or more

5. Where was/were the summer program(s) you attended offered? (Select ALL that apply)

a. My local high school district (school I was attending in Grade 10 or 11)
b. Another school district in Texas
c. A community college or university in Texas
d. A business or community organization in Texas
e. In a state other than Texas

6. What type(s) of summer program(s) did you participate in? (Select ALL that apply)

a. A college readiness program designed to help me learn more about what I would need to do to apply to college successfully
b. A college readiness program designed to help me learn more about financial aid for college
c. An academic enrichment program designed to help me be better prepared to take Pre-AP/AP or dual credit (courses that provide both high school and college credit) courses
d. A tutoring program
e. A program to learn more about careers I might be interested in
f. A job shadowing program or internship
g. Other (please describe): _____

7. First, think about the summer 2016 program(s) you attended. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statements about the summer 2016 program(s) you attended.

	Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
I attended the summer program(s) for the majority of days it was offered.	○	○		○
I enjoyed the activities offered during the summer program(s) I attended.	○	○	○	○

8. Regarding the summer 2016 program(s) you attended, consider the following items. If the item asks about a topic that was not related to the summer program you attended, please indicate not applicable. If the topic is related, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statements about the summer 2016 program(s) you attended.

	Not Applicable	*Strongly Disagree*	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
a. I have a better understanding of financial aid for college after attending the summer program(s).					
b. I have a better understanding of college entrance requirements after attending the summer program(s).					
c. I have a better understanding of the benefits of college after attending the summer program(s).					
d. I have a better understanding of careers I might be interested in after attending the summer program(s).					
e. I have a better understanding of a specific career/job after attending the summer program(s).					
f. The summer program(s) prepared me academically for taking one or more of my high school classes.					
g. I feel more prepared to take Advanced Placement [AP], Pre-AP or college credit courses after attending the summer program(s).					
h. The summer program(s) provided me with skills to help me in my high school classes (for example, time management skills, organization skills).					
i. I would recommend the summer program(s) I attended to other students at my school.					
j. Based on my experiences with the summer 2016 program(s) I attended, I am planning on attending one or more summer 2017 program(s) if possible.					

9. What thoughts, if any, do you have about the summer 2016 program(s) you attended and how it/they benefited you?

10. Select the reasons that you attended one or more summer 2016 program(s). (Select ALL that apply)

a. I wanted to participate in a summer program(s)
b. My parents wanted me to participate in a summer program(s)
c. The academic content focus of a summer program(s) was of interest to me
d. The summer program(s) provided an opportunity for me to spend time with friends
e. I thought it would help me to do well in my Grade 11 classes
f. I thought it would help me to do well in my AP, Pre-AP or dual credit (courses that provide both high school and college credit) classes
g. The summer program(s) was scheduled on days that I could attend
h. The summer program(s) was scheduled at a time of day that I could attend
i. The school strongly encouraged me to attend the summer program(s)
j. Someone from GEAR UP strongly encouraged me to attend the summer program(s)
k. Other (please describe other reasons for attending): _____

11. (NOTE skip logic to here if did not attend Summer 2016 program(s)) Select from the following reasons that you did NOT attend a summer 2016 program. (Select ALL that apply)

a. I did not want to participate in a summer program
b. My parents did not want me to participate in a summer program
c. The content focus of the summer programs I was aware of were not of interest to me
d. None of my friends were attending a summer program
e. Our family was not in the area during the time that summer programs I was aware of were scheduled (for example, we were on vacation during this time)
f. The summer programs I was aware of were scheduled at a time of day that did not work for me
g. The summer programs I was aware of were related to careers/jobs that I am not interested in learning more about.
h. I had a job and could not miss work to attend
i. I had family responsibilities and could not attend (for example, watching siblings, household responsibilities, etc.)
j. The school did not inform me about any summer programs I might attend
k. The school did not encourage me to attend any summer programs
l. Other (please describe other reasons for NOT attending): _____

12. If your school or GEAR UP program was to plan a summer 2017 program, what might they plan that would be of interest to you in attending prior to your senior year?

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM PREPAREDNESS

13. For the following set of questions, we would first like to know if you participated in any test preparation (test prep) activities for any of the identified exams. This would be test prep that occurred anytime during summer 2016 to the present. After answering whether or not you participated in the test prep activity, please choose the answer that best matches how prepared you felt afterwards to take the upcoming entrance exams.

	Did you participate in any of the following test prep activities?		How prepared do you feel for the college entrance exam(s) now that you have taken this test prep?			
	Yes	*No*	*Not Prepared*	*Somewhat Prepared*	*Well Prepared*	*Very Well Prepared*
a. PSAT/NMSQT test prep	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. SAT test prep	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. ACT test prep	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. ASPIRE test prep	○	○	○	○	○	○
e. TSIA test prep	○	○	○	○	○	○

GEAR UP AND SCHOOL STAFF

14. For each of the following topics, please indicate who you consider to be your primary source of information. Please select one option for each topic.

	GEAR UP College Prep Advisor	*School Counselor*	*Both GEAR UP College Prep Advisor and School Counselor*	*I have not learned about this topic from either*
a. College entrance exam requirements	○	○	○	○
b. Scholarship opportunities	○	○	○	○
c. Student financial aid information (for example, FAFSA, Pell grants, student loans, etc.)	○	○	○	○
d. Academic tutoring	○	○	○	○
e. Personal advice	○	○	○	○
f. Enrolling in dual credit (provide both high school and college credit) courses	○	○	○	○
g. Enrolling in Pre-AP/AP courses	○	○	○	○
h. Selecting the right college(s) to apply to	○	○	○	○
i. Information on selecting majors in college	○	○	○	○
j. Participating in PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, or ACT test prep	○	○	○	○
k. Participating in TSIA test prep	○	○	○	○
l. The transfer of credit(s) from dual credit or AP courses to college	○	○	○	○

15. For the topics which you have received information from both School Counselors and your GEAR UP College Preparation Advisor, as selected in the previous question, was the information the same from both people?

a. Yes, I received the same information from my counselor and GEAR UP College Prep Advisor
b. No, I did not receive the same information from my counselor and GEAR UP College Prep Advisor
c. I do not remember whether I received the same or different information from my counselor and GEAR UP College Prep Advisor.

16. How satisfied are you with the relationship between you and your GEAR UP College Prep Advisor?

a. Strongly Satisfied
b. Satisfied
c. Dissatisfied
d. Strongly Dissatisfied

FACTORS DETERMINING POSTSECONDARY PLANS

17. Do you plan on attending a 4-year college or 2-year college after high school?

a. I plan on attending a 2-year college after graduating high school (continue to question 18)
b. I plan on attending a 4-year college after graduating high school (continue to question 18)
c. I plan on attending a 2-year college after graduating high school, but will transfer to a 4-year college afterwards (continue to question 18)
d. Not sure (continue to question 18)
e. No (skip to question 22)

18. Please select "yes" or "no" depending on whether or not each factor will determine what college(s) you plan to attend.

	Yes	*No*
a. The distance of the college to my home/family		
b. It is close to my current job		
c. My friends are going to this college		
d. The school has a good reputation for the subject I want to major in		
e. The size of the college is a good fit for me		
f. I was referred to the college by a GEAR UP staff member		
g. I was referred to the college by a school staff member or counselor		
h. I was referred by a family member		
i. I will receive financial aid from the college if I attend		
j. I like the average class size at this college; it is a good fit for me		
k. The college offers the type of degree I plan to pursue (Certificate, Associate's, Bachelor's, etc.)		
l. The college has a high graduation/ completion rate for students like me		
m. There will be other students who are like me		
n. The college will accept my dual credits and/or AP credits		
o. Other:		

19. Please select "yes" or "no" regarding whether or not you know where to find information about each of the following factors for a college in which you are interested.

	Yes	*No*
a. The college's reputation for the subject I want to major in		
b. The size of the college		
c. The financial aid options available from the college		
d. The average class size of the college		
e. The college offers the type of degree I plan to pursue (Certificate, Associate's, Bachelor's, etc.)		
f. The college's graduation/ completion rate for students like me		
g. Details about the student population—whether there will be other students who are like me		
h. Whether the college will accept my dual credits and/or AP credits		
i. Other:		

20. How has the GEAR UP staff at your school helped you understand which college is best for you?

21. How likely are your parents to support you in attending a local college (within 50 miles from your current residence)?

a. Very likely
b. Likely
c. Somewhat likely
d. Not likely

22. How likely are your parents to support you in attending a non-local college (more than more than 50 miles from your current residence)?

a. Very likely
b. Likely
c. Somewhat likely
d. Not likely

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMICS AND ENDORSEMENTS

23. For each of the following, first please indicate if you are currently enrolled in this type of course. Then if you are enrolled, please indicate how challenging academically each has been for you.

	Are you enrolled in this course?		*I find this class to be…*			
	Yes	*No*	*Not at all challenging*	*A little challenging*	*Challenging*	*Extremely challenging*
a. Pre-AP courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. AP courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Dual credit courses (courses that provide both high school and college credit)	○	○	○	○	○	○

24. Do you plan on enrolling in at least one dual credit (courses that provide both high school and college credit) or AP class next semester?

a. Yes, I plan to take both AP and dual credit (courses that provide both high school and college credit) classes *(continue to question 25)*
b. Yes, I plan to take AP classes, but not dual credit classes *(continue to question 25)*
c. Yes, I plan to take dual credit classes, but not AP classes *(continue to question 25)*
d. No *(skip to question 26)*

25. What motivated you to want to enroll in a dual credit (courses that provide both high school and college credit) or AP class? *(Select ALL that apply)*

a. The opportunity to earn college credit
b. The opportunity to be challenged in school
c. My friends enrolled in a dual credit or AP class
d. I was recommended by a teacher
e. I was recommended by a counselor
f. I was recommended by a GEAR UP coordinator
g. My parents encouraged me to enroll in a dual credit or AP class
h. The credits earned will be appropriate for my postsecondary path
i. A dual credit or AP class would look good on my college applications
j. I am very interested in the topic of my dual credit or AP class
k. Taking this course will help my GPA
l. Other

26. Have you had the same endorsement(s) (major/minor) since the beginning of Grade 9?

a. Yes (*skip to question 29*)
b. No (*continue to question 27*)
c. N/A; I do not have an endorsement (*skip to question 30*)
d. N/A: I dropped my endorsement in Grade 10 (*skip to question 30*)

27. How many times have you changed your endorsement since Grade 9?

a. 1
b. 2
c. 3 or more

28. Why did you change your endorsement?

29. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement: My endorsement(s) (major/minor) will help me prepare for college and a career.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

BACKGROUND

30. What is your current grade level?

○ Grade 9	○ Grade 10	○ Grade 11	○ Grade 12

31. What is your gender?

○ Female	○ Male

32. What is the language you use most often *at home*? (Please select only one)

a. English
b. Spanish
c. Both English and Spanish
d. Another language (please specify: _____)

33. What is the language you use most often *with friends*? (Please select only one)

a. Only English
b. Only Spanish
c. Both English and Spanish
d. Another language (please specify:_____)

34. Are you Hispanic/Latino? (Please select only one)

a. No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
b. Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
c. Yes, Puerto Rican
d. Yes, Cuban
e. Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

35. What is your race? (Select ALL that apply)

a. American Indian or Alaska Native *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. This area may include, for example, native Indians from the United States, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.)*
b. Asian *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippine Islands.)*
c. Black or African American *(A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)*
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii or other pacific islands such as Samoa and Guam.)*
e. White *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe (including Spain), North Africa, or the Middle East.)*
f. I do not wish to share

Thank you. Your time and answers are greatly appreciated.

D.2 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Student Survey: Spring 2017

GEAR UP Student Survey, Spring 2017

Reminder: You may have completed a similar survey in fall 2016 for GEAR UP. We are asking just a few questions this spring to learn about your high school career. We will continue to send out surveys twice a year throughout your time in high school to learn how your thinking and understanding about GEAR UP changes over time.

The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the impact of the Texas Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) State Grant (SG) program at your school. Because you are enrolled in a GEAR UP school in 2016–17, we would like to include you in the study of the Texas Education Agency GEAR UP program. As part of this important research, you are being asked to complete a survey which should take approximately 20–30 minutes. Please answer the following questions about your school experiences, future education plans and opinions about GEAR UP.

Your parent or guardian has been informed that you will be asked to complete this survey and will let your school know if they would not like you to participate. Filling out this survey is voluntary and you may choose to skip questions or stop taking the survey at any time. Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and all findings will be reported by summarizing data across students—individual responses will not be reported. Your name will not be on the survey and ICF will not share your individual responses with your teachers, administrators, other students or your parents/legal guardians. The study presents minimal risk to you. If you feel uncomfortable/upset during or after the survey and want to talk with someone, please let someone at your school know or see your guidance counselor. Study participation helps build knowledge in the state and nationally about how to support students to prepare for postsecondary education. Where appropriate, GEAR UP grantees can use the information learned to adjust GEAR UP programming.

If you have any questions about the study or your rights as a study participant, you or your parent/legal guardian can call Thomas Horwood, ICF at (703) 934-3000.

By selecting "I agree to take this survey," you agree that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to take the on-line survey. If you select "I do not agree to take this survey," you will not be presented with the option to take the survey. If you need to stop the on-line survey before completing it and return to it at a later time, you will be able to do so.

- ○ I agree to take this survey.
- ○ I do not agree to take this survey *(Skip to end of survey).*

1. IMPORTANT: Have you already completed a spring 2017 Texas GEAR UP SG survey (within the last few days or weeks)?

- ○ Yes, I have already completed the spring 2017 Texas GEAR UP SG survey. *(Skip to end of survey)*
- ○ No, this is my first time taking the spring 2017 survey.

ABOUT PREVIOUS SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

2. Did you attend any of the following middle schools when you were in Grade 7 and/or 8?

○ Brentwood	○ Decker	○ Dunbar College Prep Academy	○ E.T. Wrenn
○ Gus Garcia	○ Manor	○ Somerset	○ Did not attend any of the schools listed when I was in Grade 7 and/or 8

3. Did you attend any of the following high schools last year?

○ Estacado High School	○ John F. Kennedy High School	○ Manor High School	○ Manor New Tech High School
○ Memorial High School	○ Somerset High School	○ Did not attend any of the schools listed last year	

POSTSECONDARY PLANS

4. What is the highest level of education that you want to complete? (Please select only one)

- ○ Some high school
- ○ High school
- ○ Some college
- ○ 2-year college degree (Associate degree)
- ○ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)
- ○ More than a 4-year college degree

5. What is the highest level of education that you expect to complete? (Please select only one)

- ○ Some high school
- ○ High school
- ○ Some college
- ○ 2-year college degree (Associate degree)
- ○ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)
- ○ More than a 4-year college degree

6. Has participating in GEAR UP activities at your school helped you to decide to go to college after high school graduation?

- ○ Yes *(Skip to question 8)*
- ○ No, I was already planning on going to college. *(Skip to question 8)*
- ○ No, I still don't plan to go to college.
- ○ Does not apply; I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school but I do plan to go to college. *(Skip to question 8)*
- ○ Does not apply; I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school and I do not plan to go to college.

7. You indicated that you currently do not plan to continue your education after high school. Has your thinking about this changed in the last year?

- ○ In prior years, I expected to continue my education after high school but I no longer expect to do so.
- ○ I have never expected to continue my education after high school.

8. If you do not continue your education after high school, what would be the reason(s)? (Select ALL that apply)

- ○ Family commitments
- ○ I need to work after high school.
- ○ I want to work after high school.
- ○ I will not need more than high school to succeed.
- ○ I want to join the military service after high school.
- ○ It costs too much/I cannot afford it.
- ○ My grades are not good enough to get into college.
- ○ My performance on college entrance exams (e.g., SAT, ACT) has not/will not be high enough to get into college.
- ○ Other (Please write in other reason(s)):

  _____

9. Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about…

	Yes	*No*
a. College entrance requirements?	○	○
b. The availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?	○	○

10. Select the sources of information that have helped you to think about your future college education. (Select ALL that apply)

- ○ Does not apply; I do not plan to attend college.
- ○ Information from a class activity or assignment
- ○ Doing research specifically at the Texas GEAR UP website: www.texasgearup.com
- ○ Research that I have done on my own (other than on the Texas GEAR UP website)
- ○ Information from or discussions with friends or other people my age
- ○ Information from a college visit
- ○ Information from a GEAR UP summer program
- ○ Information from or discussions with GEAR UP staff or GEAR UP events (other than college visits or summer programs)
- ○ Information from programs other than GEAR UP (e.g., AVID, Breakthrough, Communities in Schools)
- ○ Information from or discussions with parents/family members
- ○ Information from or discussions with teachers/school counselors
- ○ Information from a college fair
- ○ Information from television
- ○ Information from watching sports
- ○ None; I have not yet begun to seek outside sources of information for my future college education.
- ○ Other (Please describe other source(s)): _____

11. On average, how much do you think or would you guess it costs (tuition and fees only) for one year to attend…

	$1 to $1,000	*$1,001 to $1,900*	*$1,901 to $3,000*	*$3,001 to $6,500*	*$6,501 to $9,400*	*$9,401 to $13,000*	*$13,001 to $18,000*	*More than $18,000*
a. Your local public two-year community college? *(Please select only one)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. A four-year public college in Texas? *(Please select only one)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

12. Do you think you will be able to afford to attend…

	Definitely not	*Probably not*	*Not sure*	*Probably*	*Definitely*
a. Your local public community college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. A public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

13. How much do you know about each of the following?

	Not Knowledgeable	*Slightly Knowledgeable*	*Knowledgeable*	*Extremely Knowledgeable*
a. FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. SAT	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. ACT	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Federal Pell Grants	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Federal student loans	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Federal work-study	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Scholarships	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Financial aid and the cost and benefits to you in pursuing postsecondary education	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. General requirements for college acceptance	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Importance/benefit of college	☐	☐	☐	☐

14. For the following set of questions, we would first like to know if you have participated in the academic course or activity during <u>this school year</u> (2016–2017). If you participated in the course or activity during this school year, please answer "yes" and then choose the answer that best matches how effective the course or activity was in helping you to succeed in school/prepare to go to college. If you did not participate in the course or activity, please answer "no" and skip to the next item.

	Have you participated in this course/activity during this school year (2016–2017)?		If yes you participated in the course/activity, how effective was this course/activity in helping you to succeed in school/prepare to go to college?			
	Yes	*No*	*Not Effective*	*Slightly Effective*	*Mostly Effective*	*Very Effective*
a. Taking a pre-AP or AP mathematics course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Taking an AP English/language arts course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Taking a pre-AP or AP science course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Taking an AP social studies course	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Tutoring/homework assistance in math	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Tutoring/homework assistance in English/language arts	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Tutoring/homework assistance in science	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Tutoring/homework assistance in social studies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Mentoring	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. A 2015 GEAR UP Summer Program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Academic or career counseling/advising	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Financial aid counseling/advising	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. College visits/college student shadowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
n. Job site visit/job shadowing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. Educational field trips	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. Other school workshops about benefits/options of college	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
q. Family/cultural events (<u>your</u> participation in the event[s])	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
r. Family/cultural events (your parent's/parents' participation in the event[s])	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

15. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
a. Attending college is important for my future.	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. It is too early for me to think about college.	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I am planning to take a pre-AP, AP and/or dual credit course in mathematics next year.	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I am planning to take an AP and/or dual credit course in English/language arts next year.	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. I am planning to take a pre-AP, AP and/or dual credit course in science next year.	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. I am planning to take an AP and/or dual credit course in social studies next year.	☐	☐	☐	☐

16. What kind of information, support, or activities do you need from your school/GEAR UP to help you be more successful in school and be more prepared for college? (Select ALL that apply)

I would like: _____

- ○ More AP classes.
- ○ More dual credit courses where I can earn both high school and college credit.
- ○ Information about participating in GEAR UP events.
- ○ Tutoring.
- ○ Opportunities to participate in college visits.
- ○ Information about college entrance requirements.
- ○ Information about college financial aid/scholarships.
- ○ Information about college student clubs and sports.
- ○ Information and events presented in other languages like Spanish.
- ○ Information about taking college entrance exams (e.g., SAT, ACT, Texas Success Initiative Assessment [TSIA] exam).
- ○ Information about endorsement options.
- ○ Other information, support or activities you would be interested in participating in or learning more about? (Please specify) _____

17. How prepared do you feel for college?

- ○ Not at all prepared
- ○ Somewhat prepared
- ○ Mostly prepared
- ○ Very prepared

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM PREPAREDNESS

18. For the following set of questions, we would like to know if you took, or plan on taking, any of the college entrance exams in the 2016–17 school year.

Please indicate if you have taken any of the following:

Have you taken the exam listed below?

	Yes, I have taken	*No, but I plan on taking before the end of the current school year*	*No, I have not taken and I have no current plans to take this school year*
PSAT/NMSQT	☐	☐	☐
SAT	☐	☐	☐
ACT	☐	☐	☐

19. Did you take the entire TSI/TSIA?

- ○ Yes
- ○ I have taken some, but not all sections of the TSI/TSIA
- ○ No, I have not taken any section of the TSI/TSIA *(skip to question 21)*

20. Have you ever retaken a section of the TSI/TSIA?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

21. When was the most recent semester in which you took a section of the TSIA?

- ○ Spring 2017
- ○ Fall 2016
- ○ Spring 2016
- ○ Fall 2015 or earlier

GEAR UP AND SCHOOL STAFF

22. Have you met with the College Preparation Advisor at your school in the 2016–17 school year?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No *(Skip to question 23)*
- ○ I don't know; I did not know that my school has a College Preparation Advisor *(Skip to question 23)*

23. How satisfied are you with the relationship between you and your GEAR UP College Preparation Advisor?

Strongly Satisfied
Satisfied
Dissatisfied
Strongly Dissatisfied

24. For each of the following topics, please indicate who you consider to be your primary source of information. Please select one option for each topic.

	GEAR UP College Preparation Advisor	*Another source, such as school counselor, AVID, ADVISE TX, etc.*	*Both GEAR UP Advisor and another source*	*I have not learned about this topic from either source*
a. College entrance exam requirements	○	○	○	○
b. Scholarship opportunities	○	○	○	○
c. Student financial aid information (for example, FAFSA, Pell grants, student loans, etc.)	○	○	○	○
d. Academic tutoring	○	○	○	○
e. Personal advice	○	○	○	○
f. Enrolling in dual credit (provide both high school and college credit) courses	○	○	○	○
g. Enrolling in pre-AP/AP courses	○	○	○	○
h. Selecting the right college(s) to apply to	○	○	○	○
i. Information on selecting majors in college	○	○	○	○
j. Participating in PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, or ACT test prep	○	○	○	○
k. Participating in TSI/TSIA test prep	○	○	○	○
l. The transfer of credit(s) from dual credit or AP courses to college	○	○	○	○

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMICS AND ENDORSEMENTS

25. For each of the following, first please indicate if you are currently enrolled in this type of course. Then if you are enrolled, please indicate how challenging academically each has been for you.

	Are you enrolled in this type of course?		*So far, how challenging would you say these courses, on average, have been for you academically?*			
	Yes	*No*	*Not at all challenging*	*A little challenging*	*Challenging*	*Extremely challenging*
a. Pre-AP courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. AP courses	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. Dual credit courses (courses that provide both high school and college credit)	○	○	○	○	○	○

26. Based on the classes you have taken in high school between fall 2014 and spring 2017, are you on track to graduate with an endorsement?

- ○ Yes, I am on track.
- ○ No, I am not on track.
- ○ I am not sure.
- ○ Does not apply, I do not plan to graduate with an endorsement. *(Skip to question 28)*

27. Please indicate whether or not you would like to change your endorsement(s) (major/minor) if given the opportunity.

	Yes	*No*	*Not Sure*	*Not Applicable*
I have no plans to change my endorsement(s) (major/minor).	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have already changed my endorsement(s) (major/minor).	☐	☐	☐	☐
I plan to change my endorsement(s) (major/minor) in the near future.	☐	☐	☐	☐

28. Based on the classes you have taken in high school between fall 2014 and spring 2017, are you on track to graduate with a Foundation High School Diploma with a Distinguished Level of Achievement?

- ○ Yes, I am on track.
- ○ No, I am not on track.
- ○ I am not sure.
- ○ Does not apply, I do not plan to graduate with a distinguished level of achievement.

BACKGROUND

29. What is your current grade level?

○ Grade 9	○ Grade 10	○ Grade 11	○ Grade 12

30. What is your gender?

○ Female	○ Male

31. What is the language you use <u>most often</u> *at home*? (Please select only one)

a. English
b. Spanish
c. Both English and Spanish
d. Another language (please specify: _____)

32. What is the language you use <u>most often</u> *with friends*? (Please select only one)

a. Only English
b. Only Spanish
c. Both English and Spanish
d. Another language (please specify: _____)

33. Are you Hispanic/Latino? (Please select only one)

a. No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
b. Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
c. Yes, Puerto Rican
d. Yes, Cuban
e. Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

34. What is your race? (Select ALL that apply)

a. American Indian or Alaska Native *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. This area may include, for example, native Indians from the United States, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.)*
b. Asian *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippine Islands.)*
c. Black or African American *(A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)*
d. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii or other pacific islands such as Samoa and Guam.)*
e. White *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe (including Spain), North Africa, or the Middle East.)*
f. I do not wish to share

Thank you. Your time and answers are greatly appreciated.

D.3 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Parent Survey: Spring 2017

Survey of Parent/Guardian of GEAR UP Students: Spring 2017

Reminder: You may have completed a similar survey in prior years for the Texas Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). We are asking questions annually to understand how your thinking and understanding about GEAR UP changes over time. This is the only survey related to GEAR UP that you will be asked to complete this year.

GEAR UP schools throughout Texas, including the one your child attends, are participating in a statewide study to learn about preparing middle and high school students for college or other postsecondary education. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this survey is to evaluate the impact of the GEAR UP program in which your child is participating. Because of your child's enrollment in a GEAR UP school in 2016–2017, we would like to include you in the study of the Texas GEAR UP State Grant (SG), administered by the TEA. As part of this important research, you are being asked to complete a survey which should take approximately 15–20 minutes. These questions are about your child's experiences in school and your expectations for his/her future. Please answer the following questions about your child who is in Grade 11, participating in GEAR UP. If you do not have a child in Grade 11, but have a child in different grade who is participating in GEAR UP please complete the survey for that child. **If you have more than one child in GEAR UP, please complete a survey for each child.**

Filling out this survey is voluntary and you may choose to skip questions or stop taking the survey at any time. Your answers to these questions will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law and all findings will be reported in a summary manner to protect your identity. Your name will not be on the survey and ICF will not share your responses with your children, their teachers, their administrators, other students and other parents/legal guardians. Survey responses will be combined before they are presented in reports – individual responses will not be reported. The study presents minimal risk to you. If you feel uncomfortable/upset during or after the survey and want to talk with someone, please let someone at your child's school know. Study participation helps build knowledge in the state and nationally about how to support students to prepare for postsecondary education. Where appropriate, GEAR UP grantees can use the information learned to adjust GEAR UP programming. **TEA's goal is to have at least 50% of parents complete the survey and share their perspectives on the program – please consider participating as your answers are important for fully understanding the program.**

If you have any questions about the study or your rights as a study participant, please call Thomas Horwood, ICF at (703) 934-3000.

By selecting "I agree to take this survey," you agree that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to take the online survey. If you select "I do not agree to take this survey," you will not be presented with the option to take the survey. If you need to stop the online survey before completing it and return to it at a later time, you will be able to do so.

- ○ I agree to take this survey.
- ○ I do not agree to take this survey. *(Skip to end of survey)*

1. Please confirm that this is the only time you have taken the GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Survey in spring 2017.

- ○ Yes, this is the only time I have taken this survey in spring 2017.
- ○ I completed the survey in spring 2017 for another student I have participating in GEAR UP. This is my first time taking the survey for this child who is also participating in GEAR UP.
- ○ No, I completed the survey online in spring 2017. *(Skip to end of survey)*

2. Do you currently have a child in Grade 11? Please complete the survey thinking about this child.

- ○ Yes *(Skip to question 3)*
- ○ No *(Continue to question 2b)*

b. If no, in what grade do you have a child participating in GEAR UP for whom you would like to complete a survey? *(NOTE: If you do not have a child in Grade 11 or participating in GEAR UP, please do not complete the remainder of the survey.)*

- ○ Grade 9
- ○ Grade 10
- ○ Grade 12
- ○ I do not have a child who is participating in the GEAR UP program. *(Skip to end of survey)*

POSTSECONDARY PLANS

3. What is the highest level of education that you want your child to complete? (Please select only one)

- ○ Less than high school
- ○ High school
- ○ Some college
- ○ 2-year college degree (Associate's degree)
- ○ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)
- ○ More than a 4-year college degree

4. What is the highest level of education that you expect your child to complete? (Please select only one)

- ○ Less than high school
- ○ High school
- ○ Some college
- ○ 2-year college degree (Associate's degree)
- ○ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)
- ○ More than a 4-year college degree

5. Please answer each of the following:

		Yes	*No*
a.	Has anyone from your child's school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about college entrance requirements?	○	○
b.	Have you talked with your child about attending college?	○	○
c.	Has anyone from your child's school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about the availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?	○	○

6. How much do you think or would you guess it costs (tuition and fees only) to attend for one year at…

	$1 to $1,000	*$1,001 to $1,900*	*$1,901 to $3,000*	*$3,001 to $6,500*	*$6,501 to $9,400*	*$9,401 to $13,000*	*$13,001 to $18,000*	*More than $18,000*
a. Your local public 2-year community college? *(Please select only one)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. A 4-year public college in Texas? *(Please select only one)*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

7. Do you think that your child could afford to attend…

	Definitely not	*Probably not*	*Probably*	*Definitely*
a. A local public community college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?	○	○	○	○
b. A public 4-year college using financial aid, scholarships, and your family's resources?	○	○	○	○

8. How much do you know about each of the following?

	Not Knowledgeable	*Slightly Knowledgeable*	*Knowledgeable*	*Extremely Knowledgeable*
a. Financial aid and the cost and benefits of your child pursuing a postsecondary education	○	○	○	○
b. General requirements for college acceptance	○	○	○	○
c. Importance/benefit of college	○	○	○	○
d. FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)	○	○	○	○
e. SAT	○	○	○	○
f. ACT	○	○	○	○
g. Federal Pell Grants	○	○	○	○
h. Federal student loans	○	○	○	○
i. Federal work-study	○	○	○	○
j. Scholarships	○	○	○	○

HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMICS

9. Overall, how challenging would you say high school has been for your child academically?

- ○ Extremely Challenging
- ○ Challenging
- ○ A little Challenging
- ○ Not at all Challenging

10. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about high school graduation plans at your child's school.

	Strongly Disagree	*Disagree*	*Agree*	*Strongly Agree*
a. Someone from Texas GEAR UP or my child's school has discussed graduation requirements with my child.	○	○	○	○
b. I have discussed graduation requirements with my child.	○	○	○	○

c. I understand how my child's endorsement(s) will help my child to prepare for college and a career.	○	○	○	○
d. My child plans on dropping her/his endorsement(s) during her/his junior (Grade 11) year.	○	○	○	○
e. I understand what my child needs to do to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement.	○	○	○	○
f. I plan for my child to graduate with the distinguished level of achievement.	○	○	○	○

11. Based on the classes your child has taken in high school between fall 2014 and spring 2017, is your child on track to earn an endorsement?

- ○ Yes, my child is on track.
- ○ No, my child is not on track.
- ○ I am not sure.

12. Based on the classes your child has taken in high school between fall 2014 and spring 2017, is your child on track to graduate with a Foundation High School Diploma and at the distinguished level of achievement?

- ○ Yes, my child is on track.
- ○ No, my child is not on track.
- ○ I am not sure.

13. For each of the following, first please indicate if your child is currently enrolled in this type of course. Then if he/she is enrolled, please indicate (to the best of your knowledge) how challenging academically each has been for your child.

	Is your child enrolled in this course?		***My child finds this/these class(es) to be…***				
	Yes	*No*	*Not at all challenging*	*A little challenging*	*Challenging*	*Extremely challenging*	*Unsure*
a. A pre-AP, AP and/or dual credit course in mathematics.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
b. An AP and/or dual credit course in English/language arts.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
c. A pre-AP, AP, and/or dual credit course in science.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
d. An AP and/or dual credit course in social studies.	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH GEAR UP

14. Please answer each of the following.

	Yes	*No*
a. I participated in at least one GEAR UP activity during the last school year (2015–2016).	○	○
b. I participated in at least one GEAR UP activity during summer 2016.	○	○
c. I have participated in at least one GEAR UP activity so far this school year (2016–2017).	○	○

15. **Have any of the following contributed to your being able or willing to attend school sponsored GEAR UP events? (Select ALL that apply)**
    - ○ Encouragement from your child
    - ○ Incentives (food, door prizes, etc.)
    - ○ Interest/relevance of topics
    - ○ Outreach from school/GEAR UP staff
    - ○ Translated services/material available
    - ○ Other (please specify):

16. **Have any of the following contributed to your <u>not</u> being able or willing to attend school sponsored GEAR UP events? (Select ALL that apply)**
    - ○ Child care
    - ○ Work schedule
    - ○ Interest/relevance of topics
    - ○ Language barriers
    - ○ Time/schedule
    - ○ Transportation
    - ○ Other (please specify):

17. **Have you participated in any GEAR UP sponsored college visits with your child?**
    - ○ Yes
    - ○ No
    - ○ I don't know

18. **Have you met with the GEAR UP College Preparation Advisor at your child's school in the 2016–17 school year?**
    - ○ Yes
    - ○ No *(Skip to question 21)*
    - ○ I don't know; I did not know that my child's school has a College Preparation Advisor. *(Skip to question 21)*

19. **Have you participated in any of the following types of interactions or activities with your school's College Preparation Advisor? (Select ALL that apply)**
    - ○ Individual meetings at your child's school
    - ○ Phone meetings
    - ○ Email conversations
    - ○ Home site visits
    - ○ GEAR UP sponsored after school activities

20. **Overall, how satisfied are you with the relationship (i.e., communication, information) between you and the GEAR UP College Preparation Advisor at your child's school?**
    - ○ Very Satisfied
    - ○ Satisfied
    - ○ Dissatisfied
    - ○ Very Dissatisfied

21. **Overall, how satisfied have you been with the GEAR UP program at your child's school this year (2016–2017)?**

- ○ Does not apply; I did not participate in any GEAR UP events this school year.
- ○ Very Satisfied
- ○ Satisfied
- ○ Dissatisfied
- ○ Very Dissatisfied

22. Please share anything that you would like us to know about your experiences with the GEAR UP program. What have you liked/not liked? Is there anything you would like to see the GEAR UP program doing with you and your child?

BACKGROUND

23. Did your child attend any of the following middle schools when they were in Grade 7 and/or 8? (Select all that apply)

○ Brentwood	○ Decker	○ Dunbar College Prep Academy	○ E.T. Wrenn
○ Gus Garcia	○ Manor	○ Somerset	○ My child did not attend any of the schools listed in Grade 7 and/or 8

24. Did your child attend any of the following high schools last year? (Select all that apply)

☐ John F. Kennedy High School	☐ Memorial High School	☐ Estacado High School	☐ My child did not attend any of the schools listed last school year (2015–2016)
☐ Manor High School	☐ Manor New Tech High School	☐ Somerset High School	

25. Does your child participate in the free or reduced-cost lunch program at school?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Not Sure

26. What is your child's gender?

- ○ Female
- ○ Male

27. What is the language you use most often at home?

- ○ English
- ○ Spanish
- ○ Both English and Spanish
- ○ Another language (please specify):

28. Other than the child you focused on in completing this survey, in what other grades do you have children? (Select all that apply.)

- ○ I do not have any children other than the one for whom I completed this survey.
- ○ Younger than Kindergarten
- ○ Kindergarten through Grade 5
- ○ Grade 6
- ○ Grade 7

- ○ Grade 8
- ○ Grade 9
- ○ Grade 10
- ○ Grade 12
- ○ College student or college graduate
- ○ Other (please specify):

29. Are you Hispanic/Latino? (Select One)

- ○ No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- ○ Yes, Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano
- ○ Yes, Puerto Rican
- ○ Yes, Cuban
- ○ Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin

30. What is your race? (Select one or ALL that apply)

- ○ American Indian or Alaska Native *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment. This area may include, for example, native Indians from the United States, Mexico, Nicaragua, Guatemala, and Costa Rica.)*
- ○ Asian *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. This area includes, for example, China, India, Japan, Korea, and the Philippine Islands.)*
- ○ Black or African American *(A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.)*
- ○ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii or other pacific islands such as Samoa and Guam.)*
- ○ White *(A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe (including Spain), North Africa, or the Middle East.)*

31. What is your highest level of education?

- ○ Less than high school
- ○ High school
- ○ Some college
- ○ 2-year college degree (Associate's degree)
- ○ 4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)
- ○ More than a 4-year college degree
- ○ I do not wish to share.

Thank you. Your time and answers are greatly appreciated!

D.4 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Fall 2016: Coordinator Interview Protocol

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this interview is to better understand your role as the day-to-day coordinator/contact for GEAR UP at your school(s) with a particular interest in this past summer and this school year so far. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this interview to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form.*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. GUIDES Data and prior interview data (in particular, reported plans for the 2016–17 school year) will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site-specific probes.

Note to interviewer: If our evaluation team has already met the person and had a chance to engage with them previously, review prior notes and identify any key issues that were not addressed. If basic items were all addressed and unlikely to change, skip the item. Questions to focus on change within current year and over the year have been identified. Identify prior discussions about planned activities/services to inquire about progress on those plans. In addition, please ask the coordinator to reflect on sustaining with follow-on cohorts throughout as appropriate.

1. **What have been your roles and responsibilities in GEAR UP this semester?**
    a. *If new, tell us about your roles and responsibilities. Experience/training? (NOTE: if new, revise questions in later sections to ask what roles/responsibilities they are aware of, how they are accomplishing their roles and responsibilities, and if they have been told that their actions, roles, or responsibilities have changed from those of prior years' district coordinators.)*
    b. *How have your responsibilities changed since last school year? Has your role increased or diminished at all this school year? If so, what factors have contributed to that? Are you satisfied with these changes?*
    c. *What GEAR UP activities are you involved with this semester (e.g., vertical team, before/after school services, parent engagement, teacher professional development, alliance engagement, college visits, statewide GEAR UP activities)? What GEAR UP activities/programs do you deliver yourself? What activities do you oversee or delegate to others? (Probe for perceptions of this oversight/management structure). How do you make the decision of to whom to delegate certain tasks?*
    d. *How do you interact with the college preparation advisor(s) at your school(s)? How has this changed from last school year? To what extent do you work as a team with other GEAR UP staff to address*

GEAR UP goals and the GUIDES data reporting requirements? How well would you say the various GEAR UP staff work together towards the goals?

2. **Are there any changes in how GEAR UP is structured at this school(s) for this school year? Since last school year?**
    a. *If known: Have any of the key players changed? How has this changed from prior years?*
    b. *If not known: What is the structure of GEAR UP at this school/these schools? Who are the key players? Who are the key players on a day-to-day basis?*
    c. *In what ways did you collaborate with the IPSI Family Engagement Specialist and Educator Outreach Coach? Have you implemented any strategies that were suggested by either of them?*
    d. *Have your perceptions of the management structure of GEAR UP in your district changed since last school year? If so, please explain.*
    e. *What impact has the state implementation office had on GEAR UP operations in your district this semester? How often have you interacted with the implementation office this semester?*
    f. *What are your perceptions of the state implementation office's role in GEAR UP?*
    g. *How did the planning for this year's implementation go? How satisfied are you with the level of involvement you had? Who has been involved in the GEAR UP planning process (advisory councils, parents, school leaders, teachers, principal)? Who is involved now? Are these groups helping to inform GEAR UP programming decisions/activities/programs? If so, how? What are barriers/facilitators to involving these groups? What GUIDES data or additional GEAR UP data that you may collect or track did you and your team use to plan? In what ways did you use these data?*
    h. *Are there any goals that your district is prioritizing this year? Why are these goals your priority? What data, collected by GEAR UP or the school, did you use to inform how you plan to reach these goals this year?*
    i. *How did preparing for long-term success of GEAR UP fit into this year's planning? [Probe for graduating college ready (distinguished level of achievement/endorsements), college entrance requirements knowledge, financial aid knowledge, 18 hours of college credit by graduation, on-time promotion and graduation, SAT/ACT and TSIA].*
    j. *Did GEAR UP staff or the district/school work with Grade 11 teachers to familiarize them with GEAR UP?*
    k. *If new administrators: How have the GEAR UP staff worked to familiarize new administrators with GEAR UP activities and goals? Are you satisfied with their level of buy-in and engagement so far?*
3. **Effective transitions to high school and between grades while in high school is another important element in promoting student preparation for college. As students moved from Grade 10 to Grade 11, have there been any additional activities to help them to transition in a way that prepares students for college level work? (If no, probe for details about why they did not offer summer activities. If yes, probe for details on each event and for focus on academic rigor using the following probes.)**
    a. *Who was responsible for planning and conducting the summer activities?*
    b. *For each activity, what percentage of students attended?*
    c. *What are your perceptions about the success of these activities? What factors may have contributed to the success of these activities?*
    d. *What challenges did you face? Were you able to overcome them or how might you overcome them in the future?*
    e. *What summer transition activities, if any, did your site offer this past summer for students entering Grade 9 in the 2015–16 school year? In what ways, if any, were they similar to or different from those you provided to GEAR UP students last summer (summer 2014)?*
4. **In what ways is GEAR UP promoting postsecondary education differently this school year to students? To parents?**
    a. *What are the different types of schools and programs (e.g., public, private, 4-year, 2-year, vocational) that GEAR UP has provided information about to students?*

b. *What factors do you think are important for students to consider when selecting where and how to further their education? [Probe for postsecondary school factors (e.g., class size, school location, community type, where peers plan to attend, graduation rate, how similar school population demographics match the student, program availability, degrees available) as well as program factors.] How do your thoughts differ from the thoughts of students and parents?*
c. *How does GEAR UP help students determine the schools that are the best fit for them?*

5. **The primary goal of GEAR UP is to promote college readiness and college going. In what ways has GEAR UP contributed to the college-going culture in the GEAR UP school(s) in this district? Has it changed from prior years? Is the change across a broad range of students? What features of GEAR UP do you think have contributed to this change? If any factors identified, do you think those factors will continue in the future? (*Reminder to probe for sustainability*.)**
   a. *Have you been involved in any planning to maintain or sustain any initiatives started or enhanced with GEAR UP once the grant is no longer in place at this site? What are those plans for maintaining or sustaining initiatives at the middle or high school level/district level?*
   b. *If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: Relative to being college ready and college going -- What are the characteristics of the GEAR UP school(s) in this district and its students (e.g., student and staff demographics, student needs)? How did you consider these characteristics/needs in designing a GEAR UP action plan at the GEAR UP school(s) in this district this year? (Probe on English Language Learners in particular, subgroups in general throughout.) Has this changed over prior years? In what ways?*
   c. *How do you expect students to perform on the ACT/SAT? On the TSIA? In what ways has the district or school prepared students to succeed on the ACT/SAT? What steps do you see taking to improve in this area going forward? (Probe for using ASPIRE/PSAT 10, Khan Academy)*
   d. *If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: What challenges/successes has/have the GEAR UP school(s) in this district had with students being promoted on time? What plans does/do the GEAR UP school(s) in this district have to improve on-time promotion? (Probe specifically on Grade 10 to Grade 11 promotion rates and any change even if small, given it is relatively high.)*
   e. *How many youth from the district have been going to college after graduating? In general, how would you say your district has been doing on these issues relative to other districts in the state? Are there any changes from prior years?*
   f. *What programs and student support services are available to students this semester? What is the level of student involvement in these services (percentage of participation) approximately? How has this changed since prior years? How helpful are these programs at preparing students to be college going? What, if any, programs/services have been sustained (continued implementation for this year's Grades 9 and 10 students)? What programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? Are there any plans for new/additional programs/support services for this year? What programs or services related to college readiness are available to students other than GEAR UP?*
   g. *If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: What are the characteristics of households from which students come? (Family structure, employment status, education, attitudes toward postsecondary education.) Has this changed over prior years?*
   h. *If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: How involved are parents in their children's education? Has parent involvement changed from prior years? Engaging parents of new Grade 9 students?*
   i. *What programs and services are available to families [e.g., programs that inform about college; family nights; support services (e.g., counseling)]? What is the level of participation (note goal of 50% of parents attending 3 or more activities)? How has this changed over the years? What programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? What, if any,*

programs or services for families have been continued for parents of this year's Grades 9 and 10 students? Are there any plans for new/additional programs/support services for this year? What programs or services related to college readiness for families are there other than GEAR UP?

6. **Increasing the number of advanced/honors and college credit courses offered as well as the number of students involved in these is also a GEAR UP goal. To what extent has/have your school(s) increased the number of advanced courses offered so far? Has the number of Grade 11 students enrolled in these courses increased from previous years? Does your school(s) have a specific plan to increase the number of advanced courses offered in high school grades and/or to increase enrollment in these courses? How would you describe the progress in students passing advanced courses? (*Probe for dual credit and AP as part of advanced and for sustainability.*)**
    a. *If yes, please tell us about what you have been doing/planning, including who (district staff, school staff, GEAR UP staff) is involved. If no, why not?*
    b. *If not already addressed, ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: Tell us about how your offerings of advanced courses have changed over time. Any new advanced courses or any advanced courses no longer offered? Planned for future grades? (Cite list of advanced/honors math, English, science courses based on latest GUIDES data and/or prior site visit knowledge.) Has the definition of advanced courses offered changed over time? What criteria are used to meet the current definition?*
    c. *To what extent, if any, have you seen any change in the interest of GEAR UP students in advanced courses in comparison to prior years' students? To what extent was the school prepared to enroll a greater number of students in advanced courses? How does the enrollment of this year's Grades 9 and 10 students in advanced courses compare to previous years?*
    d. *Is there a wide range of students enrolling in these courses (e.g., English Language Learners, did well vs. did poorly in Pre-AP courses)? Which students are more likely to be enrolled? What barriers keep the other students from enrolling or being interested?*
    e. *Are you aware of any changes in course rigor since the increase in enrollment? Are students appropriately prepared for the advanced courses? What challenges have existed in successfully offering these courses?*
    f. *What supports does GEAR UP offer for students enrolled in these courses? What successes have these supports facilitated?*
7. **A goal of GEAR UP is to provide students with opportunities to receive 18 hours of college credit by graduation. Since we last talked, what progress has the school taken to ensure that this goal can be met?**
    a. *What are your perceptions about how prepared students in your school/district are to take these (advanced and college credit) courses? At this point, have this year's GEAR UP students seemed better prepared than students in the past, about the same, or less prepared? Since the GEAR UP cohort has started Grade 11, have you noticed any changes in the level of preparedness for these types of courses for students in Grades 9 and 10?*
    b. *In what ways are students currently earning college credit? Are the enrollments in AP and dual credit courses what your team anticipated this year? Do you expect the enrollment in these courses to increase next year?*
    c. *If school includes an Early College High School: How does the college readiness of the GEAR UP students in the Early College High School compare to the GEAR UP students not in the Early College High School? How does their opportunity for dual credit compare to those not in the Early College High School? Has the existence of the Early College High School influenced or impacted the availability of dual credit courses in any way?*
    d. *How would you describe progress towards the goal of having 70% of students having knowledge of and being academically prepared for college?*
    e. *Discuss any facilitators and barriers to long term planning for increasing the number of, and student enrollment in, advanced courses and college credit courses.*

8. **We understand students will be participating in the SAT/ACT, TSIA and/or PSAT/NMSQT this year. Do you have a role in student participation in and preparation for these activities?**
    a. *If yes, tell us about your role. Are you or will you be working at all with the Khan Academy to prepare students? Other programs or strategies for helping students with preparing for these assessments? What is your vision of success regarding participating in these preparation programs?*
    b. *How did students' experience with the PSAT 10 influence the way these preparation activities are administered by GEAR UP?*
    c. *Any anticipated challenges regarding participation in these preparation programs? If yes, how might you overcome those challenges?*
    d. *Specifically, to what extent is/are the school(s) working to help students succeed on these types of assessments? Is the help provided across a wide range of students (e.g., English Language Learners, did well vs. did poorly on PSAT 10)?*
    e. *Do you anticipate additional students taking the TSIA this year? How often are they able to take the TSIA? Are you aware if these students are ready to take/retake the assessment and pass?*
    f. *What TSIA preparation activities are available this year for students? How do these activities differ from those offered last school year? Did your experience with test preparation activities and last school year's TSIA results influence how these activities are offered or administered this year?*
    g. *Are there any additional ways students are qualifying for dual credit course enrollment this year?*
9. **Is the school(s) participating in SAT School Day?**
    a. *What was the motivation for opting to participate in SAT School Day? What role did GEAR UP have in the decision to opt to participate?*
    b. *What role did/will GEAR UP play in implementing this SAT School Day?*
    c. *How did GEAR UP collaborate with school staff to implement the SAT School Day?*
10. **How, if at all, has the role of GEAR UP in supporting teacher professional development (PD) changed since last spring?**
    a. *What specific GEAR UP PD training sessions have been provided over the past summer or so far this semester?*
    b. *If none provided, what has prevented site(s) from conducting teacher/administrator PD? What is the plan to begin conducting PD for Grade 11 teachers? How might any barriers to conducting be overcome?*
    c. *How pleased are you with the number and type of PD activities related to GEAR UP you have been able to provide so far this semester?*
    d. *Did attendance at provided PD meet expectations? Probe for any needed clarity regarding who was offered the training (e.g., grade levels, content areas, administrators and teachers) and how the PD was delivered (i.e., online/face-to-face).*
    e. *To what extent has provided PD aligned with GEAR UP goals (e.g., improved academic rigor, student success, college admissions training)? What GEAR UP goals have not yet been met through PD (including PD provided within and outside of GEAR UP)?*
    f. *To what extent were Grade 11 teachers already familiar with GEAR UP because of prior participation in PD that was vertically aligned? How has this semester's PD training focused on vertical alignment with regard to meeting GEAR UP goals? In what ways is the school/district meeting the goal of 5 days of vertical team preparation? (Probe for continued vertical alignment efforts with middle school as well as across high school grades or content areas.)*
    g. *What are your perceptions on the success of GEAR UP's teacher PD strategies deployed to improve academic rigor and promote student achievement this semester (e.g., AP courses and training, data-driven instruction, project-based learning, differentiated instruction, etc.)? To what extent were they successful? What factors contributed to their success?*
    h. *What barriers do you face in implementing GEAR UP PD programs this semester? How did you overcome them/might you overcome them in the future?*

i. *In what ways, if any, has GEAR UP PD continued for other teachers (i.e., those currently teaching Grades 9 and 10)? How can PD being delivered to Grade 11 teachers be sustained for other teachers in the school or to Grade 11 teachers next year? How might the skills taught be enhanced in teachers who have already participated?*
j. *What non-GEAR UP PD are Grade 11 teachers receiving this semester? How might this PD support GEAR UP goals?*
k. *Has the Texas Gateway (formerly known as Project Share) been promoted to teachers? How successful was this promotion? What feedback did you receive on the usefulness from teachers? Do you know of any other school staff who have used this resource?*
l. In what other ways has GEAR UP supported teachers or plan to support teachers this year?

11. Outside of PD, how are teachers/school staff involved with GEAR UP (e.g., field trips, college visits, afterschool programs, etc.)? Did this change over the course of the school year?

a. *How are teachers/staff involved in college visits and awareness activities? Do teachers integrate GEAR UP/college themes into their lessons? If so, how? If not, why not?*
b. *In what other ways do you interact with teachers and build relationships with them? How do you distribute GEAR UP information to teachers? Are they responsive and receptive to the information? In what ways have you prepared Grade 11 teachers for GEAR UP students, goals, resources, and activities this year?*
c. *Have teachers delivered any financial literacy curricula to students this semester? If so, what are your perceptions of this activity? If not, why not? Was TG involved in developing or delivering this curricula?*
d. *Has GEAR UP been able to provide teachers with resources/materials for their classroom? If so, please describe. What are your perceptions of extent/how teachers utilize the resources?*

12. What business, government, education, and community alliances, if any, are involved with GEAR UP? Any changes since last spring? Is this collaboration occurring at the district or school level?

a. *If no, what challenges have you faced in engaging organizations to participate in GEAR UP?*
b. *If yes, how have community organizations supported GEAR UP at the school this year? What services/support has each alliance provided?*
c. *Tell us about the organizations' roles in providing matched funding to the GEAR UP program. If any alliance provided matching funds, please describe.*
d. *What factors help facilitate organizations' involvement? How might you build on this in the future?*
e. *What barriers did you encounter in working with organizations? How did you address them/how might you address them in the future?*
f. *Do you anticipate that you or the district/school will be able to sustain the alliance in future years? Why/why not? To what extent have organizations continued to deliver supports to students other than the current Grade 11 cohort of GEAR UP students?*
g. *Do you plan on recruiting new organizations? If so, how many and/or what types of additional alliances would you like to recruit?*
h. *Have you recruited and convened a GEAR UP Advisory Board for the district? If so, what does it do and how often does it meet? If not, why not? Who makes up your advisory board? What role would you like the advisory board to play in the implementation of GEAR UP? How is that role different to their current role?*
i. *Do you have any gaps in the alliances and community partnerships that you are seeking to fill? What challenges are you facing in filling those gaps? How are you overcoming them?*

13. One goal of Texas GEAR UP was to have schools put in place programs that might help students successfully transition to high school level coursework and be better prepared for college and college level coursework.

a. *Have any additional transition events occurred since we last spoke, as students shifted to Grade 10? How successful were these activities?*

b. *How well would you say that this year's students have transitioned to high school? What aspects of transitioning have gone well/not so well: developing high school level study habits (time management skills, organization skills); social transition (e.g., joining clubs, making friends in high school); students knowing teachers and counselors (knowing who/where they can go to for help when needed). How about focus on being ready for college?*
c. *What factors may have contributed to the success of student transitions? To what extent do you think the district will be able to sustain these facilitators?*
d. *What challenges did the school face in helping students to transition? Were you able to overcome them or how might you overcome them in the future? What might you do differently in the future to help these types of transition activities to be more successful?*

14. **How has your interaction with school staff (teachers, administrators, counselors) been different this year in comparison to previous years? (*Note this question is not relevant if new to role, can probe for current role and any perception of change from prior years based on feedback received to date*.)**
    a. *How do you interact with district administrators? How do you interact with school administrators? How do you interact with school counselors? How satisfied are you with this interaction and the role they each play in GEAR UP? Any challenges or ways you would like their role to change, if at all?*
    b. *What has facilitated successful interactions? What challenges have you faced?*
    c. *Do you think district and school staff understand the role and goals of GEAR UP? (Probe for different types of district and school staff – teachers, administrators, counselors.) Do they understand your role as the GEAR UP Coordinator?*
    d. *What is your level of satisfaction with the amount of collaboration you have had with these staff? What could increase your satisfaction?*
    e. *Do you think GEAR UP and school staff are delivering a consistent message about college preparedness at this school(s)? If not, in what ways does it differ? Which staff members offer a different message?*
    f. *Do you think there is any duplication of work and effort between GEAR UP staff and school staff? What efforts have been taken to minimize duplication?*

15. **How involved/knowledgeable are you about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events? [Probe for GEAR UP Website (www.texasgearup.com) and GEAR UP (state and national) conferences.] *(Note the change aspect of this question is not relevant if new to role, can probe for involvement and for perception of change from prior year based on feedback received to date.)***
    g. *Did you/your school/students/parents participate in any statewide activities/events this semester? What was the purpose of the event? Who/how many attended?*
    h. *Did you/your school utilize statewide resources this semester? If yes, which resources and how did you use them? If not, why not? Probe for use of TEA Graduation Tool Kit or district tools (while not a GEAR UP specific tool may be of use to support GEAR UP).*
    i. *Discuss facilitators and barriers to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events. How do these facilitators and barriers vary between GEAR UP staff, school staff, parents, and students?*
    j. *Did the district work with any of the Texas GEAR UP state collaborators (TG, AMS Pictures, GeoFORCE, T-*
    STEM Center, etc.)? If yes: In what ways did this work promote college readiness and/or awareness? If no: Why not? Are you interested in working with them in the future? What barriers exist that prevent you working with these collaborators?
    k. *Did you/your school/students/parents utilize any additional tools to promote college awareness and readiness? In what ways were they helpful?*
    l. *Are there any other resources that would be helpful to have delivered or offered at the state-level?*

16. **Is there anything else we should know about GEAR UP at your school/district and how you/the school/the district is working to meet project goals?**

D.5 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: Coordinator Interview Protocol

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this interview is to better understand your role as the day-to-day coordinator/contact for GEAR UP at your school with a particular interest in this school year since we last spoke to you in Fall 2016. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this interview to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form.*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. GUIDES data and prior interview data (in particular, reported plans for the 2016–17 school year) will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site-specific probes.

Note to interviewer: If our evaluation team has already met the person and had a chance to engage with them previously, review prior notes and identify any key issues that were not addressed. If basic items were all addressed and unlikely to change, skip the item. These items are indicated by "*If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change".* **Questions to focus on change over the year have been identified. Identify prior discussions about planned activities/services to inquire about progress on those plans. In addition, please ask the coordinator to reflect on sustaining with follow-on cohorts throughout as appropriate.**

1. **What have been your roles and responsibilities in GEAR UP since we last spoke in the fall?**
    a. *If new, tell us about your roles and responsibilities. Experience/training? [NOTE: if new, revise questions in later sections to ask what roles/responsibilities they are aware of, how they are accomplishing their roles and responsibilities, and if they have been told that their actions, roles, or responsibilities have changed from those of prior years' district coordinators).*
    b. *Have your responsibilities changed over this school year? Over the past five years? If yes, how have they changed? Has your role increased or diminished at all this school year? If so, what factors have contributed to that? Are you satisfied with these changes?*
    c. *What GEAR UP activities have you been involved with this semester? (e.g., vertical teaming, before/after school services, teacher professional development, partners, college visits, statewide GEAR UP activities). What GEAR UP activities/programs do you deliver yourself? What activities do you oversee or delegate to others? (Probe for perceptions of this oversight/management structure).*
    d. *How do you interact with the college preparation advisor(s) at your school(s)? How has this changed over time? To what extent do you work as a team with other GEAR UP staff to address GEAR UP*

goals and the GUIDES data reporting requirements? How well would you say the various GEAR UP staff work together towards the goals? How do you interact/collaborate with other campus and district GEAR UP staff?

e. *How do you interact/collaborate with district administrators? How do you interact with campus administrators and staff? How satisfied are you with this interaction and the role they each play in GEAR UP? Any challenges or ways you would like their role to change, if at all?*

2. Are there any changes in how GEAR UP is structured at this school(s) for this semester? Over the course of this school year?

a. *If known: Have any of the key players changed? Do you know why these changes took place?*
b. *If not known: What is the structure of GEAR UP at this school/these schools? Who are the key players? Who are the key players on a day-to-day basis? How has this changed over the course of the year? If changes have been made, how have they impacted the day-to-day implementation of the grant?*
c. *In what ways did you collaborate with the IPSI Family Engagement Trainer and Educator Outreach Coach? Have you implemented any strategies that were suggested by either of them?*
d. *Have your perceptions of the management structure of GEAR UP in your district changed since fall? If so, please explain.*
e. *What are your perceptions of the state implementation office's role in GEAR UP (UT-IPSI)? What impacts has IPSI had on GEAR UP operations in your district this year? TEA? How often have you interacted with IPSI and/or TEA this year?*
f. *Who has been involved in the GEAR UP planning process for the current and upcoming school year (advisory councils, parents, school leaders, teachers, principal, other campus staff)? Who is involved now? Which district and campus staff are currently involved in the planning? Are these groups helping to inform GEAR UP programming decisions/activities/programs? If so, how? What are barriers/facilitators to involving these groups? In what ways have you had to change GEAR UP implementation plans throughout the year to accommodate any student, campus, or district needs that arose throughout the year? What information and data are you using to help you plan? Who provides this data? Do you use GUIDES data at all? Do you feel you have sufficient data to help you and the rest of the GEAR UP team plan successfully?*
g. *How has preparing for long-term success of GEAR UP (meeting GEAR UP Project Objectives) fit into your planning for going forward into summer and next year? (Probe for graduating college ready (distinguished level of achievement/endorsements), college entrance requirements knowledge, financial aid knowledge, 18 hours of college credit by graduation, on-time promotion and graduation, PSAT/NMSQT, ACT, TISA, ACT, and SAT).*

6. If new administrators: How have the GEAR UP staff continued to familiarize new administrators with GEAR UP activities and goals? Are you satisfied with their level of buy-in and engagement? The primary goal of GEAR UP is to promote college readiness and college going. In what ways has GEAR UP contributed to the college-going culture in the GEAR UP school(s) in this district during this semester? Has it changed over the course of the year? Is the change across a broad range of students? What features of GEAR UP do you think have contributed to this change? If any factors identified, do you think those factors will continue in the future? [Reminder to probe for sustainability.]

a. *Have you been involved in any planning to maintain or sustain any initiatives started or enhanced with GEAR UP once the grant is no longer in place at this site? Are there any plans for maintaining or sustaining any initiatives?*
b. *If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: Relative to being college ready and college going -- What are the characteristics of the GEAR UP school(s) in this district and its students (e.g., student and staff demographics, student needs)? How did you consider these characteristics/needs in designing a GEAR UP action plan at the GEAR UP school(s) in this district this*

year? (Probe on English language learners in particular, subgroups in general throughout.) Has this changed over prior years? In what ways? How will you use this information in future planning?

c. *If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: What are the characteristics of households from which students come? (Family structure, employment status, education, attitudes toward postsecondary education.) Has this changed over prior years? How will you use this information in future planning?*
d. *If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: How involved/engaged are parents in their children's education? Has parent/family involvement/engagement changed from prior years? Engaging parents of new Grade 9 and 10 students?*
e. *If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: What challenges/successes has/have the GEAR UP school(s) in this district had with students being promoted on time? What plans does/do the GEAR UP school(s) in this district have to improve on-time promotion? (Probe specifically on Grade 11 to Grade 12 promotion expectations)*
f. *What programs and student support services are available to students this semester? What is the level of student involvement in these services (percentage of participation) approximately? How has this changed since prior years? How helpful are these programs at preparing students to be college going? What, if any, programs/services have been sustained (continued implementation for this year's Grades 9 and 10 students)? What programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? What programs or services related to college readiness are available to students other than GEAR UP?*
g. *How often do students miss class/instruction time for GEAR UP events? What guidance do you provide for making up this time (for example, ask teacher for missed work, attend tutoring, complete work ahead of time)? Have you received any negative feedback from school staff and/or parents regarding students' time missed in the classroom?*
h. *How many students from the district have been going to college after graduating? In general, how would you say your district has been doing on these issues relative to other districts in the state? Are there any changes from prior years? Is this school or district planning to make any changes in the way they prepare students for these assessments?*
i. *What are the types of programs and services that were available to families this year [e.g., programs that inform about college; family nights; financial aid information sessions, support services (e.g., counseling)]? What was the level of participation [note goal of 50% of parents attending 3 or more activities]? How has this changed over the course of the year and over the years of GEAR UP implementation? What IPSI or campus GEAR UP (IPSI Family Engagement Coordinator, campus parent liaison) staff have you worked with to meet this goal? What types of support have they provided? What parent/family programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? What, if any, programs or services for families have been continued for parents of this year's Grade 9 and Grade 10 students? Are there any plans for new/additional programs/support services for the 2017-18 school year? What programs or services related to college readiness for families are there other than GEAR UP?*
j. *What strategies have the GEAR UP team used to identify parents/households who have not attended a GEAR UP family event? What are your plans for engaging with these parents? What supports would you like in identifying and engaging with these parents from the school, district, IPSI, and/or TEA?*
k. *How has the quality of GEAR UP events and services, for students and parents, evolved since your time in GEAR UP? What areas would identify for potential increase in quality, if any?*

3. In what ways is GEAR UP promoting postsecondary education differently this semester to students? To parents?

a. *What are the different types of schools and programs (e.g., public, private, 4-year, 2-year, vocational, non-profit, proprietary) that GEAR UP has provided information about to students?*

b. *What factors do you think are important for students to consider when selecting where and how to further their education? [Probe for postsecondary school factors (e.g., class size, school location, community type, where peers plan to attend, graduation rate, how similar school population demographics match the student, program availability, degrees available) as well as program factors.] How do your thoughts differ from the thoughts of students and parents?*
c. *How does GEAR UP help students determine the schools that are the best fit for them?*

4. **One goal of Texas GEAR UP was to have schools put in place programs that might help students successfully transition to advanced level coursework and be better prepared for college and college level coursework.**
   a. *What factors may have contributed to the success of student transitions to advanced coursework? To what extent do you think the district will be able to sustain these facilitators?*
   b. *What challenges does your school face in helping students to transition to advanced coursework? Being prepared for college level coursework? Were you able to overcome them or how might you overcome them in the future? What might you do differently in the future to help these types of transition activities to be more successful?*
   c. *What GEAR UP programs or initiatives are keeping students engaged in school and focused on successfully completing high school and entering college? Do you think the GEAR UP cohort is on track to successfully transition out of high school into postsecondary education?*
5. **Increasing the number of advanced/honors and college credit courses as well as the number of students involved in these is also a GEAR UP goal. To what extent has your school increased the number of advanced courses so far? Does your school(s) have a specific plan to increase the number of advanced courses offered in high school grades and/or to increase enrollment in these courses? How would you describe the progress in students passing advanced courses? *[Probe for dual credit and AP as part of advanced and for sustainability.*]**
   a. *If yes, please tell us about what you have been doing/planning, including who is involved. If no, why not?*
   b. *If not already addressed, ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: Tell us about how your offerings of advanced courses have changed over time. Any new advanced courses or any advanced courses no longer offered? Planned for future grades? (Cite list of advanced/honors math, English, science courses based on latest GUIDES data and/or prior site visit knowledge.)*
   c. *To what extent, if any, have you seen any change in the interest of GEAR UP students in advanced courses in comparison to prior years' students? To what extent was the school prepared to enroll a greater number of Grade 11 students in advanced courses? To what extent was the school able to sustain last year's efforts and enroll a greater number of Grades 9 and 10 students in advanced courses than in previous years?*
   d. *If not asked in the fall: Is there a wide range of students enrolling in these courses (e.g., English language learners, did well vs. did poorly in Pre-AP courses, did well vs poorly on the PSAT/NMSQT)? Which students are more likely to be enrolled? What barriers keep the other students from enrolling or being interested?*
   e. *Are you aware of any changes in course rigor since the increase in enrollment? What challenges have existed in successfully offering these courses?*
   f. *What supports does GEAR UP offer for students enrolled in these courses? What about when students are struggling with the coursework? What successes have these supports facilitated?*
   g. *What role does GEAR UP have in identifying students who should be enrolled in advanced/AP courses? What tools and data, such as the AP Potential tool provided by College Board, are used to identify students to enroll in AP courses? Are you aware of any cases in the GEAR UP cohort of students identified by school or GEAR UP staff as students who should be enrolled in AP or advanced courses, but who were instead in standard-level courses? If students like these are identified, what*

actions, if any, are taken to transfer them into the AP or advanced courses? What about students who are in AP or advanced courses who ask to transfer into standard courses? What is the process you follow in handling these kinds of requests? What guidance or support (e.g. tutoring, mentoring) does GEAR UP offer when students want to transfer out of an advanced/AP course? How have these situations (if applicable) affected GEAR UP's efforts to meet goals regarding AP enrollment and college readiness?

h. *Are there some courses that more students have been transferring out of in comparison to others (e.g., AP History, AP Chemistry, dual credit English)? What reasons did students provide for transferring out of these courses? Did students receive supports prior to transferring?*

6. **A goal of GEAR UP is to provide students with opportunities to receive 18 hours of college credit by graduation. How will the students at your school be able to meet this goal (what opportunities will they have to earn credit)? How has the progress on this goal been going so far? Since we last talked, what steps/ progress has the school taken to ensure that this goal can be met?**
   a. *What are your perceptions about how prepared students in your school/district are to take these (advanced and college credit) courses? At this point, have this year's GEAR UP students seemed better prepared than students in the past or about the same? Any idea of how many Grades 9 and 10 students since the GEAR UP cohort have arrived prepared to take advanced and college credit courses?*
   b. *In what ways are students currently earning college credit? Do you expect the enrollment in these courses to increase next year?*
   c. *If school includes an Early College High School: How does the college readiness of the GEAR UP students in the Early College High School compare to the GEAR UP students not in the Early College High School? How does their opportunity for dual credit compare to those not in the Early College High School? Has the existence of the Early College High School influenced or impacted the availability of dual credit courses in any way?*
   d. *How would you describe progress towards the goal of having 70% of students having knowledge of and being academically prepared for college? What indicators do you have for this?*
   e. *Discuss any facilitators and barriers to long term planning for increasing the number of, and student enrollment in, advanced courses and college credit courses.*
7. **We understand students participated in the TSIA, PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, and ACT this year. Do you have a role in student participation in these activities?**
   a. *If yes, tell us about your role. Did you/the students work at all with the Khan Academy? Other programs or strategies for helping students with participating in these programs? What is your vision of success regarding participating in these preparation programs?*
   b. *How did students' experience with PSAT/NMSQT influence the way that test preparation activities have been administered by GEAR UP?*
   c. *What percentage of GEAR UP students would you estimate have not yet participated in the SAT or ACT? Do they plan to do so before fall 2017? [If school held an SAT School Day] Were all students able to be provided with appropriate accommodations to participate? If not, what accommodations were unable to be provided? How many students would you estimate did not participate in the SAT School Day? If aware, what were the reasons they did not participate?*
   d. *How many students have taken the TSIA this year? Do you anticipate additional students taking the TSIA this year? Are you aware if these students are ready to take/retake the assessment and pass?*
   e. *Any anticipated challenges regarding participation in these programs? If yes, how might you overcome those challenges?*
   f. *Did you have a role in helping the teachers prepare the students for the assessments?*
   g. *Was there any variation in the way or amount of preparation students received? How did you address students unsatisfied with their performance on these assessments? What supports were offered, if any, for future assessments?*

8. **One of the GEAR UP goals is to have at least 30% of the students involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level (AP classes; dual credit classes), ease transitions, and increase college awareness each summer. Tell us about your experiences with engaging students in these types of summer programs.**
    a. *Tell us about the upcoming summer. Have you been involved in identifying potential summer programs for students to attend? What types of programs? Where are the programs located (e.g., locally, elsewhere in Texas, in another state)? Who will provide the programs (e.g., university or community college, business)?*
    b. *Please share information about any district or school sponsored/organized college visits planned for summer 2017?*
    c. *How successful would you describe student enrollment in upcoming summer programs as being?*
    d. *What challenges have there been to engaging students in enrolling in summer programs? Ideas on how to overcome those challenges going forward?*
9. **How has your interaction with school staff (teachers, administrators, counselors) been different this semester in comparison to the previous semester? (Note this question is not relevant if new to role, can probe for current role and any perception of change from prior years based on feedback received to date.)**
    a. *What has facilitated successful interactions with school and district staff? What challenges have you faced?*
    b. *Do you think district and school staff understand the role and goals of GEAR UP? (Probe for different types of district and school staff – teachers, administrators, counselors.) Do they understand your role as the GEAR UP Coordinator?*
    c. *What is your level of satisfaction with the amount of collaboration you have had with these staff? What could increase your satisfaction?*
    d. *Do you think GEAR UP and school staff are delivering a consistent message about college preparedness at this school(s)? If not, in what ways does it differ? Which staff members offer a different message?*
    e. *Do you think there is any duplication of work and effort between GEAR UP staff and school staff or other programs on campus? What efforts have been taken to coordinate efforts and minimize duplication?*
10. **How, if at all, has the role of GEAR UP in supporting teacher professional development (PD) changed over the course of the year?**
    a. *What specific GEAR UP PD has been provided over the course of the year?*
    b. *If none provided, what has prevented site(s) from conducting teacher/administrator PD? What is the plan to begin conducting PD for Grade 12 teachers? How might any barriers to conducting be overcome?*
    c. *How pleased are you with the number and type of PD activities related to GEAR UP you have been able to provide this year?*
    d. *Did attendance at provided PD meet expectations? Probe for any needed clarity regarding who was offered the training (e.g., grade levels, content areas, administrators and teachers) and how the PD was delivered (i.e., online/face-to-face)?*
    e. *To what extent did any given PD align with GEAR UP goals (e.g., improved academic rigor, student success, college admissions training, financial literacy, college entrance requirements)? What gaps in PD have you identified with regard to alignment to GEAR UP goals?*
    f. *To what extent were Grade 11 teachers already familiar with GEAR UP because of prior participation in PD that was vertically aligned? How has this year's PD training focused on vertical alignment with regard to meeting GEAR UP goals? In what ways is the school/district meeting the goal of 5 days of vertical team preparation? Probe for continued vertical alignment efforts with middle school as well as across high school grades or content areas.*

g. *What are your perceptions on the success of GEAR UP's teacher PD strategies deployed to improve academic rigor and promote student achievement this year (e.g., AP/dual credit courses and training, data-driven instruction, project-based learning, differentiated instruction, etc.) To what extent were they successful? What factors contributed to their success?*
h. *What barriers do you face in implementing GEAR UP PD programs this year? How did you overcome them/might you overcome them in the future?*
i. *In what ways, if any, has GEAR UP PD continued for other teachers (i.e., those currently teaching Grade 9 and 10)? How can PD being delivered to Grade 11 teachers be sustained for other teachers in the school or to Grade 11 teachers next year? How might the skills taught be enhanced in teachers who have already participated?*
j. *What non-GEAR UP PD are Grade 11 teachers receiving this year? How might this PD support GEAR UP goals?*
k. *Has the Texas Gateway (formerly known as Project Share) been promoted to teachers? How successful was this promotion? What feedback did you receive on the usefulness from teachers? Do you know of any other school staff who have used this resource?*

11. **Outside of PD, how are teachers/school staff involved with GEAR UP? (e.g., field trips, college visits, afterschool programs, tutoring, etc.) Did this change over the course of the school year?**
    a. *How are teachers/staff involved in college visits and awareness activities? Do teachers integrate GEAR UP/college themes into their lessons? If so, how? If not, why not?*
    b. *In what other ways do you interact with teachers and build relationships with them? How do you distribute GEAR UP information to teachers? Are they responsive and receptive to the information? In what ways have you prepared Grade 12 teachers for GEAR UP students, goals, resources, and activities next year?*
    c. *Have teachers delivered any financial literacy curricula to students this year? Have GEAR UP staff delivered any financial literacy curricula to students this year? If so, what are your perceptions of this activity? If not, why not? Was TG involved in developing or delivering this curriculum?*
    d. *Has GEAR UP been able to provide teachers with resources/materials for their classroom? If so, please describe. What are your perceptions of extent/how teachers utilize the resources?*
12. **What business, government, education, and community alliances, if any, are involved with GEAR UP? Any changes since last semester? Is this collaboration occurring at the district or school level?**
    a. *If no, what challenges have you faced in engaging organizations to participate in GEAR UP?*
    b. *If yes, how have community organizations supported GEAR UP at the school this semester? What services/support has each partner provided?*
    c. *Tell us about the organizations' roles in providing matched funding to the GEAR UP program. If any partner provided matching funds, please describe.*
    d. *What programs or services on this school campus that have goals similar to GEAR UP have you worked with this year (such as Advise TX or LEARN)? What programs or services do you anticipate working with next year? How do the goals of these programs and/or services align with GEAR UP's goals? Do you think there is any overlap or duplication in work? If yes to overlap/duplication, how are you working to maximize resources and minimize duplication? What opportunities have you identified for potential collaboration with these programs or services?*
    e. *What factors help facilitate organizations' involvement? How might you build on this in the future?*
    f. *What barriers did you encounter in working with organizations? How did you address them/how might you address them in the future?*
    g. *Do you anticipate that you will be able to sustain the alliance in future years? Why/why not? To what extent have organizations continued to deliver supports to students other than the current Grade 11 cohort of GEAR UP students?*
    h. *Do you plan on recruiting new organizations this summer or next year? If so, how many and/or what types of additional partners would you like to recruit?*

i. *Have you recruited and convened a GEAR UP Advisory Board for the district? If so, what does it do and how often does it meet? If not, why not? Who makes up your advisory board? What role would you like the advisory board to play in the implementation of GEAR UP? How is that role different from their current role?*
j. *Do you have any gaps in the alliances and community partnerships that you are seeking to fill? What challenges are you facing in filling those gaps? How are you overcoming them?*

13. **How involved / knowledgeable are you about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events? [Probe for GEAR UP Website (www.texasgearup.com) and GEAR UP conferences]**
    a. *Did you/your school/students/parents participate in any statewide activities/events this semester/year? What was the purpose of the event? Who/how many attended?*
    b. *Did you/your school utilize statewide resources this semester/year? If yes, which resources and how did you use them? If not, why not? Probe for use of TEA Graduation Tool Kit or district tools (while not a GEAR UP specific tool may be of use to support GEAR UP). How helpful were the tools/resources you used?*
    c. *Discuss facilitators and barriers to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events.*
    d. *Did the district work with any of the Texas GEAR UP state collaborators (TG, GeoFORCE, Signal Vine, etc.)? If yes: In what ways did this work promote college readiness and/or awareness? If no: Why not? Are you interested in working with them in the future? What barriers exist that prevent you working with these collaborators?*
    e. *Thinking specifically about AMS Pictures, what services or resources are you aware of that they offer? Did you use these resources or services? Why or why not? If you did use them, what did you use? What made you want to utilize them? If you did not use them, what would have made you more likely to use them?*
    f. *Did you/your school/students/ parents utilize any additional tools to promote college awareness and readiness? In what ways were they helpful?*
    g. *Are there any other resources that would be helpful to have delivered or offered at the state-level?*
14. **Is there anything else we should know about GEAR UP at your school/district and how you/the school/the district is working to meet project goals?**

D.6 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Fall 2016: College Preparation Advisor Protocol

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP state grant initiative to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this interview is to better understand your role as the College Preparation Advisor for GEAR UP at your school with a particular interest in this past summer and this school year so far. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this interview to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. The most recent GUIDES reporting data (i.e., student and parent event, demographic, and participation data), and prior interview data (in particular, reported plans for the 2016–17 school year) will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site-specific probes.

INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS

1. **What have been your roles and responsibilities in GEAR UP this semester?**
    a. How have your responsibilities changed since last school year? Has your role increased or diminished at all this school year? If so, what factors have contributed to that?
    b. What GEAR UP activities are you involved with (e.g., college visits, before/after school services, tutoring/mentoring)?
    c. How have you interacted with students so far this year? Are there any additional ways you anticipate interacting with them later in the year? (Probe for one-to-one, group contact, workshop. Probe for frequency/duration of interaction.)
    d. What factors at the school help facilitate your interaction with students? What barriers do you face in interacting with students? If barriers, how have you/will you address them? To what extent are data systems in place to identify students in need of services? What kind of information/data do you use to guide your interaction with students? From where do you get such information? (Probe for GUIDES, any additional data collected by GEAR UP, school data system, teachers, counselors.) Does this information work well for you? Is there any additional information or data that would be helpful in guiding your interactions with students? Tell me about any one-on-one interactions you have had with students.

e. Are you involved with sustainability of GEAR UP programming with the middle schools or Grades 9 and/or 10? Involved with it through vertical teaming? Tell me about how you see GEAR UP goals being sustained or not and your role in that.
f. We know you are hired and supervised by IPSI, but work on the school campus. Has the GEAR UP structure within the school evolved since your time working on GEAR UP? How has it affected your ability to meet project goals? Generally, what is your perspective on the current model/structure?
g. What is your role in spreading GEAR UP across the campus, specifically to the teachers? To what extent do you go in to the classrooms? Meet with teachers? How would you describe those interactions?

2. **How has your interaction with the GEAR UP coordinator for this school changed since last school year? With other GEAR UP staff?**
   a. *Who do you report to while at the school and at IPSI? Has that changed since last school year? (Probe for level/frequency of interaction with coordinator and supervisor as well as teachers/parents.)*
   b. Describe the different roles that make up the GEAR UP team. In what ways do you collaborate with other GEAR UP staff? (Probe for coordinator, liaison, data clerk, and other staff.) To what extent do you work as a team to address GEAR UP goals and the APR requirements? How well would you say the various GEAR UP staff are working together as a team towards the goals?
   c. What new training have you received this school year? How useful has this training been so far? From who? (Probe for IPSI role.)
3. **Tell me about the planning for GEAR UP implementation for this year that you were involved in.**
   a. *How much has been planned out so far for this year?*
   b. Who has been involved in the planning? Which GEAR UP staff? Which school staff? Any district staff? Are you satisfied with the type and level of input everyone has provided? If not, what would you change for next year?
   c. What data were used for planning this year's activities and strategies for engagement? GUIDES? Any additional GEAR UP data? (Probe for previous participation levels, previous feedback, goal obtainment in previous years.) School data? (Probe for grades, course enrollment, attendance, etc.)
   d. Do you feel that your role on the GEAR UP team is clearly defined? Do you feel that you clearly understand your responsibilities? Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of other members of the team? Do you feel that each team member adheres to their roles and responsibilities appropriately?
4. **Tell me about any progress made toward accomplishing the main GEAR UP goals/objectives for this year and strategies to achieve progress. This can include progress over the past summer.**
   a. *What are the primary goals for this year? (Probe for: success in advanced math and science courses, AP courses, and dual credit courses generally; on-time promotion exceeding state average; ensuring students had an effective transition between grade levels while in high school; familiarizing students/families with college entrance requirements, SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, ACT, and financial literacy. Check against project goals in general.]*
   b. To what extent were you involved in executing the GEAR UP planning process for this school year? If involved, how? If not, why not
   c. How does preparing for long-term success of GEAR UP students fit into executing this year's plan? [Probe for graduating college ready (distinguished level of achievement/endorsements), college entrance requirement knowledge, financial aid knowledge, 18 hours of college credit by graduation, ACT/SAT, increasing number of and enrollment in advanced courses.]
5. **What activities/events has your school offered to students/parents, particularly students rising to Grade 11 and their parents, this past summer and so far this school year? (Probe for details on each event.)**
   a. *Tell me about your role in helping to meet the goal of having at least 50% of parents attend 3 events. Is this a continued challenge or have you made more progress in this area? If progress, what*

strategies have worked to increase attendance? Please describe how you have been able to implement your parent engagement plan.

b. *To what extent did you work with/collaborate with the IPSI Family Engagement Specialist? What kind of support did the specialist provide to date? How, if at all, did she change your plan for parent engagement this year? Has this led to any new implementation activities? To improved success in engaging families?*
c. *How did you encourage student/parent attendance at events? For each event, were participation/attendance levels consistent with program targets? If not, why not?*
d. *What are your perceptions about the success of these events? What factors may have contributed to the success of these events?*
e. *What challenges did you face (with students and/or parents)? Were you able to overcome them or how might you overcome them in the future?*
f. *What was your role in these events? What role, if any, did other GEAR UP/school staff or collaborators play? Was this a change in roles as compared to last year?*
g. *Are there activities/events that support student academic achievement (such as tutoring)? If so, what is your perception of these activities? Are there any activities/events offered to parents about the role they can play to support student academic achievement (such as parent nights or information sessions about advanced course offerings)? If so, what is your perception of these activities?*
h. *Any changes since last school year (i.e., from spring to fall semester)?*

6. **What services have you provided directly to GEAR UP students this past summer and so far this school year to support the cohort in Year 5 of the program?**
   a. *Have you worked with or discussed with any students about dropping, changing, or adding endorsements since the beginning of this school year? Who else may they have talked to about this decision? What reasons do students tell you they have for changing or adding endorsements?*
   b. *Did you provide any services related to AP course enrollment? Are you able to have an impact on a student's enrollment status in an AP course? Do you collaborate or discuss AP course enrollment with the school counselors?*
   c. *What services regarding financial literacy have you offered this school year to GEAR UP students? What gaps in financial literacy knowledge do you think students still have in regards to financial literacy? What is the GEAR UP staff's plan to fill that gap?*
   d. *Did you provide any services related to the development of college and/or career plans?*
   e. *What are the data or other supports available to help you identify the areas students are in need of services in?*
   f. *What are your perceptions of these services this past summer and so far this school year? (Probe for how these services link to college readiness and how that's changed since spring)*

7. **What business, government, education, and community alliances, if any, are involved with GEAR UP? Any changes since last spring? [If no partners are identified, probe for any involvement in identifying/recruiting alliances.]**
   a. *What is your role in identifying community alliances? What type of alliances (e.g., college readiness, career readiness, financial literacy, etc.) do you consider top priority?*
   b. Have these organizations supported college preparation and awareness activities this semester (e.g., through providing services, hosting college visits)? How have career readiness goals been supported through these organizations?
   c. *If no, what challenges have you faced in engaging these organizations?*
   d. *If yes, how have community alliances supported GEAR UP, college preparation, and college awareness this school year? What services/support has the alliance provided?*

8. **We understand that students will likely be participating in the SAT, ACT, and/or PSAT/NMSQT this year. Has the school opted into College Board's SAT School Day program?**
   a. *If yes, do you know what the motivation was for opting into the SAT School Day program? (For example, did students express interest in SAT School Day?)*
   b. Was implementing the SAT School Day included in GEAR UP objectives?
   c. Who was involved in making the decision about participating in SAT School Day?
9. **Do you have a role in preparing students for the SAT, ACT and/or PSAT/NMSQT?**
   a. *If yes, tell me about that. Has the Khan Academy been playing a role? How often are students using Khan Academy? Are they using it effectively? Other programs or strategies for helping students with this?*
   b. How have students' experiences with the PSAT 10 affected the way they are preparing for the SAT? Are they preparing more, less, or the same amount than they did for the PSAT 10? Is the way they are preparing any different?
   c. Specifically, to what extent is the school and/or GEAR UP working to help students succeed on these types of exams? Is the help provided across a wide range of students (e.g., English language learners, did well vs. did poorly on PSAT 10) or do some students receive different or more/less help than others? Do you have a role in determining the type and level of help students receive? If so, describe your role.
   d. Do you feel that students are/will be prepared to do well on the SAT/ACT/PSAT/NMSQT this year? Why or why not? If you feel they will do well, what has/will facilitate the success? If you feel they are not prepared to do well, what are the barriers preventing them from succeeding?
   e. For those who took the TSIA before the school year began, do you know, or can you estimate, the approximate percentage of students who were able to pass the assessment? About how many students are still planning to take or retake it this year? Do you think these students are prepared to take and/or retake and pass the assessment? What TSIA preparation opportunities are available to them this year?
   f. What other ways, besides the TSIA, have students become eligible to enroll in dual credit classes?
   g. What is your vision of success for students participating in these test preparation programs?
   h. Any anticipated challenges regarding student participation in the SAT/ACT, PSAT/NMSQT, and/or the TSIA? If yes, how might you overcome those challenges? What challenges have you or the GEAR UP team experienced in offering preparation for these tests? How have you overcome these challenges?
10. **How has the transition into more advanced and/or college level coursework, including AP or dual credit courses, gone for students so far this school year?**
   a. *Is there a wide range of students enrolling in these courses (e.g., English language learners, did well vs. did poorly in Pre-AP courses) or are some students more/less likely to be enrolled than others? If it varies, why do you think this is?*
   b. What supports are available to help students succeed in these courses? Do you think they all take advantage of these supports? What may keep students from pursuing these supports? How do you manage these challenges?
   c. What AP or dual credit courses are GEAR UP students enrolled in this semester, if any? How have those been going? What feedback from students have you received?
   d. Are any GEAR UP students taking both AP and dual credit courses? What factors influence students' choices to take one type of course over the other? What factors do you encourage them to consider? If known, what factors do school counselors encourage students to consider? Do parents consider any other factors?
   e. How do students' long-term goals and plans influence the decision to take AP AND/OR dual credit courses?
   f. If school includes an Early College High School: How does the college readiness of the GEAR UP students in the Early College High School compare to the GEAR UP students not in the Early College High School? How does their opportunity for dual credit compare to those not in the Early College High School? Has the existence of the Early College High School influenced or impacted the availability of dual credit courses in any way?

g. What types of skills might contribute to student success in advanced coursework? How prepared do you perceive students are on those skills? To what extent do students understand what they need to be doing to succeed in advanced coursework? How has this changed/stayed the same over the time you have been in this role and interacting with students?
h. Effective transitions to high school and between grades while in high school is another important element in promoting student preparation for college. As students moved from Grade 10 to Grade 11, have there been any additional activities to help them to transition between grade levels and be better prepared for college, including college level work? What activities in this area, if any, occurred over the summer or so far this school year? What activities are underway/planned for this school year?

11. In what ways have students been talking about college differently now that they are in Grade 11? Do they know what postsecondary schools and programs they would like to pursue?

a. What different types of postsecondary schools have students been able to explore through college visits or other research (e.g., public, private, 4-year, 2-year)? What role do you play in helping students and/or their parents determine the type of school that is the best fit for them?
b. What factors do you think are important for students to consider when selecting where and how to further their education? (Probe for postsecondary school factors [e.g., class size, school location, community type, where peers plan to attend, graduation rate, how similar school population demographics match the student, program availability, degrees available] as well as program factors (e.g., types of degrees offered, choices in major, length of program.) How do your thoughts differ from students' and parents'?
c. Do students and parents have the resources and access to research about what each school offers?
d. How has the number of students who do not plan to obtain post-secondary education immediately after high school fluctuated in the past year? What barriers do students perceive to prevent them from attending college?
e. What alternative paths do students plan to take after high school? What kind of guidance do you offer students to help them determine the most appropriate path after high school? What other resources do you offer students and parents to help make this decision?

12. Earlier we asked about summer programs offered by the school or district. Now we'd like to know about student participation in summer programs not hosted or facilitated by the school or district this past summer. Were you involved in guiding students towards any programs? Type of programs students attended to your knowledge? Where they attended (e.g., locally, elsewhere in Texas, in another state)? Who provided the programs (e.g., university or community college, business)?

a. Please share information about any district or school sponsored/organized college visits that occurred in summer 2016.
b. If aware of student participation, how successful would you describe that participation as being? About how many students were involved in summer programs (how close to goal of 30% enrolled)?
c. If not aware of student participation, what challenges have there been to engaging students in the summer? Ideas on how to overcome those challenges going forward?
d. Has any planning occurred to date for summer 2017? Ideas for what you would like/not like to see occur in summer 2017?

13. How has your involvement with and knowledge about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events changed since last school year? (Probe for statewide activity outside of GEAR UP, GEAR UP website, GEAR UP conferences) (Note the change aspect of this question is not relevant if new to role, can probe for any involvement and for perception of change from prior year based on feedback received to date.)

a. Did you/your school/students/parents participate in any statewide activities/events? What was the purpose of the event? Who/how many attended?

b. Did you/your school utilize statewide resources this past summer or so far this school year? If yes, which resources and how did you use them? If not, why not?
c. Discuss facilitators and barriers to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events.

14. **How has your interaction with school staff (teachers, administrators, counselors) been different this year in comparison to previous years? (Note this question is not relevant if new to role, can probe for current role and any perception of change from prior year based on feedback received to date.)**
    a. What has facilitated successful interactions? What challenges have you faced?
    b. Do you think school staff understand the role and goals of GEAR UP? (Probe for different types of school staff—teachers, administrators, counselors.) Do they understand your role as a College Preparation Advisor?
    c. What is your level of satisfaction with the amount of collaboration you have had with school staff? (Probe for satisfaction about collaboration with teachers, administrators, and counselors.) What could increase your satisfaction?
    d. Do you think GEAR UP and school staff are delivering a consistent message about college preparedness at this school? If not, in what ways does it differ? Which staff members offer a different message?
    e. Do you think there is any duplication of work and effort between GEAR UP staff and school staff? What efforts have been taken to minimize duplication?
15. **Is there anything else you would like us to know about GEAR UP in your school and how you/the school is working to meet project goals?**

Thank you for your time.

D.7 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: College Preparation Advisor Protocol

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP state grant initiative to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this interview is to better understand your role as the College Preparation Advisor for GEAR UP at your school with a particular interest in this school year since we last talked. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this interview to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. The most recent GUIDES data (i.e., student and parent event, demographic, and participation data) and prior interview data (in particular, reported plans for the 2016–17 school year) will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site-specific probes.

INTERVIEWER QUESTIONS

1. **What have been your roles and responsibilities in GEAR UP this semester?**
    a. How have your role/responsibilities changed since we last spoke? If so, what factors have contributed to that? Has your role increased or diminished at all this school year? If so, what factors have contributed to that?
    b. What GEAR UP activities are you involved with (e.g., college visits, before/after school services, tutoring/mentoring, financial aid counseling)?
    c. How did you interact with students this year? (Probe for one-to-one, group contact, workshop, mentoring. Probe for frequency/duration of interaction.) Tell me about any formal or informal one-on-one interactions you have had with students and how these are contributing to achieving GEAR UP goals.
    d. What factors at the school help facilitate your interaction with students? What barriers do you face in interacting with students? If barriers, how have you/will you address them? To what extent are data systems in place to identify students in need of services? What kind of information do you use to guide the interaction with students? Where do you get such information from (GEAR UP records, school data system, teachers, counselors)? Does that work well for you? Is there any additional information or data that would be helpful in guiding interactions with students?

e. Have you been involved with preparing to sustain any of the GEAR UP initiatives for next year's Grade 11 students? Tell me about how you see GEAR UP goals being sustained or not and your role in that.
f. We know you are hired and supervised by IPSI, but work on the school campus. Has the GEAR UP structure within the school evolved since your time working on GEAR UP? In what ways if any does this structure affect your role? Has it helped or hindered your ability to meet project goals? Generally, what is your perspective on this model/structure?
g. What is your role in spreading awareness of GEAR UP across the campus, specifically to the teachers? To what extent do you go in to the classrooms? Meet with teachers? How would you describe those interactions?

2. **How has your interaction with the GEAR UP coordinator for this school changed since last semester? With other GEAR UP school or district staff such as the parent liaison or data clerk? With guidance counselors/teachers/parents/administrators?**
   a. Who do you report to while at the school and IPSI? Has that changed since last semester? (Probe for level/frequency of interaction with coordinator and supervisor as well as teachers/parents.)
   b. Describe the different roles that make up the GEAR UP team. In what ways do you collaborate with other GEAR UP staff? (Coordinator, parent liaison, data clerk, IPSI Family Engagement Trainer, IPSI Educator Outreach Coach, other staff)? To what extent do you work as a team to address GEAR UP goals and the APR requirements? How well would you say the various GEAR UP staff are working together as a team towards the goals?
   c. Do you feel that your role on the GEAR UP team is clearly defined? Do you feel that you clearly understand your responsibilities? Do you understand the roles and responsibilities of other members of the team? Do you feel that each team member adheres to their roles and responsibilities appropriately?
   d. What new training have you received this school year? How useful has this training been so far? From who? (Probe for IPSI role)
3. **Tell me about any planning for GEAR UP implementation next year that you have been involved in.**
   a. How much has been planned out so far for next year?
   b. Who has been involved in the planning? Which GEAR UP staff? Which school staff? Any district staff? Are you satisfied with the type and level of input everyone has provided? If not, what would you change?
4. **What data were/will be used for planning next year's activities and strategies for engagement? GUIDES? Any additional GEAR UP data? (Probe for previous participation levels, previous feedback, goal obtainment in previous years.) School data? (Probe for grades, course enrollment, attendance, etc.) Tell me about any progress made toward accomplishing the main GEAR UP goals/objectives for this year and strategies to achieve progress.**
   a. What were the primary goals for this year from your perspective? [Probe for: Promoting student success in Algebra II, advanced courses, AP courses, dual enrollment courses generally; foundation high school plan with endorsement or distinguished level of achievement; on track for four years of credit in core subjects; on-time promotion exceeding state average; ensuring students had an effective transition between grade levels while in high school; familiarizing students/families with college entrance requirements, PSAT/NMSQT, ACT,SAT, TSIA, financial literacy, overall college preparedness. Check against project goals in general.] How well informed of the goals were you through the year? Do you think others in your school and district (GEAR UP coordinator, principal, teachers, parents) were well-informed and understood the goals?
   b. To what extent were you involved in executing GEAR UP this school year and the planning for next year? If involved, how? If not, why not? [Probe for who else is involved in the GEAR UP planning process (parents, school leaders, teachers, principal)? How has your role in planning changed from the prior

year?] Do you think the execution of GEAR UP this year met the goals? Why or why not? What elements helped facilitate the goal completion? What barriers did GEAR UP face when trying to meet goals?

c. *How did preparing for long-term success of GEAR UP students fit into executing this year's plan? [Probe for graduating college ready (distinguished level of achievement/endorsements), college entrance requirement knowledge, financial aid knowledge, 18 hours of college credit by graduation, ACT/SAT/TSIA, increasing number of and enrollment in AP/ Pre-AP/dual credit courses, other advanced courses, and overall college preparedness.] What role did you have in encouraging students to stay with their plan to graduate with an endorsement? Encouraging students to complete Algebra II?*

5. **What activities/events has your school offered to students/parents, particularly Grade 11 students and their parents, since we last spoke?** ***(Probe for details on each event; probe specifically for information about any financial aid information events.)***

a. *Tell me about your role in helping to meet the goal of having at least 50% of parents attend 3 events. Is this a continued challenge or have you made progress in this area? If progress, what strategies have worked to increase attendance? Please describe how you have been able to implement your parent engagement plan.* ***[Probe whether or not the topics of some events were more successful than others.]***

b. *To what extent do you work with/collaborate with the IPSI Family Engagement Trainer? What kind of support has the trainer provided to date? How, if at all, did she change your plan for parent engagement this year? Has this led to any implementation activities? To improved success in engaging families?*

c. *How did you encourage student/parent attendance at events? For each event, were participation/attendance levels consistent with program targets? If not, why not?*

d. *What are your perceptions about the success of these events? What factors may have contributed to the success of these events?*

e. *What about activities/events that support student academic achievement and postsecondary readiness (such as tutoring, financial aid events, college visits, etc.)? If so, what is your perception of these activities?*

f. *In what ways have you promoted financial aid to students and parents this year (e.g. one-on-one conversations, workshops, family events)? What information and options about financial aid have you discussed with students and parents? In what ways have parent and student knowledge of financial aid changed this year? Do you feel that you have the knowledge and support to provide financial aid information to students with a variety of levels of need? What information or resources would be helpful for your efforts to inform students and parents about financial aid? What challenges have you experienced in informing parents and students about financial aid so far? How have you overcome them? What new challenges do you anticipate next school year?*

g. *How often do students miss class/instruction time for GEAR UP events? What guidance do you provide for making up this time (for example, ask teacher for missed work, attend tutoring, complete work ahead of time)? Have you received any negative feedback from school staff and/or parents regarding students' time missed in the classroom? What changes have you made as a result of this feedback?*

h. *What strategies have the GEAR UP team used to identify parents/households who have not attended a GEAR UP family event? What are your plans for engaging with these parents? What supports would you like in identifying and engaging with these parents from the school, district, IPSI, and/or TEA?*

i. *What challenges did you face (with students and/or parents)? Were you able to overcome them or how might you overcome them in the future?*

j. *What was your role in these events? What role, if any, did other GEAR UP/school staff or collaborators play? Was this a change in roles as compared to last year?*

k. *Thinking about student engagement and family engagement, any changes over the course of the school year (i.e., from fall to spring semester)? How has the quality of student support services and parent services evolved since your time in GEAR UP? What areas would identify for potential increase in quality, if any?*
l. *Any changes since last semester (i.e., from fall to spring semester)?*

6. **What postsecondary readiness services have you provided directly to GEAR UP students since we last spoke? (Probe for changing endorsements; developing educational plans; mentoring; developing career plans; assessing education interests, college entrance requirements and financial literacy.)**
   a. *What are your perceptions of these services so far this school year? (Probe for perceptions of understandings of graduation plans and endorsements and how this links to college readiness. Have perceptions changed since fall)?*
   b. *How well were these services received by the students? For each service, were participation/attendance levels consistent with targets? If not, why not?*
   c. *Any changes over the course of the year (i.e., from last school year to this school year or from the start of the school year to this spring)?*
   d. *Have you worked with or discussed with any students about their college and career plans? How can they use their plan to begin planning for postsecondary education?*
   e. *How would you describe the extent of providing student support services (tutoring, mentoring, counseling)?*
   f. *How might the school sustain these services with future students if perceived as helpful? What challenges might they face in sustaining them? If the school does not perceive these services as helpful, what might they change to make them more effective?*

7. **What business, government, education, and community alliances, if any, are involved with GEAR UP? Any changes since the fall semester? *[If no alliances are identified, probe for any involvement in identifying/recruiting alliances.]***
   a. *Has your role in identifying community alliances changed since we last spoke? What type of alliances (e.g., college readiness, career readiness, financial literacy, etc.) do you consider top priority?*
   b. *Which GEAR UP state collaborators have you worked with this year (i.e., TG, GeoForce, Focus Training, Signal Vine, Raise Achievement,)? In what ways have they supported GEAR UP at this school this year? If there are any collaborators you have not worked with this year, why did you not work with them?*
   c. *Thinking specifically about AMS Pictures, what services or resources are you aware of that they offer? Did you use these resources or services? Why or why not? If you did use them, what did you use? What made you want to utilize them? If you did not use them, what would have made you more likely to use them?*
   d. *Have these organizations supported college preparation and awareness activities this semester (e.g., through providing services, hosting college visits)?*
   e. *If no, what challenges have you faced in engaging these organizations?*
   f. *If yes, how have community alliances supported GEAR UP this school year? What services/support has the alliance provided?*
   g. *What programs or services on this school campus that have goals similar to GEAR UP have you worked with this year (such as Advise TX or LEARN)? What programs or services do you anticipate working with next year? How do the goals of these programs and/or services align with GEAR UP's goals? Do you think there is any overlap or duplication in work? What opportunities have you identified for potential collaboration with these programs or services?*

8. **How has the transition into more advanced and/or college level coursework, including AP or dual credit courses, gone for students this school year?**

a. *What AP or dual credit courses are GEAR UP students enrolled in this year, if any? How have those been going? What feedback from students have you received?*
b. *What supports are available to help students succeed in these courses? What about for students who are struggling with coursework? Do you think they all take advantage of these supports? What may keep students from pursuing these supports? How do you manage these challenges?*
c. *Have many students transferred out of advanced courses this year? Are there some courses that more students have been transferring out of in comparison to others (e.g., AP History, AP Chemistry, dual credit English)? What reasons did students provide for transferring out of these courses? Did students receive supports prior to transferring?*
d. *If school includes an Early College High School: How does the college readiness of the GEAR UP students in the Early College High School compare to the GEAR UP students not in the Early College High School? How does their opportunity for dual credit compare to those not in the Early College High School? Has the existence of the Early College High School influenced or impacted the availability of dual credit courses in any way?*
e. *What role does GEAR UP have in identifying students who should be enrolled in advanced/AP courses? What tools and data, such as the AP Potential tool provided by College Board, are used to identify students to enroll in AP courses? Are you aware of any cases in the GEAR UP cohort of students identified by school or GEAR UP staff as students who should be enrolled in AP or advanced courses, but* who were instead *enrolled in standard-level courses?* If students like these are identified, what actions, if any, are taken to *transfer* them into the AP or advanced courses? What about students who are in AP or advanced courses who ask to transfer into standard courses? What is the process you follow in handling these kinds of requests*? What guidance or support* (e.g. tutoring, mentoring) *does GEAR UP offer when students want to transfer out of an advanced/AP course? How have these* situations (if applicable) *affected GEAR UP's efforts to meet goals regarding AP enrollment and college readiness?*

9. What activities do you have planned to help students be prepared for Grade 12 and beyond?

a. *Have you engaged in any activities to help students pick a potential college major and/or to select a college that is aligned with that career goal? In general, are students talking about going to college and being ready for college? Are they talking about the specific college they would like to attend yet? How has the way they talk about college changed since they started in GEAR UP? Thinking back over your time in this role, how has the way students talk about plans for the future and for attending college changed/stayed the same?*
b. *Any activities planned going forward to continue to help students to transition and be successful during their senior year in high school? How will these activities keep students engaged and focused on transition to college? Is the cohort on track to successfully transition into college after graduating high school?*
c. *To what extent do students understand what they need to be doing to succeed in college? How has this changed/stayed the same over the time you have been in this role and interacting with students?*

10. One of the GEAR UP goals is to have at least 30% of the students involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level (AP classes; dual credit classes), and increase college awareness each summer. Tell us about your experiences with engaging students in these types of summer programs.

a. *Please share information about any district or school sponsored/organized college visits planned for summer 2017?*
b. *How successful would you describe student enrollment in summer programs as being so far? About how many students will be involved in summer 2017 programs [how close to goal of 30% enrolled]?*
c. *What challenges have there been to engaging students in enrolling in summer programs? What challenges were faced in implementing these programs (probe for scheduling conflicts, lack of district/ campus staff, funding issues)? Ideas on how to overcome those challenges going forward?*

11. **We understand that students have already participated in, or plan on participating in, the SAT, ACT, TSIA, and/or PSAT/NMSQT this year. Can you elaborate on the level of success students have had? Did you have a role in preparing students?**
    a. *If yes, tell me about that. Has the Khan Academy played a role? How often were students using Khan Academy? Were they using it effectively? Other programs or strategies for helping students with this?*
    b. *What is your vision of success for students participating in these test preparation programs?*
    c. *How have students' experiences with the PSAT/NMSQTaffected the way they prepared for the SAT? Performed on SAT? Is the way they are preparing any different?*
    d. *Specifically, to what extent has the school and/or GEAR UP worked to help students succeed on these types of exams? Is the help provided across a wide range of students (e.g., English language learners, did well vs. did poorly on PSAT/NMSQT) or did some students receive different or more/less help than others? Do you have a role in determining the type and level of help students receive? If so, describe your role.*
    e. *What percentage of GEAR UP students would you estimate have not yet participated in the SAT or ACT? Do they plan to do so before fall 2017? [If school held an SAT School Day] Were all students able to be provided with appropriate accommodations to participate? If not, what accommodations were unable to be provided? How many students would you estimate did not participate in the SAT School Day? If aware, what were the reasons they did not participate?*
    f. *Do you feel that students were prepared to do well on the SAT, ACT, TSIA, or PSAT/NMSQT this year? Why or why not? What has facilitated the success or barriers to success? If you feel they are not prepared to do well, what are the barriers preventing them from succeeding?*
    g. *For those who took the TSIA, do you know, or can you estimate, the approximate percentage of students who were able to pass at least one section of the assessment? Do you think these students were prepared to take and/or retake and pass the assessment? What TSIA preparation opportunities are available to them this year?*
    h. *If not asked the previous semester: What other ways, besides the TSIA, have students become eligible to enroll in dual credit classes?*
    i. *What challenges have you or the GEAR UP team experienced in offering preparation for these tests? How have you overcome these challenges?*

12. **How has your involvement with and knowledge about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events changed since last semester? *[Probe for teacher PD, GEAR UP website, GEAR UP conferences]***
    (Note this question is not relevant if new to role, can probe for any perception of change from prior based on feedback received to date.)
    a. *Did you/your school/teachers/students/parents participate in any statewide activities/events? What was the purpose of the event? Who/how many attended?*
    b. *Did you/your school utilize statewide resources this school year? If yes, which resources and how did you use them? If not, why not?*
    c. *Discuss facilitators and barriers to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events?*

13. **Is there anything else you would like us to know about GEAR UP in your school and how you/the school is working to meet project goals?**

Thank you for your time.

D.8 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Fall 2016: Administrator Interview Protocol

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Note to briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP state grant initiative to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals* with a particular interest in this past summer and this school year so far. *The purpose of this interview is to better understand your role in GEAR UP as a school/district leader with a particular interest in this past summer and this school year so far. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this interview to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary and all data collected will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form.*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Try to find out ahead of time if administrator is new to district or continues from last year, in new or same role and use that to guide initial items in particular. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. The most recent GUIDES reporting data, prior interview data in particular, and reported plans for the 2016–17 school year will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site-specific probes.

Interviewer notes: If you already met the person and had a chance to engage with them previously, review prior notes and identify any key issues that were not addressed. If basic items were all addressed and unlikely to change, skip the item. Questions to focus on change within current year and over year have been identified. Identify prior discussions about planned activities/services to inquire about progress on those plans.

1. **Tell me a little about yourself. *(Probe for how long at school, how long in role if not already known)*. If already met, reintroduce self and begin interview.**
    a. If new to school/district, what if anything do you know about GEAR UP? Have you heard anything so far about school/district participation in GEAR UP? Where (from whom) did you learn about the GEAR UP grant on your campus? (Interviewer note: Be prepared to briefly explain program and goals and let them know we are still interested in their thoughts.
2. **Are there any changes in how GEAR UP is structured at your school since last year?**
    a. If not known: What is the structure of GEAR UP at this school? Who leads GEAR UP planning and activities/events with students? With staff? With families? Who are the key players on a day-to-day basis? How has this changed from prior years? What are your thoughts on how it might change going forward?

b. How and to what extent are you involved in GEAR UP since we last spoke? (Probe for when first learned about it/when began focusing on GEAR UP if not already known.) How if at all has the extent of your involvement changed from prior years? How satisfied are you with your role in the program? To the extent satisfied, what do you like about your role (what factors contribute to satisfaction); if unsatisfied, how would you like your role to differ (what factors contribute to dissatisfaction)? How has your satisfaction changed from prior years?
c. What do you feel are the goals of GEAR UP this year at this school? Do you feel you understand the role each GEAR UP staff member has in achieving these goals and implementing the grant? Do you feel you have a clear understanding of the role the GEAR UP team wishes you to have in GEAR UP?
d. Did you have a role in planning for GEAR UP implementation this year? Did you contribute any data collected by the school to help plan? If so, what data were included and from where were the data collected?
e. At this point, in general how satisfied are you with the structure of the program? To the extent satisfied, what do you like about the structure (what factors contribute to satisfaction); if unsatisfied, how would you like structure to differ (what factors contribute to dissatisfaction)? How has your satisfaction changed from prior years?
f. Since we last spoke, have you interacted with the state GEAR UP implementation office? If so, how would you describe the relationship between the office and you/your GEAR UP site? How satisfied have you been? What would you like to see stay the same? What would you like to change? How have interactions changed from prior years?
g. What new business, government, education and community organizations are involved in GEAR UP at your site since we last spoke? To what extent has GEAR UP played a role in establishing these alliances? If organizations are active in the program, what are your perceptions about their roles? How do you interact with these organizations? Has there been any change in organizations or their involvement from prior years? If no organizations are involved, are there plans to involve some over the course of this year? What are the plans to get partners involved? (Probe for distinction between school- and district-level alliances.) Has collaboration with business, government, education and community organizations initiated through GEAR UP continued at your site? Have you participated in an advisory council meeting?
h. How does GEAR UP leverage or coordinate with other programs/services within the school building? With other programs/services in the community? (Probe for links with specific programs.) How has this changed from prior years?
i. Have you played a role in planning what type of college readiness and awareness information will be distributed to this year's GEAR UP students? Who at the school will be distributing this information? How do you think the counselors' college readiness tasks with Grade 11 students in the past compare to their tasks with this year's Grade 11 students? In what ways have counselors and GEAR UP staff collaborated? What is your level of satisfaction with this collaboration? In what areas could they collaborate more? Are there any tasks that you would prefer the counselors solely manage?

3. What are your overall thoughts about the GEAR UP program?

a. What role or input, if any, did you have in the implementation of GEAR UP? Are you satisfied with this level of involvement? Would you have preferred to have been involved more or less? What role in the grant implementation would you like to have as the program progresses? In what ways can the GEAR UP program supplement the campus's goals and objectives?
b. Generally, what are the key successes that you feel can be contributed to the GEAR UP program across years? What factors do you think contributed to the success of the program?
c. Generally, what barriers did you encounter in promoting goals of GEAR UP this semester? This year? Were you able to overcome any barriers? Overcome over the course of the year? Over prior years? Plans to overcome going forward?

d. How/to what extent was the school keeping in mind long-term GEAR UP goals in conducting events/activities and providing services this semester? (Probe for on-time promotion; ACT/SAT; college credit; college entrance requirements; and financial literacy.) Are there any changes from prior years? What are plans to change going forward?

e. Do you think GEAR UP is achieving the college readiness goal at your school?

4. The primary goal of GEAR UP is to promote college readiness and college going. In what ways has GEAR UP contributed to the college-going culture at this school? *Has it changed from prior years? Is the change across a broad range of students? What features of GEAR UP do you think have contributed to this change? If any factors identified, do you think those factors will continue in the future? What more do you think the GEAR UP program could be doing to improve college-going culture at this school?*

a. If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: Relative to being college ready and college going -- What are the characteristics of this school and its students (e.g., student and staff demographics, student needs)? How did you consider these characteristics/needs in designing a GEAR UP action plan at the school this year? (Probe on English Language Learners in particular, subgroups in general throughout.) Has this changed from prior years?

b. If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: What are the characteristics of households from which students come? (Family structure, employment status, education, attitudes toward postsecondary education). Has this changed from prior years?

c. If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: How involved are parents in their children's education?

d. Has parent involvement changed from prior years?

e. If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: What challenges/successes has the school had with students being promoted on time? What plans does school have to improve on-time promotion?

f. How have students been doing on the ACT/SAT? What steps do you see taking to improve in this area going forward? (Probe for using PSAT 10/ASPIRE)?

g. How many youth from the district have been going to college after graduating? What barriers exist that keep some students from persisting in postsecondary education? Are students taking postsecondary education paths that seem appropriate for their readiness level (straight to a 4-year school, 2-year school with plan to transition into a 4-year school, etc.)?

h. In general, how would you say your school/district has been doing on the topics we have discussed so far (e.g., parent involvement, on-time promotion, ACT/SAT performance, postsecondary education persistence) relative to other schools/districts in the state? Are there any changes from prior years?

i. What programs and student support services (other than GEAR UP) are available to students this semester? (Probe for other programs that encourage/support attending college; student support services that assist with on-time promotion and school success [e.g., mentoring, counseling, tutoring].) What is the level of student involvement in these services (percentage of participation) approximately? How has this changed from prior years? How helpful are these programs at preparing students to be college going? What programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? Are there any plans for new/additional programs/support services for next year?

j. What programs and services (other than GEAR UP) are available to families? For example, other programs that inform about college; family nights; support services (e.g., counseling). How has this changed from prior years? What programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? Are there any plans for new/additional programs/support services for next year?

5. In what ways has the college going culture changed at your school since GEAR UP has been implemented?

a. What types of opportunities to explore different types of postsecondary schools (e.g., public, private, 4-year, 2-year) has your school been able to offer students? Has your school offered college visits to

a variety of postsecondary schools? What role has GEAR UP played in offering those opportunities? How do the opportunities of students in the GEAR UP cohort compare to those not in the cohort?

b. What resources are available to students to determine what type of postsecondary path and school is the best fit for them? Who provides these resources? What about resources for parents? Are there any additional resources you would like offer, but currently do not?

c. What barriers to attending college do students at your school perceive?

6. **Let's discuss endorsements and the Foundation High School Program graduation plan. How has that been going at this school with the GEAR UP cohort? How has it been going with the classes below the GEAR UP cohort? How has it been going with the 12th graders who chose to be on the FHSP? What features of GEAR UP, if any, have been helpful in implementing the FHSP overall? Are there any challenges/barriers to implementing changes? How has this changed from prior years? Are there any planned changes?**

   a. *Are there any planned changes regarding the implementation of endorsements and pathways for classes following the GEAR UP cohort? (Probe for endorsements that are offered at the school and decisions about selecting/changing endorsement offerings. Remind that this is related to HB 5 changes in graduation requirements to the Foundation High School Program if needed.) Any change from prior years/planned for next year in endorsement offerings?*

   b. *What have you learned so far about students selecting endorsements? What factors contribute to selection of endorsements? Does going to college/being college ready appear to play a role in how students select endorsements? Does being career oriented appear to play a role in how students select endorsements? Are there any changes you would like to see so that students select endorsements to facilitate being college going/college ready and/or career ready? How about changing endorsements? Is there any change in the frequency of endorsement selection in comparison to prior years?*

   c. *If not already addressed ask all; in spring ask for change: Who at your school has a key role in helping students succeed both in in selecting/changing an endorsement and graduating with an endorsement? What has the school done to help teachers/students with selecting endorsements and selecting courses in line with endorsements? (Probe for any use of the TEA Graduation Toolkit or other district resources.) How has this changed from prior years? What, if any, changes are planned for next year to help students with endorsement selection/changes?*

   d. *To your knowledge, are there any practices related to endorsements and the Foundation High School Program initiated through GEAR UP that have continued for other students (current Grades 9 and 10 students; middle school students, if known)?*

7. **Are services/events encouraged or sponsored by GEAR UP helping to promote the goals of student success and college readiness in your school? *If so, how? If not, why not? (NOTE: Focus on support services and activities/events related to GEAR UP goal of college readiness.)***

   a. *For tutoring/mentoring/academic support services, how were decisions made to involve students in these activities? Has this changed from prior years?*

   b. *As each GEAR UP event was planned, how were decisions made about which students and parents to invite to participate in college readiness/awareness events, if any held so far this year? Were some events open to all parents/students while others were not? What are your perceptions about the success of college readiness/awareness efforts? What factors facilitate success of events? What barriers impede success? What programs are being continued for other students (current Grades 9 and 10 students, middle school students if known, etc.)?*

   c. The goal is to have at least 50% of parents attend 3 events each year; to what extent do you see your school succeeding at meeting this goal? In what ways do you believe these parent events have or will contribute to students' college readiness? What might the school need to do to be more successful? How do you see the high school successfully meeting this goal? What factors facilitated the success of any given event/activity or service? What barriers impeded success of events? Any

plans for the upcoming year? How has this changed from prior years? What programs are being continued for other families (parents of Grades 9 and 10 students)?

d. If not known: Is GEAR UP supporting any early warning system for students at your school? (Probe for details of the warning system). If not, why not? How are students identified? Are there data systems in place? Any plans to put a system in place?
If already known to have a system: How has the early warning system been used at your school? How helpful has it been at identifying students with needs and providing services to those students? Any challenges with using the system? Any plans for changes to the system? How has this changed from prior years?

e. If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: Were you involved in any conversations about services/activities/events that occurred in the past and how you might build on their success/learn from their failures? Has your school been able to sustain any successful services/activities/events over time (from one semester to the next or one year to the next) (for example, mentors, TG financial literacy courses for parents)?

8. **Improving the number of advanced and college credit courses, including dual credit and AP courses, as well as the number of students involved in these is also a GEAR UP goal. [NOTE: Clarify throughout advanced includes dual credit and AP courses]**
   a. *If not already addressed ask all; otherwise ask once a year for change: Tell us about how your offerings of advanced courses have changed over time. Are there any new advanced courses or any advanced courses no longer offered? (Cite list of advanced/honors math, English, science courses from Grade 11 based on APR and/or prior site visit knowledge.) Does your school have a specific plan to increase the number of advanced courses offered and/or to increase enrollment in advanced courses/AP courses? If yes, please tell us about what you have been doing/planning, including who is involved. If no, why not? In what ways, if any, do other students (current Grades 9 and 10 or middle school students if known) continue to have opportunities to take advanced courses? For example, did you have many students who started Grade 9 this year who had already completed Algebra I? Did you have many students who started Grade 10 this year who had already completed Algebra II?*
   b. *To what extent, if any, have you seen any change in the interest of GEAR UP students in advanced courses in comparison to prior years' students? To what extent was the school prepared to enroll a greater number of students in advanced courses?*

9. **A goal of GEAR UP is to provide students with opportunities to receive 18 hours of college credit by graduation. Since we last talked, what steps has the school taken to ensure that this goal can be met? What policies are in place at the school that may lead students to take AP courses or dual credit courses? Do any policies steer students toward one of those options over the other? What is your level of satisfaction with these policies and their impact? What about student progress towards graduating with a distinguished level of achievement (including Algebra II, endorsement and 26 credits)? In what ways are students becoming eligible for dual credit courses at your school?**
   a. What are your perceptions about how prepared students in your school/district are to take these (advanced and college credit) courses? At this point, have this year's GEAR UP students seemed better prepared than students in the past or about the same? What successes or challenges are there in students completing/passing advanced courses?
   b. If school includes an Early College High School: How does the college readiness of the GEAR UP students in the Early College High School compare to the GEAR UP students not in the Early College High School? How does their opportunity for dual credit compare to those not in the Early College High School? Has the existence of the Early College High School influenced or impacted the availability of dual credit courses in any way?
   c. What types of non-academic skills do you think it takes for a student to be successful in high school, and ultimately college aware and ready? How successful would you say the Grade 11 students have been at having these skills? What aspects of being a successful high school student have gone well/not so well

for the GEAR UP students? In what ways, if at all, have you noticed students recognizing when they need supplemental help to succeed academically? Are students motivated to seek supplemental help out on their own? Do they know where to turn for the help? To what extent is the district able to guide them to supports or programs?

d. How would you describe progress towards the goal of having 70% of students having knowledge of and being academically prepared for college?
e. Discuss any facilitators and barriers to long term planning for increasing the number of, and student enrollment in, advanced courses and college credit courses.

9. We understand students could be participating in the SAT, ACT, TSIA, and/or PSAT/NMSQT this year. Do you have a role in that?

a. If yes, tell us about your role. Are you working at all with the Khan Academy? Other programs or strategies for helping students prepare for the tests? What is your vision of success regarding participating in these programs?
b. To what extent does your school encourage students to take the SAT and ACT? Have there been any activities to date with the Grade 10 students to promote taking these in the future.
c. To what extent is the school and GEAR UP working to help students succeed on these types of exams? Is the help provided across a wide range of students (e.g., English Language Learners, did well vs. did poorly on PSAT 10) or do some students receive different or more/less help than others?
d. Any anticipated challenges regarding participation? If yes, how might you overcome those challenges?
e. Does your school plan to participate in SAT School Day? Has your school participated in the past? What was the impetus for the decision to participate? Who was involved in making that decision? Did GEAR UP play a role in the decision to participate this school year? If so describe the role. Do you know if this decision was part of a larger GEAR UP strategy? How has GEAR UP participated in the planning, implementation, and/or preparation for this day? Do you plan to continue this moving forward? If GEAR UP has been involved in this year's SAT School Day, do you believe the school and/or district will be able to implement SAT School Days in upcoming years without GEAR UP staff? How do you anticipate this year's SAT completion rate to compare to Grade 11 students from previous years?

10. Since we last talked: Have you/the teachers at your school engaged in any GEAR UP related professional development (PD)? (If new, ask since GEAR UP began in the district in 2012-13) This includes any GEAR UP-related PD that occurred over the past summer. If so, what were your impressions of it? If not, what barriers prevented conducting GEAR UP-related PD?

[Also probe for any additional PD activities that we should be aware of that were not reported in GUIDES, which may have occurred after the latest GUIDES submission. Probe for impressions of pre-AP/AP and/or advanced mathematics professional development; improving academic rigor, differentiated instruction, project-based learning, financial literacy.]

a. If not already known: What are the school's/district's major goals for teacher and administrator professional development for the current school year?
b. Has any PD occurred since we last spoke? (Probe whether PD was provided by GEAR UP including through Texas Gateway [formerly known as Project Share].) If none, why not?
c. Do the planned number of PD events for this year meet your expectations? Why/why not? What about participation in these events, did it meet expectations? Probe for any critical PD still needed at the school in the upcoming year in order for GEAR UP to be successful?
d. Have you worked with the IPSI Education Outreach Coach? Has anyone else in your school? What are your thoughts on her work with the teachers in this school? What feedback have you received from teachers?
e. What factors contribute to current successes related to PD? What barriers have been encountered? How did you overcome them/might you overcome them in the future?

f. Has the school begun to make plans/goals for next year for teacher/administrator professional development related to GEAR UP? If yes, what role did GEAR UP play in this effort?

g. In what ways, if any, has GEAR UP PD continued for other teachers (i.e., those currently teaching Grades 9 and 10, middle school teachers if known)?

11. Since we last talked last spring, have you or any of the teachers at this school been engaged in any vertical alignment activities? NOTE if none identified in prior conversations or in response to main prompt, has the school begun to work on establishing a team/plan to ensure that vertical alignment occurs? Why/why not? When do you anticipate beginning to work on vertical alignment?

a. If not already known: Were you or the teachers at this school engaging in vertical alignment activities since the GEAR UP program began in 2012-2013 school year?

b. If new vertical alignment events have occurred, or are underway or planned, what is the scope of the effort? (Probe for: Grades and major subjects covered by vertical alignment and whether new vertical alignment activities were provided through GEAR UP or through other funding).

c. In what ways is the school/district meeting the goal of 5 days of vertical team preparation? What are your perceptions about the success of this vertical alignment work? What factors contribute to successes?

d. What barriers have been encountered? How did you overcome them?

e. What are your perceptions about the value of vertical alignment? How will it impact student achievement? How will it impact teachers and instruction at the school? If not satisfied with current status of vertical alignment, what might need to occur to improve satisfaction?

f. If vertical alignment between middle and high school occurred in prior years, to what extent has that continued to occur this year? Has it changed since GEAR UP has been implemented?

12. Effective transition to high school is another important element in promoting student preparation for college and college level coursework, as well as increased awareness of college to build interest in attending college.

a. This year's Grade 10 students had an opportunity to participate in a summer program before starting Grade 9 to help with the transition. In what ways, if any, were summer transition programs provided for this year's Grade 9 students (summer 2016) similar to those you provided to GEAR UP students in summer 2014? Has this been helpful to those Grade 9 students in your opinion? (If appropriate, probe for use of or planned use of EXPLORE, high school visits, academic early warning systems.)

13. What types of skills do you think it takes for a student to be successful in high school, and ultimately college aware and ready? How successful would you say the GEAR UP cohort students have been at developing and implementing these skills?

a. How well would you say that GEAR UP students (Grade 11) have transitioned to high school and into Grade 11? What aspects of transitioning have gone well/not so well: developing high school level study habits (time management skills, organization skills); social transition (e.g., joining clubs, making friends in high school); students knowing teachers and counselors (knowing who/where they can go to for help when needed) Engaging in college ready strategies? What factors may have contributed to the success of their transition? (Note: Relative to successfully transitioning to being a high school student, probe for content (e.g., making high school culture clear, training on specific "soft" skills like organization or study skills, encouraging to get involved, taking AP or dual enrollment courses, introducing to teachers, etc.)

b. How would you describe Grade 11 students with regard to awareness of college and interest in attending college? Are you aware of any activities to support awareness and interest in attending college or in choosing a career and how that might link to postsecondary education? Has this changed over the course of the year/over prior years?

14. One of the GEAR UP goals is to have at least 30% of the students involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level (AP classes; dual credit classes), ease

transitions, and increase college awareness each summer. Tell us about your experiences with engaging students in these types of summer programs. (*If not aware, focus on Probes d & e)*

a. Tell us about student participation in summer programs this past summer. Were you involved in guiding students towards any programs? What type(s) of programs did students attend, to your knowledge? Where were the programs attended (e.g., locally, elsewhere in Texas, in another state)? Who provided the programs (e.g., university or community college, business)?

b. Please share any college visits that occurred in summer 2016.

c. If aware of student participation, how successful would you describe that participation as being? About how many students were involved in summer programs (how close to goal of 30% enrolled)? How do you think the summer programs contribute to students' college readiness?

d. If not aware of student participation, what challenges have there been to engaging students in the summer? Ideas on how to overcome those challenges going forward?

15. How involved/knowledgeable are you about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events? [Probe for GEAR UP website (www.texasgearup.com), GEAR UP activities/events (e.g., GEAR UP conference)]

a. What statewide activities/events do/did you/your school/district participate in this semester and/or over the past summer?

b. Did you/your school utilize statewide resources this semester? If yes, how did you use them? If not, why not?

c. What facilitators and barriers are there to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events?

d. What Texas GEAR UP collaborators did your school work with this semester and/or over the summer? How was your experience?

e. To what extent do students in other grades use these resources?

16. Looking ahead, what roles would you like GEAR UP to play at your school?

a. How might successful GEAR UP activities be sustained for next year's Grade 9, 10, and 11 students and their families? For Grade 9, 10, and 11 students in the future? For middle school students (if known)?

b. How might GEAR UP activities be sustained with any new teachers at the school and/or other grades?

c. What strategies do you anticipate will be difficult to sustain?

d. What factors do you think contribute to your ability to sustain or not activities over time?

Thank you for your time.

D.9 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: Administrator Interview

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Note to briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP state grant initiative to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals* with a particular interest in this school year. *The purpose of this interview is to better understand your role in GEAR UP as a school/district leader with a particular interest in this school year so far. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this interview to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary and all data collected will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form.*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Try to find out ahead of time if administrator is new to district or continues from the fall, in new or same role and use that to guide initial items in particular. If no, exclude items on interview that they would not be able to answer (e.g., comparison to prior years). Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. The most recent GUIDES data and reported plans for the 2016–17 school year, and prior interview data in particular, will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site-specific probes.

Interviewer notes: If you already met the person and had a chance to engage with them previously, review prior notes and identify any key issues that were not addressed. If basic items were all addressed and unlikely to change, skip the item. These items are indicated by "*If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change"* **Questions to focus on change over the year have been identified. Identify prior discussions about planned activities/services to inquire about progress on those plans.**

1. **Tell me a little about yourself. (Probe for how long at school, how long in role if not already known). If already met, reintroduce self and begin interview.**
    a. *If new to school/district, what if anything do you know about GEAR UP? Have you heard anything so far about school/district participation in GEAR UP? Be prepared to briefly explain program and goals and let them know we are still interested in their thoughts.*

2. **Are there any changes in how GEAR UP is structured at your school over the course of the year?**
    a. If not known: What is the structure of GEAR UP at this school? Who leads GEAR UP planning and activities/events with students? With staff? With families? Who are the key players on a day-to-day basis? How has this changed over the course of the year/from the prior year? What are your thoughts on how it might change going forward?
    b. How and to what extent are you involved in GEAR UP since we last spoke? (Probe for when first learned about it/when began focusing on GEAR UP if not already known.) How, if at all, has the extent of your involvement changed from prior years? How satisfied are you with your role in the

program? To the extent satisfied, what do you like about your role (what factors contribute to satisfaction); if unsatisfied, how would you like your role to differ (what factors contribute to dissatisfaction)? How has your satisfaction changed over the current year/from the prior year?

c. What do you feel are the goals of GEAR UP this year at this school? Do you feel you understand the role each GEAR UP staff member has in achieving these goals and implementing the grant? Do you feel you have a clear understanding of the role the GEAR UP team wishes you to have in GEAR UP?
d. At this point, in general how satisfied are you with the structure of the program? To the extent satisfied, what do you like about the structure (what factors contribute to satisfaction); if unsatisfied, how would you like the structure to differ (what factors contribute to dissatisfaction)? How has your satisfaction changed over the current year/from the prior year?
e. Since we last spoke, who have you interacted with about GEAR UP? Have you interacted with the state GEAR UP implementation office (define if they are unsure who this is)? If so, how would you describe the relationship between the office and you/your GEAR UP site? How satisfied have you been? What would you like to see stay the same? What would you like to change? How has your satisfaction changed over the current year/from prior years?
f. What new business, government, education and community organizations are involved in GEAR UP at your site since we last spoke? To what extent has GEAR UP played a role in establishing these alliances? If organizations are active in the program, what are your perceptions about their roles? Has there been any change in organizations or their involvement over the course of the year? If no organizations are involved, are there plans to involve some over the course of this year? What are the plans to get partners involved? Probe for distinction between school- and district-level alliances. Has collaboration with business, government, education and community organizations initiated through GEAR UP continued at your site?
g. How does GEAR UP leverage or coordinate with other programs/services within the school building? With other programs/services in the community? (Probe for links with specific programs.) How has this changed over the course of the year? Going forward: Over prior years?

3. **The primary goal of GEAR UP is to promote college readiness and college going. In what ways has GEAR UP contributed to the college-going culture at this school? *Has it changed from prior years? Is the change across a broad range of students? What features of GEAR UP do you think have contributed to this change? If any factors identified, do you think those factors will continue in the future? What more do you think the GEAR UP program could be doing to improve college-going culture at this school?***
    a. *If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: Relative to being college ready and college going -- What are the characteristics of this school and its students (e.g., student and staff demographics, student needs)? How did you consider these characteristics/needs in designing a GEAR UP action plan at the school this year? (Probe on English language learners in particular, subgroups in general throughout.) Has this changed from prior years?*
    b. If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: What are the characteristics of households from which students come? (Family structure, employment status, education, attitudes toward postsecondary education). Has this changed from prior years?
    c. If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: How involved/engaged are parents in their children's education?
    d. Has parent/family involvement/engagement changed from prior years?
    e. If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: What challenges/successes has the school had with students being promoted on time? What plans does the school have to improve on-time promotion? Are GEAR UP staff or programs included in any of these plans? Do you think there is potential for them to be involved?
    f. How have students been doing on the ACT/SAT/TSIA? What steps do you see taking to improve in this area going forward? Outside of the SAT School Day, if your school held one, have students been

registering for the SAT or ACT? Do students at your school usually take the ACT or SAT? Why or why not?

g. How many youth from the district have been going to college after graduating? Do you know what their persistence rates are? What are some of the reasons students from your school are leaving college? In general, how would you say your school/district has been doing on these issues relative to other schools/districts in the state? Are there any changes from prior years?

h. In general, how would you say your school/district has been doing on the topics we have discussed so far (e.g., parent involvement, on-time promotion, ACT/SAT performance, postsecondary education persistence) relative to other schools/districts in the state? Are there any changes from prior years?

i. If not already addressed ask all/ otherwise ask once a year for change: What programs and student support services (other than GEAR UP) are available to students this school year? (e.g., other programs that encourage/support attending college; student support services that assist with on-time promotion and school success such as mentoring, counseling, tutoring. What is the level of student involvement in these services (percentage of participation) approximately? How has this changed from prior years? How helpful are these programs at preparing students to be college going? What programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? Are there any plans for new/additional programs/support services for next year or this summer?

j. What programs and services (other than GEAR UP) are available to families? For example, other programs that inform about college; family nights; support services (e.g., counseling). How long have they been in place? How has this changed over the course of the year? Going forward: Over prior years? How successful have parent events been? What programs do you hope to sustain in future years because they have been helpful? Are there any plans for new/additional programs/support services for next year?

4. Let's discuss endorsements and the Foundation High School Program graduation plan. How has that been going at this school? What features of GEAR UP, if any, have been helpful in implementing the changes? Are there any challenges/barriers to implementing changes? How has this changed from prior years? Are there any planned changes?

a. Tell us about the endorsements offered at your school. Any challenges in offering endorsements? Any challenges in allowing students to change their endorsement? What about having the right courses and the right number of each courses aligned with each endorsement? Tell us about any successes or challenges associated with being able to connect students with the endorsements and coursework they are interested in.

b. Did going to college/being college ready appear to play a role in how students select endorsements? Did being career oriented appear to play a role in how students select endorsements? Are there any changes (people, staff, inclusion/exclusion of resources) you would like to see so that students select endorsements to facilitate being college going/college ready and/or career ready? How about changing endorsements?

c. If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: Who at your school has a key role in helping students succeed in selecting/changing/adding an endorsement and graduating with an endorsement? What has the school done to help teachers/students with selecting endorsements and selecting course options in line with endorsements? How many students have been changing or adding endorsements? Are students still interested in the endorsements, pathways, and coursework they initially selected? Are you aware if GEAR UP staff or programs played a role in the endorsement(s) students selected? If yes, how influential was GEAR UP? If no, do you think it would have been appropriate for GEAR UP to play a role? Probe for any use of the TEA Graduation Toolkit or other district resources. What kind of career exploration activities have students participated in to help them select their endorsement? How has this changed from prior years? What, if any, changes are planned for next year to help students with endorsement selection/changes?

d. To your knowledge, are there any practices related to the implementation of endorsements and the Foundation High School Program initiated through GEAR UP that have continued for other students (current graduates interested in having an endorsement, current Grades 9 and 10 students; middle school students, if known)?

5. **Are services/events encouraged or sponsored by GEAR UP helping to promote the goals of student success and college readiness in your school?** ***If so, how? If not, why not? (NOTE: Focus on support services and activities/events related to GEAR UP goal of college readiness.)***
   a. *For tutoring/mentoring/academic support services, how were decisions made to involve students in these activities? How has this changed over the course of the year/over prior years? Who is involved in making those decisions?*
   b. As each GEAR UP event was planned, how were decisions made about which students and parents to invite to participate in college readiness/awareness events, if any held so far this year? Were some events open to all parents/students while others were not? What are your perceptions about the success of college readiness/awareness efforts? What factors facilitate success of events? What barriers impede success? What GEAR UP initiated programs are being continued for other students (current Grades 9 and 10 students, middle school students if known, etc.)?
   c. The goal is to have at least 50% of parents attend 3 events each year; to what extent do you see this school succeeding at meeting this goal? What might the school need to do to be more successful? How do you see the high school successfully meeting this goal? What factors facilitated the success of any given event/activity or service? What barriers impeded success of events? Any plans for increasing parent attendance for the upcoming school year/next school year? How has this changed over the course of the year/Over prior years? What programs are being continued for other families (parents of Grades 9 and 10 students)? What kind/populations of parents or families are you able to successfully engage with? Which do you struggle with more? What kind of support do you receive from GEAR UP and IPSI staff to facilitate successful parent engagement as an administrator?
   d. If not already known whether services/events encouraged or sponsored by GEAR UP help to promote the goals of student success and college readiness: Is GEAR UP supporting any early warning system for students at your school? (Probe for details of the warning system). If not, why not? How are students who may be struggling identified by the early warning system? Are there data systems in place? Any plans to put a system in place?
   e. If already known to have a system: How has the early warning system been used at your school? How helpful has it been at identifying students with needs and providing services to those students? Any challenges with using the system? Any plans for changes to the system? How has this changed from prior years? What variables inform the early warning? Who is notified of the warning? Are GEAR UP staff notified about their students? To what extent are students who have been identified by the system able to be connected to appropriate supports? What successes/challenges have you had at connecting students to support services?
   f. If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: Were you involved in any conversations about services/activities/events that occurred in the past and how you might build on their success/learn from their failures? Has your school been able to sustain any successful services/activities/events over time (over the course of the year/Over prior years)? (For example, mentors, TG financial literacy courses for parents)
   g. How has the quality of GEAR UP events and services, for students and parents, evolved since your time in GEAR UP? What areas would identify for potential increase in quality, if any?

6. **Improving the number of advanced and college credit courses, including dual credit and AP courses, as well as the number of students involved in these is also a GEAR UP goal. To what extent has your school increased the number of advanced courses so far? Does your school(s) have a specific plan to increase the number of advanced courses offered in high school grades and/or to increase enrollment in these**

courses? How would you describe the progress in students passing advanced courses? [NOTE: Clarify throughout advanced includes dual credit and AP courses]

a. *If not already addressed ask all/otherwise ask once a year for change: Tell us about how your offerings of advanced courses has changed over time. Are there any new advanced courses or any advanced courses no longer offered? What are the advanced courses planned for Grade 12? (Cite list of advanced/honors math, English, science courses for current year based on GUIDES if available and/or prior site visit knowledge). Does your school have a specific plan to increase the number of advanced courses offered and/or to increase enrollment in advanced courses/AP courses or dual credit/enrollment courses? If yes, please tell us about what you have been doing/planning, including who is involved. If no, why not? In what ways, if any, do other students (current Grades 9 and 10 or middle school students if known) continue to have opportunities to take advanced courses?*
b. To what extent, if any, have you seen any change in the interest of/performance of GEAR UP students in advanced courses in comparison to prior years' students? To what extent was/has the school prepared to enroll a greater number of students in advanced courses this year/next year? What tools and data, such as the AP Potential tool provided by College Board, are used to identify students to enroll in AP courses? Are you aware of any cases in the GEAR UP cohort of students identified by school or GEAR UP staff as students who should be enrolled in AP or advanced courses, but who were instead enrolled in standard-level courses? If students like these are identified, what actions, if any, are taken to transfer them into the AP or advanced courses? What about students who are in AP or advanced courses who ask to transfer into standard courses? What is the process you follow in handling these kinds of requests? Who should submit and approve of requests to transfer in or out of AP/advanced courses? How often are you able to accommodate these transfer requests?
c. A goal of GEAR UP is to provide students with opportunities to receive 18 hours of college credit by graduation. What progress has the school made on this goal to date? Since we last talked, what steps has the school taken to ensure that this goal can be met? What about student progress towards graduating with a distinguished level of achievement (including Algebra II, endorsement, and 26 credits)?
d. What are your perceptions about how prepared students in your school/district are to take these (advanced and college credit) courses? At this point, have this year's GEAR UP students seemed better prepared than students in the past or about the same? What successes or challenges are there in students completing/passing advanced courses?
e. If school includes an Early College High School: How does the college readiness of the GEAR UP students in the Early College High School compare to the GEAR UP students not in the Early College High School? How does their opportunity to earn dual credit compare to those not in the Early College High School? Has the existence of the Early College High School influenced or impacted the availability of dual credit courses in any way?
f. What types of non-academic skills do you think it takes for a student to be successful in high school, and ultimately college aware and ready? How successful would you say the Grade 11 students have been at having these skills? What aspects of being a successful high school student have gone well/not so well for the GEAR UP students? In what ways, if at all, have you noticed students recognizing when they need supplemental help to succeed academically and are motivated to seek it out on their own? Do they know where to turn for the help? To what extent is the district able to guide them to supports or programs?
g. How would you describe progress towards the goal of having 70% of students having knowledge of and being academically prepared for college?
h. Discuss any facilitators and barriers to long term planning for increasing the number of, and student enrollment in, advanced courses and college credit courses.

7. **We understand students could be participating in the TSIA, PSAT/NMSQT, SAT and/or ACT this year. Do you have a role in that?**
    a. *If yes, tell us about your role. Did you work at all with the Khan Academy? Other programs or strategies for helping students with this? What was your vision of success regarding participating in these programs?*
    b. *To what extent does your school encourage students to take the SAT and ACT? Have there been any activities to date with the Grade 11 students to promote taking these in the future.*
    c. *Did your school participate in SAT School Day? Has your school participated in the past? What was the impetus for the decision to participate? Who was involved in making that decision? Did GEAR UP play a role in the decision to participate this school year? If so describe the role. Do you know if this decision was part of a larger GEAR UP strategy? How did GEAR UP participate in the planning, implementation, and/or preparation for this day? Do you plan to continue this moving forward? If GEAR UP has been involved in this year's SAT School Day, do you believe the school and/or district will be able to implement SAT School Days in upcoming years without GEAR UP staff? How do you anticipate this year's SAT completion rate to compare to Grade 11 students from previous years? Would you consider the day to be successful? Why or why not?*
    d. *Any challenges regarding participation? If yes, how did you overcome those challenges? Were all students able participate? If not, why? Were all students able to be provided with accommodations as needed? If not, what accommodations were unable to be provided?*
    e. *What kind of preparations for taking these assessments did students receive? Which students had the opportunity to take advantage of this preparation?*

8. **Since we last talked: Have you/the teachers at your school engaged in any GEAR UP related professional development (PD)? (If first time talking to this person and in district since 2012–13, ask since GEAR UP began in the district in 2012–13.) This includes any GEAR UP-related PD that occurred in summer or school year. *If so, what were your impressions of the PD? Of teachers ability to implement what was learned in the PD into their classrooms? If not, what barriers prevented conducting GEAR UP-related PD?***
    [Also probe for any additional PD activities that we should be aware of that were not reported in GUIDES, which may have occurred after the latest GUIDES submission. Probe for impressions of professional development for advanced instructional strategies; improving academic rigor; differentiated instruction; project-based learning; and financial literacy.]

    a. *If not already known: What are the school's/district's major goals for teacher and administrator professional development for the current school year?*
    b. Has any PD occurred since we last spoke? (Probe whether PD was provided by GEAR UP including through Texas Gateway). If none, why not?
    c. Have you worked with the IPSI Educator Outreach Coach? Has anyone else in your school? What are your thoughts on her work with the teachers in this school? What feedback have you received from teachers?
    d. Did the planned number of PD events for this year meet your expectations? Why/why not? What about participation in these events, did it meet expectations? Probe for any critical PD still needed at the school in the upcoming year in order for GEAR UP to be successful.
    e. How successfully were major goals for teacher and administrator professional development related to GEAR UP met? Has the number of PD events held this year met your expectations for the year? Why/why not? What about participation in these events, did it meet expectations?
    Probe for any critical PD still needed at the school in the current or upcoming school year in order for GEAR UP to be successful.
    f. What factors contribute to current successes related to PD? What barriers have been encountered? How did you overcome them/might you overcome them in the future?

g. Has the school begun to make plans/goals for next year for teacher/administrator professional development related to GEAR UP? If yes, what role did GEAR UP play in this effort?
h. In what ways, if any, has GEAR UP PD continued for other teachers (i.e., those currently teaching Grades 9 or 10, middle school teachers if known)?

9. **Since we last talked, have you or any of the teachers at this school been engaged in any vertical alignment activities? NOTE: if none identified in prior conversations or in response to main prompt, has the school begun to work on establishing a team/plan to ensure that vertical alignment occurs? Why/why not? When do you anticipate beginning to work on vertical alignment?**
    a. *If not already known: Were you or the teachers at this school engaging in vertical alignment activities since the GEAR UP program began in 2012-2013 school year?*
    b. *If new vertical alignment events have occurred, underway or planned, what is the scope of the effort? (Probe for: Grades and major subjects covered by vertical alignment and whether new vertical alignment activities were provided through GEAR UP or through other funding.)*
    c. *In what ways is the school/district meeting the goal of 5 days of vertical team preparation? What are your perceptions about the success of this vertical alignment work? What factors contribute to successes?*
    d. *What barriers have been encountered? How did you overcome them?*
    e. *What are your perceptions about the value of vertical alignment? How will it impact student achievement? How will it impact teachers and instruction at the school? If not satisfied with current status of vertical alignment, what might need to occur to improve satisfaction?*
    f. *If vertical alignment between middle and high school occurred in prior years, to what extent has that continued to occur this year?*

10. **Increased awareness of college and building interest in attending college is another important aspect of GEAR UP. How would you describe GEAR UP (current grade) students with regard to awareness of college and interest in attending college?**
    a. *Are you aware of any activities to support awareness and interest in attending college or in choosing a career and how that might link to postsecondary education? Has this changed over the course of the year/over prior years/over experiences with other schools?*

11. **One of the GEAR UP goals is to have at least 30% of the students involved in summer programs and institutes designed to help them work at or above grade level (AP classes; dual credit classes), ease transitions, and increase college awareness each summer. Tell us about your experiences with engaging students in these types of summer programs.**
    a. *Has any planning occurred to date for summer 2017? What types of summer programs are planned this year? Ideas for what you would like/not like to see occur in summer 2017? Were you or will you be involved in guiding staff/students towards any summer programs for this year? How responsive to outreach regarding these programs were the staff/students? How is that outreach usually conducted?*

12. **How involved/knowledgeable are you about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events? [Probe for GEAR UP website (www.texasgearup.com), Texas Gateway and TEA's iTunes U page, GEAR UP activities/events (e.g., GEAR UP conference).]**
    a. *What statewide activities/events do/did you/your school/district participate in this school year?*
    b. *Did you/your school utilize statewide resources this school year? If yes, how did you use them? If not, why not? Did you find them useful? Why or why not?*
    c. *What facilitators and barriers are there to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events?*
    d. *What Texas GEAR UP collaborators did your school work with this semester? How was your experience?*
    e. *To what extent do students in other grades use these resources?*

f. *Thinking specifically about AMS Pictures, what services or resources are you aware that they offer? Did you use these resources or services? Why or why not? If you did use them, what did you use? What made you want to utilize them? If you did not use them, what would have made you more likely to use them?*

13. What are your overall thoughts about the GEAR UP program?

a. *What role or input, if any, did you have in the implementation of GEAR UP? Are you satisfied with this level of involvement? Would you have preferred to have been involved more or less? What role in the grant implementation would you like to have as the program progresses? In what ways does/can the GEAR UP program supplement the campus's goals and objectives?*
b. *Generally, what are the key successes that you feel can be contributed to the GEAR UP program across years? What factors do you think contributed to the success of the program?*
c. *Generally, what barriers did you encounter in promoting goals of GEAR UP this school year? This year? Were you able to overcome any barriers? Overcome over the course of the year? Over prior years? Plans to overcome going forward?*
d. *How/to what extent was the school keeping in mind long-term GEAR UP goals in conducting events/activities and providing services this school year? (e.g., on-time promotion, ACT/SAT, college credit, etc. but also college entrance requirements and financial literacy.) Are there any changes from prior years? What are plans to change going forward?*
e. *Do you think GEAR UP is achieving the college readiness goal at your school?*

14. Looking ahead, what roles would you like GEAR UP to play at your school?

a. *In what ways have you been able to sustain any activities or programs initiated by GEAR UP for this year's Grades 9 and 10 students? How might successful GEAR UP supports and activities be sustained for next year's Grades 9, 10 and 11 students and their families? For Grades 9, 10, and 11 students in the future? For middle school students (if known)?*
b. *How might GEAR UP activities be sustained with any new teachers at the school and/or other grades?*
c. *What strategies do you anticipate will be difficult to sustain?*
d. *What factors do you think contribute to your ability to sustain or not activities over time?*
e. *How do you envision that GEAR UP will impact your school once it has left? In what ways that we haven't already discussed do you believe that the overall goal and mission of GEAR UP will be sustained at your school?*

15. Please share anything else you would like us to know about GEAR UP and how it has been going in your district/at your school.

Thank you for your time.

D.10 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Fall 2016: Student Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and/or leaders of the focus group as representatives of ICF International and describe your roles in supporting the meeting (i.e., facilitator, note taker). Students selected for the focus group should have experience with one or more GEAR UP activities/workshops.
- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: *Those funding the GEAR UP program would like to know what it is like to be a part of the program. Particularly, they are interested in students' experience with GEAR UP's college awareness activities, tutoring, mentoring, summer programs, and field trips. This is not an evaluation of your school or your GEAR UP leaders. The purpose of this focus group is to get a variety of views about the program, so that we can gather information about activities to help plan for the future. People can agree or disagree with comments, but only one person can speak at a time. The session will take approximately 30-50 minutes.*
- Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the focus group is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participating in the focus group at any time – participation will not impact you at school; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) focus group data will be maintained in secure areas; and (5) please respect others' privacy by not sharing any information outside of the focus group.*
- Ask permission to record the focus group: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If at least one person chooses not to have the focus group recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes. Any information that can be used to identify a student will be removed from transcripts prior to being shared.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. Review and ask participants to sign the assent form. Parent permission forms will be collected prior to the focus group.
- Each focus group should have six to eight participants. The focus group is open to any 11th grade GEAR UP student in the 2016-2017 school year. Ideally at least some will have participated in GEAR UP activities/events/services but this is not required for participation in the focus group.

Materials

- Name tag (first names only), pen for each participant
- Paper (to write down their thoughts)
- Chart paper and markers to be used by facilitator

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
INTRODUCTION ○ **Please introduce yourself, your name, and how long you've been involved in GEAR UP (i.e., has anyone been involved since Grade 7?). Have you participated in a GEAR UP focus group with us previously?**	○ Length of time in GEAR UP ○ Previous focus group participation	
WHAT IS GEAR UP? ○ When someone mentions GEAR UP, what do you think of? What activities, events, or programs do you think of? For those of you who have been involved in prior grades, how has your thinking about the GEAR UP program changed over time? ○ *Probe for where they have heard about GEAR UP at school, if anywhere. Provide examples of activities from APR/GUIDES to help get students started if needed.*	○ Basic knowledge if available	○ List student ideas on chart paper. *Provide background if students lack basic knowledge.*
EXPERIENCE WITH GEAR UP ○ We would like to know the range of any activities/events you attended or participated in this year to help you succeed in school and be prepared to go to college. What did you do? When did you do it? Who wants to go first? *(Review list of site-specific activities from APR/GUIDES to provide examples of activities if needed to get started. Prompt for summer 2016 activities or camps and any activities/events from current school year- tutoring/mentoring/ counseling, college visits, etc.) Probe specifically for participation in GeoForce and/or PREP; and if these come up, ask the students: Has there been any follow through on these specific programs?*	○ When ○ Nature of activity ○ Content covered/goal of activity	○ List student responses on chart paper. Then ask to see if other students participated in named activities. Prompt for recent activities in the past month. Prompt specifically for helping to select courses/endorsements and for helping to make the transition to high school (learning how to navigate schools, selecting/changing classes, meeting teachers/ counselors). (NOTE: We will have a list of endorsements to share so that we are communicating about the same things.)

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
○ *Any plans to participate in activities that GEAR UP is offering this year that you know about?*		
SAT/ACT/TSIA ○ Has anyone taken the SAT or ACT yet? How have you or how are you preparing? Did your experience with the PSAT 10 influence how you are preparing for the SAT or ACT? Do you feel prepared? ○ Has anyone taken or plan to take the TSIA? If you have already taken the TSIA, have you passed? For those that plan to take it later, how are you preparing for it?	○ Preparedness for SAT, ACT, and TSIA	
LEARNING / ATTITUDE CHANGE ○ Take a piece of paper in front of you. Write down things you learned from any activities/events you attended or services you received to help you succeed in school and be prepared to go to college. Write as many as you can think of. Think about any that may have changed your thinking about attending college in particular. (*Note: Use list of activities created in the previous discussion. If a student did not attend any activities, ask them to think about what they have learned about GEAR UP and its goals and what they would like to learn more about college including learning about attending college/ entrance requirements/ financial aid.*) ○ (after 2min) ○ I'd like each of you to select the most valuable learning experience from your list. Please share with the group and talk about why you selected it. Ask if others in the group agree.	○ Change in attitude ○ Change in knowledge	○ List ideas shared on chart paper. Discuss how different ideas may be related. ○ Separate ideas based on attendance vs. not at activities. ○ Probe for any change in thinking about attending college that has occurred for them since participating in GEARUP.

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
COLLEGE SELECTION ○ What are your plans for after high school graduation? (*Probe for types of postsecondary education, going straight to work, military*.) How did you come to this decision? How prepared do you feel for the path you are planning to pursue? ○ For those intending to pursue education after high school, are you intending to pursue a 4-year degree, a 2-year degree, a certification, or something else? Do you have a college in mind to attend? What factors are important to you in selecting a college? Did you research each of these factors about colleges you are considering? What sources did you use to conduct your research? Who helped you select the colleges you are interested in attending (*probe for friends, School Counselor, GEAR UP staff, and parents)*? Have you visited any colleges you are interested in attending, either virtually or in-person? Did you become interested in this college before or after the visit? What about the visit made you interested (or reinforced your interest) in the college? Did the visit teach you anything else about selecting the right campus for you? ○ For those considering a career or the military, do you feel that you will be prepared for these fields once you graduate high school? ○ How does your family feel about your plans for after high school? Are they supportive of your plans? Is there anything they wish you would do differently than what you are planning to do?	○ Postsecondary plans ○ Best fit factors	

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
MORE GENERAL: ACADEMIC RIGOR AND ADVANCED COURSES ○ How challenging has high school been for you? How were you prepared for the move from Grade 10 to Grade 11? What helped? What would you have liked? Would you like to share anything about challenges or successes related to passing a grade and moving to the next grade? *(Probe for summer transition activity participation as well as school year events to help transition.)* ○ Please tell me about the endorsement(s) you selected (major/minor). How have your teachers/administrators/GEAR UP staff helped you with meeting the endorsement requirements/goals (e.g., helping you to select courses to take)? Did anyone drop or change their endorsement before this year? Why did you make this change? Who did you discuss this change with? Does your school offer an endorsement or pathway you'd rather pursue? Have you had any challenges with enrolling in the courses you need to graduate with your endorsement? Are you each still interested in the endorsement you selected? Why or why not? Do you plan to study this endorsement/topic in college? ○ Is anyone working towards a distinguished level of achievement? What prompted you to seek that? ○ One goal of GEAR UP is to encourage student participation in advanced courses and courses that will give them college credit and to improve how challenging courses are at your school. Are any of you taking AP classes? Dual credit classes? What	○ Perceptions and participation ○ Barriers and challenges ○ Transition from Grade 10 to Grade 10 ○ Graduation Toolkit (endorsements/distinguished honors) ○ Advanced courses (18 hours of college credit before graduation)	○ List what students are participating in ○ Focus in on subject area ○ Why/why not taking listed courses ○ If not sure what distinguished level of achievement is, ask if anyone knows. If answer is no, move on.

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
factors did you consider when deciding to take these classes? Did anyone decide to take AP instead of dual credit classes or vice versa? Why did you make that decision? Did you talk to GEAR UP staff when deciding to enroll in AP and/or dual credit classes? Did you talk to your school counselor? Did you talk to anyone else? How did the discussions between these people differ? What roles do teachers/administrators/ parents/GEAR UP staff play in helping you select these courses? ○ What AP classes are you all taking right now? Are they challenging for you? Do you plan to continue taking AP courses next year? How did you decide which AP classes to take? Did you feel prepared to take these classes? Do you plan to take the AP exam for these courses? In what ways, if any, have you started preparing for AP exams? Do you know if the schools you are interested in will give you credit for your AP courses? ○ What dual credit classes are you taking right now? How did you become eligible to enroll in a dual credit class? Are they challenging for you? Do you plan to continue taking dual credit classes next year? Are you taking the classes here on your high school campus? How did you decide which classes to take? Did you feel prepared to take these classes? Why or why not? Do you know if the schools you are interested in will accept your credits for these classes? ○ Are you in any other advanced classes? Do you plan to enroll in any other advanced courses in the future?		

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
○ Have you participated in other course activities/courses that you find particularly challenging? Why/why not? If so, what do you like/not like about challenging/advanced courses? *Probe: Are students in Algebra II or beyond in Grade 11? If so, what is your/their impression of the course and its difficulty level so far?* ○ What skills do you think help you to succeed in high school? What about in advanced classes? Has the school or GEAR UP program supported you in building these skills?		
EFFECTIVENESS ○ We would like you to tell us what is "working well" in GEAR UP and at your school as far as helping you to be successful in school and to prepare to go to college. What issues might we want to look at to improve your school for the future? We will use the chart paper to write down your thoughts. Please tell us what is working well and issues that could be improved. Who wants to go first? ○ How knowledgeable would you say that you are regarding college requirements? [*Probe on ACT/SAT, TSIA, and plans for this year and next*.] ○ To what extent do you feel academically prepared for college? [*Probe for any specifics like knowing major and/or where they may want to attend and meeting entrance requirements associated with that*.] ○ *(NOTE: If students begin to focus on issues like a disliked teacher or cafeteria food, remind them that we want to focus on success in school in general.*	○ Understanding college admissions and financial literacy ○ Learning about/Taking PSAT,10/SAT and ASPIRE /ACT ○ Implementation issues (facilitators and barriers) ○ Student learning ○ Outcome (change in attitude, views, and knowledge) ○ Factors that shape specific implementation, learning, and outcomes	○ Use the chart paper to list students' ideas for each category. Prompt for tutoring, mentoring, college visits if needed. Note that students may have different views about whether a service or program is working well.

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
Let them know that if they think some teachers engage in strategies that do/do not help them to be successful we want to know about that but we do not need to analyze any given teacher, etc.)		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ○ We would like to create a map of where information and knowledge about college are coming from. We know people learn not just from classes, but from other people, and we want to capture this information. Could you list where you learn about college and career options? Please list as many sources as you can think of. Who wants to go first? ○ What information regarding college have you been talking to your GEAR UP college prep advisor about this year? What is different this year? What information regarding college have you been talking to your school counselor about this year? What is different this year? Do you usually get the same information from GEAR UP staff and your counselors? Do you ever get different or conflicting information from them? What information is conflicting or different? ○ How do you receive information from GEAR UP (e.g., staff, during one-on-one advisor meetings, hand-outs, announcements)? Are there any other	○ Formal (school, GEAR UP) ○ Informal (friends, family, media)	○ Use the chart paper to list and group student responses.

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
ways you would prefer to receive information? Do GEAR UP staff usually have an answer to your questions about college and career options? Where do you turn if they do not? ○ Do you think your parents are well-informed about college and career options? Where do they usually find information? Have they attended any meetings or events at school related to your college and career options? ○ *PROBE: Any people / information / resources you would like to have access to in order to prepare for college?* ○ *If state websites or Texas GEAR UP social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) do not come up, ask if they have heard of them and/or visited state GEAR UP website (www.texasgearup.com) or the Texas GEAR UP social media sites.* ○ *Consider probing for who they think provides the best / most accurate information they receive from various resources and any barriers to seeking information.*		
STUDENT SUGGESTIONS ○ Do you have any suggestions to improve the GEAR UP program? What opportunities would you like to have/information do you need to succeed in school and to feel prepared to go to college after high school? [*Probe for any interest in summer opportunities*] ○ *Possible follow up questions to their ideas:* ○ *"Why is that important?" "How will it change the way you learn about college?"*	○ Implementation issues ○ Content ○ Delivery ○ Resource ○ Where students are in their learning about college	○ If no suggestions offered, focus on information needs

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
CLOSING ○ Is there anything else we should know to understand how students in your grade in this school are working with GEAR UP staff and programs?		

Thank you very much for your time.

D.11 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: Student Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and/or leaders of the focus group as representatives of ICF and describe your roles in supporting the meeting (i.e., facilitator, note taker).
- Student Assent and Parent Consent: Only students with signed parent consent can participate in the focus group. Confirm that you have collected signed consent forms for each participating student and walk student through their assent to participate.
- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: *Those funding the GEAR UP program would like to know what it is like to be a part of the program. Particularly, they are interested in students' experience with GEAR UP's college awareness activities, tutoring, mentoring, summer programs, and field trips. This is not an evaluation of your school or your GEAR UP leaders. The purpose of this focus group is to get a variety of views about the program, so that we can gather information about activities to help plan for the future. People can agree or disagree with comments, but only one person can speak at a time. The session will take approximately 30-50 minutes.*
- Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the focus group is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participating in the focus group at any time – participation will not impact you at school; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) focus group data will be maintained in secure areas; and (5) please respect others' privacy by not sharing any information outside of the focus group.*
- Ask permission to record the focus group: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If at least one person chooses not to have the focus group recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes. Any information that can be used to identify a student will be removed from transcripts prior to being shared.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. Review and ask participants to sign the assent form. Parent permission forms will be collected prior to the focus group.
- Each focus group should have six to eight participants. The focus group is open to any 11th grade GEAR UP student in the 2016-17 school year. Ideally, at least some will have participated in GEAR UP activities/events/services but this is not required for participation in the focus group.

Materials

- Name tag (first names only), pen for each participant
- Paper (to write down their thoughts)
- Chart paper and markers to be used by facilitator

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
INTRODUCTION ○ Please introduce yourself, your name, and how long you've been involved in GEAR UP (i.e., has anyone been involved since Grade 7?). Have you participated in a GEAR UP focus group with us previously?	○ **Length of time in GEAR UP** ○ **Previous focus group participation**	
WHAT IS GEAR UP? ○ When someone mentions GEAR UP, what do you think of? What activities, events, or programs do you think of? For those of you who have been involved in prior grades, how has your thinking about the GEAR UP program changed over time? ○ *Probe for where they have heard about GEAR UP at school, if anywhere. Provide examples of activities from APR/GUIDES to help get students started if needed.*	○ Basic knowledge if available	○ **List student ideas on chart paper. Provide background if students lack basic knowledge.**
EXPERIENCE WITH GEAR UP ○ We would like to know the range of any GEAR UP activities/events you attended or participated in this year to help you succeed in school and be prepared to go to college. What did you do? When did you do it? Who wants to go first? *(Review list of site-specific activities from GUIDES to provide examples of activities if needed to get started. Prompt for any activities/events from current school year- tutoring/mentoring/ counseling, college visits, etc.) Probe specifically for participation in GeoForce, PREP, and if these come up, ask the students: Has anyone followed up with you since your participation regarding how you are applying what you have learned?* ○ *How often do you miss class for GEAR UP activities like college trips or one-on-ones with your advisor? How do you plan to make up work or a lesson when you miss class? Does anyone, such as your advisor, tutors, or teachers, help you make up this work?* ○ *Any plans to participate in activities that GEAR UP is offering this summer that you know about?*	○ When ○ Nature of activity ○ Content covered/goal of activity	○ **List student responses on chart paper. Then ask to see if other students participated in named activities. Prompt for recent activities in the past month.**

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
SAT/ACT/TSIA ○ Has anyone taken the SAT or ACT yet? ○ If yes, how did it go? Did you feel prepared? ○ If no, why did you not take the SAT or ACT? Are you planning to take either test in the future? Do you feel prepared? ○ Did your experience with the PSAT/NMSQT influence how you prepared/are preparing for the SAT? What other resources have you/did you use to help you prepare for the SAT and/or ACT? Did you use Khan Academy? If yes, how was your experience? ○ Has anyone taken or does anyone plan to take the TSIA? If you have already taken the TSIA, have you passed (the whole test or a section)? For those that plan to take it later, how are you preparing for it?	○ Preparedness for SAT, ACT, and TSIA	
LEARNING / ATTITUDE CHANGE ○ Take a piece of paper in front of you. Write down things you learned from any activities/events you attended or services you received to help you succeed in school and be prepared to go to college. Write as many as you can think of. Think about any that may have changed your thinking about attending college in particular. ○ *(Note: Use list of activities created in the previous discussion. If a student did not attend any activities, ask them to think about what they would like to learn more about college including learning about attending college/entrance requirements/financial aid).* (after 2min) ○ I'd like each of you to select the most valuable learning experience from your list. Was your learning experience related to a GEAR UP activity/event? What was valuable about your learning experience? Please share with the group and talk about why you selected it. Ask if others in the group agree.	○ Change in attitude ○ Change in knowledge	○ **List ideas shared on chart paper. Discuss how different ideas may be related.** ○ **Separate ideas based on attendance vs. not at activities.** ○ **Probe for any change in thinking about attending college that has occurred for them since participating in GEAR UP and within the past year. What, if anything, contributed to these changes over time.**

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
COLLEGE SELECTION ○ **What are your plans for after high school graduation? (*Probe for types of postsecondary education, going straight to work, military*.) How did you come to this decision? How prepared do you feel for the path you are planning to pursue?** ○ **For those intending to pursue education after high school, are you intending to pursue a 4-year degree, a 2-year degree, a certification, or something else? Do you have a college in mind to attend? What factors are important to you in selecting a college? Did you research each of these factors about colleges you are considering? What sources did you use to conduct your research? Who helped you select the colleges you are interested in attending (*probe for friends, school counselor, GEAR UP staff, other college access program staff, and parents)*? Have you visited any colleges you are interested in attending, either virtually or in-person? Was the visit related to GEAR UP or did you go on your own/with your parents/or another group? Did you become interested in this college before or after the visit? What about the visit made you interested (or reinforced your interest) in the college? Did the visit teach you anything else about selecting the right campus for you?** ○ **For those considering a career or the military, do you feel that you will be prepared for these fields once you graduate high school?** ○ **How does your family feel about your plans for after high school? Are they supportive of your plans? Is there anything they wish you would do differently than what you are planning to do?** ○ **In the past year, have you had any opportunities through your school or GEAR UP to participate in activities aligned with your post high school goals? Have you done any job**	○ Postsecondary plans ○ Best fit factors	

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
shadowing, work internships, college visits, college shadowing, or career field trips? If not, is that something you would be interested in? If yes, how did you find these experiences? Can you estimate how many college visits you've been on with GEAR UP? Have you been on any other college visits? Have you participated in college shadowing this year? If yes, what kinds of activities did you participate in? How did you like this experience compared to other college visits? Did you learn anything new about the college experience during your college shadowing experience?		
MORE GENERAL: ACADEMIC RIGOR AND ADVANCED COURSES ○ **How challenging has high school been for you so far? What skills do you think help you to succeed in school? In advanced classes? Has the school supported you in building these skills? Any challenges to succeeding in school/advanced classes? *(Probe for summer transition activity participation as well as school year events to help transition into Grade 11.)*** ○ **Please tell me about the endorsement(s) you selected (major/minor). How have your teachers/administrators/GEAR UP staff helped you with meeting the endorsement requirements/goals (e.g., helping you to select and enroll in courses to take)? Did you talk to any other staff members at your school, like your college prep advisor or a counselor, about adding an endorsement or changing your endorsement?** ○ **Tell us about how you see your endorsement preparing you for what you want to do after high school and for going to college.** ○ **Is anyone working towards a distinguished level of achievement? What prompted you to seek that? Algebra II is required to graduate with distinguished level of**	○ Perceptions and participation ○ Barriers and challenges ○ Transition from Grade 10 to Grade 11 ○ Graduation Toolkit (endorsements/distinguished honors) ○ Advanced courses (18 hours of college credit before graduation)	○ **List what students are participating in** ○ **Focus in on subject area** ○ **Why/why not taking listed courses** ○ **If not sure what distinguished level of achievement is, ask if anyone knows. If answer is no, explain meaning to students.**

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
achievement. Have you already taken and passed this course? If no, how prepared do you feel to succeed in Algebra II? If you have successfully completed Algebra II, what mathematics courses have you since taken? How difficult have these courses been? If you plan to successfully complete Algebra II this year, what mathematics course do you plan to take next year? Challenges or concerns about graduating at distinguished level? How do you see graduating with distinguished level of achievement as preparing you for college? ○ **Is anyone planning to graduate with any other performance acknowledgements? Any AP course recognitions? What made you want to pursue these accolades? Did GEAR UP play a role in this decision? If yes, how so?** ○ **One goal of GEAR UP is to encourage student participation in advanced courses (AP courses) and courses that will allow you to earn college credit; and, generally, to improve how challenging courses are at your school. Are you currently in any advanced or dual credit courses (AP courses, including in other subjects besides mathematics)? *Tell us about any pre-AP or AP courses you are taking.* Are any of you taking AP classes? Dual credit classes? What factors did you consider when deciding to take these classes? Did anyone decide to take AP instead of dual credit classes or vice versa? Why did you make that decision? Did you talk to GEAR UP staff when deciding to enroll in AP and/or dual credit classes? Did you talk to your school counselor? Did you talk to anyone else? How did the discussions between these people differ? What roles do teachers/administrators/parents/GEAR UP staff/other college access program staff play in helping you select these courses? Do you know if your parents received an "AP**		

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
Potential letter"? Did that influence your decision to take AP classes? ○ **What AP classes are you all taking right now? Are they challenging for you? Do you plan to continue taking AP courses next year? How did you decide which AP classes to take? Did you feel prepared to take these classes? Do you plan to take the AP exam for these courses? In what ways, if any, have you started preparing for AP exams? Do you know if the schools you are interested in will give you credit for your AP courses?** ○ **What dual credit classes are you taking right now? How did you become eligible to enroll in a dual credit class? Are they challenging for you? Do you plan to continue taking dual credit classes next year? Are you taking the classes here on your high school campus? How did you decide which classes to take? Did you feel prepared to take these classes? Why or why not? Do you know if the schools you are interested in will accept your credits for these classes?** ○ **Did anyone drop or change their endorsement before this year? Why did you make this change? Who did you discuss this change with? Does your school offer an endorsement or pathway you'd rather pursue? Why have you not pursued the alternative endorsement or pathway? Have you had any challenges with enrolling in the courses you need to graduate with your endorsement? Are you each still interested in the endorsement you selected? Why or why not? Do you plan to study this endorsement/topic in college?** ○ **Do you plan to participate in advanced courses or dual credit courses in the future? What roles do teachers/administrators/ parents/GEAR UP staff play in helping you select advanced or dual credit courses? Have you participated in other course activities/courses that you**		

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
find particularly challenging? Why/why not? If so, what do you like/not like about challenging/advanced courses? Tell us about any practice or actual AP exams *you have taken and how that went.* ○ **Have you participated in other course activities/courses that you find particularly challenging? Why/why not? If so, what do you like/not like about challenging/advanced courses?**		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION ○ **We would like to create a map of where information and knowledge about college are coming from. We know people learn not just from classes, but from other people, and we want to capture this information. Could you list where/from whom you learn about college and career options? Please list as many sources as you can think of. Who wants to go first?** ○ **How does your school and GEAR UP staff share information with you (e.g., one-on-one, hand-outs, announcements, text messages, social media)? Are there any other ways you would prefer to receive information? Do GEAR UP staff usually have an answer for your questions about college and career options? What kind of sources do they give you to find answers?** ○ **Do you think your parents are well-informed about college and career options? Where do they usually find information? Have they attended any meetings or events at school related to your college and career options?** ○ **What are the sources that provide you and/or your family with information about college and financial aid that you do not learn about in GEAR UP? What kind of information do they provide? How do they deliver this information?** ○ **What sources of information, like your counselor or another college access program, provide the same information as**	○ Formal (school, GEAR UP) ○ Informal (friends, family, media)	○ **Use the chart paper to list and group student responses.**

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
what you receive from GEAR UP? Do you have a preferred source? If yes, why do you prefer this source? ○ **PROBE: Any people/information/resources you would like to have access to in order to prepare for college?** ○ **If state websites or Texas GEAR UP social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) do not come up, ask if they have heard of them and/or visited state GEAR UP website (www.texasgearup.com) or the Texas GEAR UP social media sites.** ○ **Consider probing for who they think provides the best/most accurate the information they receive from various resources is and any barriers to seeking information.**		
EFFECTIVENESS ○ We would like you to tell us what is "working well" in GEAR UP and at your school as far as helping you to be successful in school and to prepare to go to college. Additionally, what issues might we want to look at to improve your school for the future? We will use the chart paper to write down your thoughts. Please tell us what is working well as well as issues that could be improved. Who wants to go first? ○ How knowledgeable would you say that you are regarding college requirements? [*Probe on TSIA, ACT/SAT and plans for next year]* How knowledgeable would you say you are regarding financial aid and paying for college? *[Probe for FASFA, Pell grants, workstudy options, student loans, and scholarships.]* ○ To what extent do you feel academically prepared for college? [*Probe for any specifics like knowing major and/or where they may want to attend and meeting entrance requirements associated with that.*] ○ *(NOTE: If students begin to focus on issues like a disliked teacher or cafeteria food, remind them that we want to focus on success in school in general. Let them know that if they think some teachers engage in strategies that do/do not help them to be successful we*	○ Understanding college admissions and financial literacy ○ Learning about/Taking SAT and ACT ○ Implementation issues (facilitators and barriers) ○ Student learning ○ Outcome (change in attitude, views, and knowledge) ○ Factors that shape specific implementation, learning, and outcomes	○ **Use the chart paper to list students' ideas for each category. Prompt for tutoring, mentoring, college visits if needed. Note that students may have different views about whether a service or program is working well.**

Opening Questions	Aspects to be covered	Facilitator's Activity
want to know about that but we do not need to analyze any given teacher, etc.)		
STUDENT SUGGESTIONS ○ **Do you have any suggestions to improve the GEAR UP program? What opportunities would you like to have/information do you need to succeed in school and to feel prepared to go to college after high school? [*Probe for any interest in summer opportunities*]** ○ **Possible follow up questions to their ideas:** ○ **"Why is that important?" "How will it change the way you learn about college?"**	○ **Implementation issues** ○ **Content** ○ **Delivery** ○ **Resource** ○ **Where students are in their process of learning about college**	○ **If no suggestions offered, focus on information needs**
CLOSING ○ **Is there anything else we should know to understand how students in your grade in this school are working with GEAR UP staff and programs?**		

Thank you very much for your time.

D.12 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Fall 2016: Parent Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and/or leaders of the focus group as representatives of ICF and describe your roles in supporting the meeting (i.e., facilitator, note taker). This session is expected to include a translator.
- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this focus group is to better understand parents' thinking about the GEAR UP program and how parents are participating in services and activities under the GEAR UP program. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this focus group to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the focus group is voluntary and data collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participation at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) focus group data will be maintained in secure areas; and (5) please respect others' privacy by not sharing any information outside of the focus group.*
- Ask permission to record the focus group: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If at least one person in the focus group chooses not to have it recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form.*
- Each focus group should have six to 10 participants. The focus group is open to any parent of a GEAR UP student in the 2016-2017 school year. Ideally at least some will have participated in GEAR UP activities/events/services but this is not required for participation in the focus group.
- Note to facilitator: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. When available, the most recent GUIDES reporting data will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site specific probes. Additionally, there will be outreach to GEAR UP partners to determine activities that they have conducted with the districts.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Conduct introductions. In addition to Grade 11 students, do you have students in any other grades? ***Probe to find out if any parents participated in prior GEAR UP focus groups*.**

1. **When someone mentions GEAR UP, what do you think of? What do you know about it? If long-term cohort parent, how has your understanding of the program changed over time? (*If needed, facilitator provides a short overview of the program including specific examples where appropriate. Note to ask about participation in events more specifically in a separate question.*)**

a. What, how, and how often has the school communicated with parents so far this year about the GEAR UP program (e.g., mail/email, robo-calls, at school events)? [If school/district has a parent liaison] In what ways, if any, have you interacted with the parent outreach liaison?
b. What information are GEAR UP staff communicating to you through outreach, resources, meetings, and events? Is there any additional information you would like to receive from GEAR UP staff?
c. What is your understanding of the goals of GEAR UP at your high school? For students? Parents? Teachers? The school/district? Statewide?
d. What activities, events, or programs do you think of when someone mentions GEAR UP? (e.g., college workshops/visits for students, financial literacy, tutoring/mentoring/academic support services, workshops for parents, summer programs)

2. Let's talk about the summer activities as they relate to GEAR UP. Did your child attend any such activities this past summer?

a. Where was this activity hosted? (Probe for high school campus, college campus, or other locations.) Who hosted the activity? What did your child do during this activity?
b. If your child did attend, what did you/your child think about the activities? Were there activities or events that occurred during the summer that you think were particularly helpful or not particularly helpful? Since the school year started, do you think the summer activities have helped your child to be more successful in high school this year?
c. What do you think was the purpose of the summer activities (e.g., specific content like math, being a successful high school student, college going thinking)?
d. How successful would you describe your child's move from being a Grade 9 student to being a Grade 10 student has been?
e. Has your child participated in similar activities in previous summers? How did this one compare?
f. If your child did attend, to what extent were parents involved in the summer activities? Were you able to be involved? Why/why not?
g. If your child did not attend, why not?
h. For all parents, how and when did the school inform you about the summer activities? Were there features of the summer activities that made it easier for your child to attend or for you/your child to want to attend? Any challenges to participating in the summer activities?
i. Would you encourage the school to continue these types of summer activities in the future? Why/why not? Any recommendations for changing the activities to improve them or things you would not change?

3. Now let's talk about the school year so far. Have your children shared any information with you about their experiences in the GEAR UP program so far during the current school year? If so, what information have they shared?

a. Experience with college awareness (including workshops, tours); experience with tutoring/mentoring; experience with course selection/endorsement selection; experience with information resources/educational planning (e.g., encourage/prepared to take advanced courses)?
b. In general, what has your child's experience been with respect to completing a high school endorsement? [Facilitator note: Be prepared to explain what an endorsement is if necessary.] Have you had conversations with your child about their selected endorsement and how their selection might impact being accepted by a college? Have they found it easy/difficult to enroll in the classes they need for their endorsement? Have they decided to add another/drop/change their endorsement? What contributed to any decision to change/add/drop endorsements? Did you talk to a counselor about endorsements? Have you discussed endorsements with GEAR UP staff?
c. What, if anything, do you think about the events/activities your student has participated in (college visits, job shadowing)? Any ideas about events/activities you would like you child to participate in/have made available to your child based on what you know about GEAR UP?

d. Are there any GEAR UP activities that you are aware of that you wish your child could participate in but was not/will not be able to? What factors facilitate or hinder your child's ability to participate in GEAR UP?
e. Are there any other types of activities you would like your child to participate in to prepare them for college?

4. (If not already discussed) GEAR UP is also interested in helping students to succeed in high school at each grade and be ready for college level work. What if anything would you say about your child regarding succeeding in high school? Academically? Socially? Engaging in college ready strategies? What factors may have contributed their success/struggles? *(Note: Relative to successfully transitioning to being a high school student, probe for content (e.g., high school culture, training on specific "soft" skills like organization or study skills, encouraging to get involved, taking AP or dual credit courses, introducing to teachers, etc.))*

a. In general, what have you seen/experienced to suggest your child is succeeding in high school and will be prepared for college? What about challenges?
b. What do you think you/your school has done well to help your child succeed in high school and be college ready?
c. What more do you think you/your school could do to support your child to succeed in high school and beyond? (Probe for any involvement in summer activities.)
d. Has the school or someone from GEAR UP communicated with you about advanced placement courses or college credit opportunities at your school and encouraged you to have your child enroll in these types of courses? Is your child enrolled in AP classes? Dual credit classes? If so, how are they doing in the class(es)? If not, would you like for them to be enrolled? Did you encourage your child to take either AP or dual credit instead of both? If so, what is your preference? Why?
e. Do you speak to any GEAR UP staff about your child's academic progress or academic future? What do you discuss? Do you feel satisfied with the frequency of these conversations? Why or why not? Are you satisfied with the amount and type of information you receive? Why or why not? Do you speak with school counselors or other staff about these topics? Is the information you receive from school staff and GEAR UP staff consistent? Is there a specific person you prefer to speak to? Why do you prefer that person?

5. How helpful has GEAR UP been in helping your child to think about attending college? Choosing a major in college?

a. Do you believe GEAR UP activities, events, and services are/would be helpful for you as a parent to help your child succeed in college? If yes, in what ways? How do they build on what you already know?
b. Anything you think has been particularly helpful with this? Not helpful?
c. What more would you like to see your school/GEAR UP doing?
d. How about understanding college entrance requirements and affording college? Has the school engaged with you/your child to be prepared to meet requirements/afford college?
e. What is the college and career pathway that your child is considering after completing high school? (Probe for 2- year degree, 4-year degree, certification, straight to work, and military.) Is this your preferred choice for your child? Why or Why not?
f. What factors do you think are important for students to consider when selecting where and how to further their education? (Probe for postsecondary school factors [e.g., class size, school location, community type, where peers plan to attend, graduation rate, how similar school population demographics match the student, program availability, degrees available] as well as program factors [e.g., types of degrees offered, choices in major, length of program].)
g. What do you think has been/would be most helpful for your child's school to do to help your child succeed in school/be prepared to go to college? (Probe for: supporting you in helping your

child to succeed in school, learning to advocate for your child, usefulness in academic and financial planning for college.)

6. **We understand that your child may be participating in the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, ACT, and/or TSIA this year.**
   a. *Do you feel well-informed about these assessments? Are you aware of the SAT School Day? If so, have you encouraged your child to participate?*
   b. Have you received any materials or resources, such as Kahn Academy, to help your child prepare at home? If at all, how have you used these items to help your child prepare for an assessment? Describe how useful they were.
   c. Did your child's experience with the PSAT 10 last year change your understanding of the SAT and the role it has in their college acceptance? If so, in what ways?
7. **Knowing what GEAR UP can provide to your children, do you believe GEAR UP activities, events, and services in the summer and the current school year have been/would be helpful to your children as far as helping them to succeed in school/be ready for college? If yes, in what ways?**
   (Probe for helping students succeed/stay in school; encouraging students to take and to successfully complete higher-level/more advanced classes [e.g., Geometry, Algebra II, AP classes] and/or dual credit courses; usefulness in planning for college academically/financially.)
8. **Have you or another adult in your household attended a GEAR UP activity or event during the current school year? (Probe again about summer if it has not already been discussed).**
   a. *If yes, what activities or events did you attend? Did you participate in any events around financial literacy? (Probe to understand if the parents knew about events and did/did not attend as compared to not knowing about events.)*
   b. What did you most like about what you participated in? Least like? What did you learn from them? What factors facilitated your participation/encouraged you to participate?
   c. If no, why not? What barriers prevented you from attending (e.g., schedule, child care/family issues, work schedule, other)? What services or supports might help you attend future GEAR UP activities or events?
   d. Probe whether few/some/all parents were aware of activities and events. Probe for how schools might be able to successfully meet the goal of at least 50% of parents attending at least three events.
   e. What other resources do you use to get information on preparing your child for college?
9. **The program at this school is part of a statewide Texas GEAR UP program. Have you received any information about statewide GEAR UP? [*Describe materials and www.texasgearup.com in more detail*].**
   a. *If yes, what information did you receive? How/from whom?*
   b. Have you accessed any statewide resources, like those described earlier on the Texas GEAR UP website, to date? If so, what did you learn from them? What did you think of them? Probe for quality of the resources and ability to meet various levels of understanding/literacy
   c. If no, facilitator will describe. Would you like to learn more about these resources? What would be the best way to inform you about statewide initiatives? What ways are not helpful in informing you about new resources?
   d. Did you participate in last year's state GEAR UP conference? If yes, what did you get out of that experience? How were you notified of the opportunity to attend? Are you planning to attend this year?
10. **What more would you like to learn from GEAR UP about helping your child to succeed in school/preparing for your child to attend college?**
    a. *Are there things you really feel you do not yet know enough about to help your child? (Gaps in knowledge)*

b. How is GEAR UP helping you and your student navigate his/her selected endorsement path?
c. What ideas do you have for future workshops/activities/resources?

11. What final thoughts do you have about GEAR UP and how it can help you and your child?

Thank you for your thoughtful participation and spending time to discuss with us.

D.13 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: Parent Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and/or leaders of the focus group as representatives of ICF and describe your roles in supporting the meeting (i.e., facilitator, note taker). This session is expected to include a translator.
- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this focus group is to better understand parents' thinking about the GEAR UP program and how parents are participating in services and activities under the GEAR UP program. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this focus group to take approximately 45 minutes.*
- Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the focus group is voluntary and data collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participation at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) focus group data will be maintained in secure areas; and (5) please respect others' privacy by not sharing any information outside of the focus group.*
- Ask permission to record the focus group: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If at least one person in the focus group chooses not to have it recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form.*
- Each focus group should have six to 10 participants. The focus group is open to any parent of a GEAR UP student in the 2016-2017 school year. Ideally at least some will have participated in GEAR UP activities/events/services but this is not required for participation in the focus group.
- Note to facilitator: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. When available, the most recent GUIDES data and action plans will be reviewed prior to conducting the site visits in order to add any site-specific probes. Additionally, there will be outreach to GEAR UP partners to determine activities that they have conducted with the districts.

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. **Conduct introductions. In addition to Grade 11 students, do you have students in any other grades? *Probe to find out if any parents participated in prior GEAR UP focus groups*.**
2. **When someone mentions GEAR UP, what do you think of? What do you know about it? If long-term cohort parent, how has your understanding of the program changed over time. (If needed, facilitator provides a short overview of the program including specific examples where appropriate. Note to ask about participation in events more specifically in a separate question.)**
    a. *What and how/how often has the school communicated with parents so far this year about the GEAR UP program (e.g., mail/email, robo-calls, text messages, at school events)? In what ways, if any, have you interacted with GEAR UP staff [or parent liaison (if your district has one)]? Have you ever interacted with the IPSI Family Engagement Coach? How do you feel about this means of communication (effectiveness, timeliness, frequency, means)?*
    b. *What information are GEAR UP staff communicating to you through outreach, resources, meetings, and events? Is there any additional information you would like to receive from GEAR UP staff?*
    c. *What is your understanding of the goals of GEAR UP at your high school? For students? Parents? Teachers? The school/district? Statewide?*
    d. *What activities, events, or programs* do you *think of? (e.g., College workshops/visits for students, financial literacy, Tutoring/mentoring/academic support services, workshops for parents, summer programs)*
3. **Now let's talk about the school year so far. Has your child(ren) shared any information with you about their experiences in the GEAR UP program during the current school year? If so, what information have they shared?**
    a. *Experience with college awareness (including workshops, college visits/tours/shadowing); experience with tutoring/mentoring; experience with course selection/endorsement selection; experience with information resources/educational planning (e.g., encourage/prepared to take advanced courses); experience with career exploration (e.g., job site visits, job shadowing, career fairs)?*
    b. *In general, what has been your experience with your child's progress towards completing a high school endorsement? Have you had conversations with your child about their selected endorsement and how their selection might impact being accepted by a college? Have they found it easy/difficult to enroll in the classes they need for their endorsement? Have they decided to add another/drop their endorsement or change/add to their endorsement? What contributed to any decision to change/drop/add endorsements? Probe for awareness of endorsements, graduation plans, or distinguished level of achievement.*
    c. *What, if anything, do you think about the events/activities your student has participated in (college visits, job shadowing)? Any ideas about events/activities you would like you child to participate in/have made available to your child based on what you know about GEAR UP?*
    d. *Are there any GEAR UP activities that you are aware of that you wish your child could participate in but was not/will not be able to? What other factors facilitate or hinder your child's ability to participate in GEAR UP?*
    e. *Are there any other types of activities you would like your child to participate in to prepare them for college?*
4. **(If not already discussed) GEAR UP is also interested in helping students to succeed in high school at each grade and be ready for college level work. What, if anything, would you say about your child regarding succeeding in high school? Academically? Socially? Engaging in college ready strategies? What factors may have contributed to their success/struggles? *(Note: Probe for***

content [e.g., making high school culture clear, training on specific "soft" skills like organization or study skills, encouraging to get involved, taking AP or dual enrollment courses, SAT/ACT, TSIA])

- *a. In general, what have you seen/experienced to suggest your child is succeeding in high school and will be prepared for college? What about challenges?*
- *b. What do you think you/your school has done well to help your child succeed in high school and be college ready?*
- *c. What more do you think you/your school could do to support your child to succeed in high school and beyond?*
- *d. Is your child enrolled in AP classes? Dual credit classes? If so, how are they doing in the class(es)? If not, would you like for them to be enrolled? Did you encourage your child to take either AP or dual credit instead of both? If so, what is your preference? Why?*
- *e. Do you speak to any GEAR UP staff about your child's academic progress or academic future? What do you discuss? Do you feel satisfied with the frequency of these conversations? Why or why not? Are you satisfied with the amount and type of information you receive? Why or why not? Do you speak with school counselors or other staff about these topics? Is the information you receive from school staff and GEAR UP staff consistent? Is there a specific person you prefer to speak to? Why do you prefer that person?*

5. How helpful has GEAR UP been in helping your child to think about attending college? Considering a major in college? Choosing the college they want to attend?

- *a. Anything you think has been particularly helpful with this? Not helpful?*
- *b. What more would you like to see your school/GEAR UP doing?*
- *c. How about understanding college entrance requirements? Has the school engaged with you/your child to be prepared to meet requirements?*
- *d. What is your understanding about affording college? Has the school engaged with you/your child to be prepared to afford college or apply for financial aid? What is your understanding about applying for financial aid? What financial aid options are you aware of to help pay for your child's postsecondary education?*
- *e. What is the college and career pathway that your child is considering after completing high school? (Probe for 2-year degree, 4-year degree, certification, straight to work, and military.) Is this your preferred choice for your child? Why or Why not?*
- *f. What factors do you think are important for students to consider when selecting where and how to further their education? (Probe for postsecondary school factors [e.g., class size, school location, community type, where peers plan to attend, graduation rate, how similar school population demographics match the student, program availability, degrees available, affordability] as well as program factors [e.g., types of degrees offered, choices in major, length of program].)*
- g. Let's talk about the summer activities as they relate to GEAR UP. Do you plan for your child to attend any activities this summer?
- *h. If you are planning to have your child attend, what is the general focus of the summer program your child will attend? What was it about this program that you hoped would benefit your child to participate in? How do you think these summer activities/this summer activity will be helpful to your child next school year or as they prepare to apply for and enroll in postsecondary education?*
- *i. How many programs are they planning to attend? Do you know who is hosting or offering the program (high school, TX college, business or community organization)? Is the program local or in the state of Texas?*
- *j. Do you think your child will be prepared to succeed academically in Grade 12? If your child is attending a summer program, how do you think it will help further prepare them to succeed academically?*

k. *Do you plan to be involved in the summer program your student attends? Why/why not?*
l. *For all parents, how and when does the school inform you about the summer activities? Are there features of the summer activities that will make it easier for your child to attend or for you/your child to want to attend? Any challenges to participating in the summer activities?*

6. **Knowing what GEAR UP can provide to your children, do you believe GEAR UP activities, events, and services in the summer or during the school year have been/would be helpful to your children as far as helping them to succeed in school/be ready for college? If yes, in what ways?**

Probe for helping students succeed/stay in school; encouraging students to take and to successfully complete higher-level/more advanced classes (e.g., Geometry, Algebra II, AP classes) and/or dual enrollment classes; usefulness in planning for college academically/financially.

7. **Have you or another adult in your household attended a GEAR UP activity or event during the current school year? [Probe whether few/some/all parents were aware of activities and events. Probe for how schools might be able to successfully meet the goal of at least 50% of parents attending at least three events.]**
   a. *If yes, what activities or events did you attend? Did you participate in any events around financial literacy or financial aid? (Probe to understand if the parents knew about courses and did/did not attend as compared to not knowing about events.)*
   b. *What did you most like about what you participated in? Least like? What did you learn from them? What factors facilitated your participation/encouraged you to participate?*
   c. *If no, why not? What barriers prevented you from attending (e.g., schedule, child care/family issues, work schedule, other)? What services or supports might help you attend future GEAR UP activities or events?*
   d. *Do you know who your child's College Preparation Advisor is? Have you met or spoken with this person one-on-one this year? In previous years? Who initiated these discussions - you, the College Preparation Advisor, your child, or someone else? Did you find this time helpful? What information, or resources, if any, did you receive during this time that you would have not received in the larger GEAR UP meetings? Do you have a preference for GEAR UP activities with a larger group or the one-on-one discussions? If yes, why do you prefer the scenario that you do?*
   e. *What other resources do you use to get information on preparing your child for college?*
   f. *How did this year's event(s) compare to the events that you attended in previous years? What could the school and/or GEAR UP staff do to improve the quality of these events? What topics would you like to be covered at these events? Would the inclusion of such topics make you more likely to attend the events?*

8. **Do you believe GEAR UP activities, events, and services are helpful for you as a parent to help your child succeed in college? If yes, in what ways? How do they build on what you already know? Any activities, events, and services that might be helpful to you as a parent going forward?**
   a. *What do you think has been/would be most helpful for your child's school to do to help your child succeed in school/be prepared to go to college? Probe for: supporting you in helping your child to succeed in school, learning to advocate for your child, usefulness in academic and financial planning for college.*
   b. *Has the school or someone from GEAR UP communicated with you about advanced placement course or college credit (dual enrollment) opportunities at your school and encouraged you to have your child enroll in these types of courses? How has your child been doing in these classes? Has GEAR UP played a role in that success? How or why not?*

c. *What other college access programs have you worked with this year to help prepare your child for postsecondary education? How has the information or resources they provided differed from what GEAR UP has provided? Have they provided any information that was similar to what you have received from GEAR UP?*

9. **We understand that your child may be participating in, or has participated in, the PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, ACT, and/or TSIA this year.**
   a. *Do you feel well-informed about these assessments? [If school had SAT School Day] Were you aware of the SAT School Day? If so, did you encourage your child to participate?*
   b. *Have you received any materials or resources, such as Khan Academy, to help your child prepare at home? If at all, how have you used these items to help your child prepare for an assessment? Describe how useful they were.*
   c. *Did your child's experience with the PSAT last year or the PSAT/NMSQT this past fall change your understanding of the SAT and the role it has in their college acceptance? If so, in what ways?*

10. **The program at this school is part of a statewide Texas GEAR UP program. Have you received any information about statewide GEAR UP? [Describe materials and www.texasgearup.com in more detail].**
    a. *If yes, what information did you receive? How/from whom?*
    b. *Have you accessed any statewide resources to date? If so, what did you learn from them? What did you think of them? Probe for quality of the resources and ability to meet various levels of understanding/literacy.*
    c. *If no, facilitator will describe. Would you like to learn more about these resources? What would be the best way to inform you about statewide initiatives? What ways are not helpful in informing you about new resources?*
    d. *Did you participate in this year's state GEAR UP conference? If yes, what did you get out of that experience? How were you notified of the opportunity to attend?*
    e. *Have you received any financial coaching or financial resources from TG this year? Did you find the information helpful? Why or why not? How did you find out about these resources?*

11. **What more would you like to learn from GEAR UP about helping your child to succeed in school/preparing for your child to attend college?**
    a. *Are there things you really feel you do not yet know enough about to help your child? (Gaps in knowledge)*
    b. *What ideas do you have for future workshops/activities/resources?*

11. **What final thoughts do you have about GEAR UP and how it can help you and your child?**

Thank you for your thoughtful participation and spending time to discuss with us.

D.14 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Fall 2016: Teacher Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: *GEAR UP is a federally funded strategy to promote college awareness and academic achievement in high-need middle and high schools across the country. In support of that goal, GEAR UP also supports school-wide improvements and professional development that can help current and future students. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF International to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals and the impact of the program. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. Note that there are no right and wrong answers to the questions in this session, and that the goal is for all participants to contribute to the discussion. We expect this focus group will take approximately 50–55 minutes.*

Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) participation is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participating in the focus group at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) data will be maintained in secure areas.*

Ask permission to record the focus group: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Evaluation team members will have access to the recording, and the Texas Education Agency will only have access to a de-identified written transcript. If at least one person chooses not to have the focus group recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes or the transcript.*

Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and complete the consent form. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Note to facilitator: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Reserve 5 minutes to discuss focus group purpose and obtain signatures.

Each focus group should have no more than 10 participants. The focus group is open to any teacher of a GEAR UP student in the 2014–15, 2015–16, or 2016-17 school years. We anticipate 2-3 teacher focus groups per school to accommodate teacher schedules and minimize classroom disruptions. Teachers of students in the target grade are the primary focus for participation. Groupings might include one for content area teacher and one for teachers in non-tested subjects, although the group can be mixed. If appropriate given GEAR UP planning at the school, a focus group may be held with a vertical team of teachers. (NOTE: Facilitator will be trained to probe/check for differences in group particularly when group is mixed.)

Materials

- Name tag (first names only), pen for each participant
- Paper (to write down their thoughts)
- Chart paper and markers to be used by facilitator
- Digital Voice Recorder

1. **Please tell me your first name, how long you have been working at this school, and how long you have been a teacher (3 min).**
   a. What grade(s)/subjects do you primarily teach? (Facilitator: Note # of core content teachers – math, science, English, social studies, # teach AP/ dual credit courses)
   b. Have you participated in one of our focus groups previously? (Ask in particular if session includes teachers of GEAR UP students from 2015–16.)

2. **Have you heard of GEAR UP before today? What do you know about it, about GEAR UP goals? (5-8 min.) (Have the GEAR UP goal sheet to share.)** If little or no knowledge at all, provide brief description of program (2 min.). If knowledge, probe using these questions:
   a. How ready do you feel that students and families are for reaching the goals of GEAR UP (to succeed in schools and be college ready)? How might you have answered the question in previous years? What do you perceive to be the major challenges with regard to the students and families you serve in reaching goals of the program? (Probe for student support services, and student/family activities/events.)
   b. Many of the Grade 11 students have been participating in GEAR UP for the past four years. Given what you know about the goals, have you noticed any differences in this year's Grade 11 students compared to Grade 11 students in previous years?
   c. To what extent, if any, have you interacted with the GEAR UP coordinator, College Preparation Advisor(s), and/or other GEAR UP staff members in your school/district? What kind of information does this person/people provide? What expectations do you have of GEAR UP staff in helping the school/district meet these college readiness goals? For Grades 9 and 10 teachers, in what ways, if any, do you continue to interact with GEAR UP staff this year as you work with Grades 9 and 10 students who are not the primary recipients of the program, but rather, may benefit from sustained GEAR UP strategies?
   d. What do you know about GEAR UP goals of teacher professional development (PD)?
   e. If little or no knowledge of professional development goals, provide brief description of PD and vertical alignment goals (from local APR data) (3 min.)

2. **For those of you who have not participated in a GEAR UP focus group, to your knowledge, have you participated in any GEAR UP-sponsored professional development over the past four years? What about during summer 2016? So far during this school year? (10 min.) Do you have plans to participate in any GEAR UP-sponsored professional development later this year?**
   a. If Yes, what programs/workshops/events do you recall? (Probe for participation in pre-AP/AP training, increasing academic rigor in general, differentiation strategies, vertical alignment, college admission requirements, project-based learning, professional learning communities, and data-driven instruction offered by GEAR UP and financial literacy curriculum PD provided by TG. Ask them to recall details on the sessions including length of training and delivery format.)
   b. If No, were you invited to participate? If yes, why did you not participate?
   c. (Probe for scheduling conflicts, inability for others to cover classes, status as non-core content teacher, other factors. Also probe for recent non-GEAR UP funded PD to better understand PD goals for the school.)

3. **For teachers who participated in GEAR UP-sponsored professional development, when did you participate (last year, this past summer, this year) and what did you think of the PD? To what extent has it been pertinent to your work? (8-10 min.)**
   a. Were any of the PD sessions particularly successful (i.e., you would recommend that new teachers take the same PD)? Why/why not? Why were some sessions less successful and how might you improve less successful sessions? [Probe for successes/issues with delivery, make up of group, content, timing, etc. Probe for any that participated in prior year that continue to be of value (sustainability).]
   b. What strategies have you taken away from these PD sessions? (List on Chart Paper if available.) Did you incorporate them into your instruction? If Yes, how? If No, why not? (Probe again for differentiated instruction, project based learning, improving academic rigor if appropriate.)
   c. For those receiving PD through TG, have you utilized any of these financial literacy curriculum materials? If so, what is your perception of these materials and their usefulness in the classroom?

d. How familiar are you with college entrance and application processes? Financial aid for students? Is this something you have had training in? Are these issues you discuss with students (discussion can include classroom activities). How do you see that changing?
e. Are there factors at school that have helped you implement strategies/content learned at PD? Were there barriers that prevented you from using the PD? How did you overcome these barriers? Will you be able to sustain implementation in the future or might additional training be needed? (Probe for areas of agreement/disagreement and differences based on subjects taught.)
f. Have you worked with the IPSI Educator Outreach Coach last school year or this school year? How have you found working with the coach? What strategies from the coach have you been able to implement in your classes? What barriers exist that prevent you from implementing other strategies? In what ways has the coach's work and support of PD been helpful to you? What, if anything, might be helpful to you with respect to having a coach?
g. Do you feel that the PD you have received helps you service a wide-range of students (such as ELL students)?

4. Looking to the future, what other professional development subjects or workshops would be most helpful to you in supporting student achievement and/or supporting students/families to be ready for college? (5 min.) ***(Facilitator list and group responses on Chart Paper if available.) (Probe for college admissions and financial aid training.)***

a. Do you see a need to have any PD that builds on PD you participated in so far?
b. If not already clear, what PD might teachers new to the school need to participate in to be ready to support GEAR UP goals?
c. Are there any ways that GEAR UP has influenced your practice outside of specific PD? If so, do you think you will continue those practices going forward?
d. Is there any additional PD that you would like to have to help you make your students more college ready?

5. GEAR UP seeks to improve the readiness of students to succeed in rigorous high school courses (e.g., advanced courses, college credit courses) and, later, attend college. What more do you think your school or GEAR UP could be doing to prepare more students for such a future? (5 min.)

a. How/to what extent have PD opportunities supported you as a teacher in improving rigor? (NOTE: this may have already been addressed in earlier responses.)
b. Overall, how challenging would you say courses are for students at your school? To what extent do they/don't they challenge students at a level that will prepare them for college? Are there some students who consistently receive content in a manner that is not challenging enough (e.g., ELL students)? [Probe for AP and honors classes and ask whether participants teach any honors/advanced (AP) classes, college credit courses and future plans for such classes.]
(Grades 9 and/or 10 teacher probe: Have you had to adjust how to challenge Grades 9 or 10 students this year relative to last year's GEAR UP cohort?)
c. One specific goal is to increase the number of advanced courses offered and to increase enrollment in advanced courses. Have you met with colleagues, the GEAR UP coordinator, or the College Preparation Advisor about this goal? (Probe for understanding the role of these staff as compared to teachers and for being introduced to resources (Graduation Toolkit). Probe for use of GEAR UP website, and if using how.] What steps might you suggest to help the school to succeed at these goals? To what extent do you think you might sustain this goal beyond the GEAR UP cohort of students? (Grades 9 and/or 10 Probe: Have you been able to maintain or introduced increased number of advanced courses for Grades 9 and/or 10 students?)

d. **What has been your role with helping students graduate with a distinguished level of achievement? How successful have students been at meeting endorsement requirements?**
e. **Discuss any facilitators or barriers to improving academic rigor at your school (e.g., teacher enthusiasm/resistance, student skill levels). (Grades 9 and/or 10 sustainability probe: any changes since last year or the year before when you worked with GEAR UP cohort?)**
f. **To what extent do you believe that any increases in academic rigor will be able to be sustained over time? What factors might influence sustainability? For Grades 9 and/or 10 teachers, in what ways, if any, have you continued instructional practices or student support services that you offered to GEAR UP students last year to the current cohort of Grades 9 and/or 10 students?**
g. **For math teachers, how would you assess the school's effort to prepare more Grade 11 students to enroll and succeed in Algebra II and beyond? In advanced/AP math courses? What successes or challenges have you found with Grade 11 students so far this school year?**
h. **Overall, to what extent would you say that your students are academically prepared for college? What about their knowledge of college requirements?**

6. **This GEAR UP grant has a performance measure that schools will participate in vertical alignment trainings and meetings. In vertical alignment, teachers across different grades work together to promote student transition and curriculum alignment. This includes alignment with middle school teachers/curriculum as well as across high school grade levels. What can you tell us about vertical alignment activities at your school? (7 min.) (*NOTE: If a vertical alignment team is identified for their own focus group, this group will focus on a deeper discussion related to this item*.)**
   a. **To your knowledge what activities occurred at your school focused on facilitating** vertical alignment in the past four years? Going on now? If not, why do you think this is? Are there plans to begin working on vertical alignment? (Probe for vertical alignment across high school grades as well as between the middle and high school level. Probe for distinction between training and implementation of vertical alignment.)
   b. Have you participated in vertical alignment activities? (If Yes, probe for number of days engaged in vertical alignment preparation/implementation, extent of involvement and topics covered, frequency of meetings, composition of the vertical team. Ask teachers their perceptions of vertical alignment activities and future plans for their vertical team. Probe to see whether they know if activities are GEAR UP-funded. If No, probe for reasons for not participating (time, scheduling, teaching non-core content area).]
   c. What are your perceptions of the value of vertical alignment? How will it contribute to student academic achievement and college readiness? (Probe for the role of vertical alignment in helping prepare teachers and students to handle the transition of students from middle to high school.)
   d. How successful has your school been at integrating strategies across grade levels to improve academic rigor (i.e., how challenging the course is to students)? To increase the number of advanced courses offered by the schools? (Probe for future oriented planning around graduating college ready (distinguished/endorsements), college entrancement requirement knowledge, financial aid knowledge, 18 hours of college credit by graduation). Discuss any facilitators and barriers to vertical alignment with regard to each issue.
7. **In what other GEAR UP activities/events have you been involved (outside of PD and vertical alignment) this past summer or so far this school year?**
   a. What are your perceptions of these activities/events? (Probe for involvement in student activities, college visits, parent/family events, etc.) (If not already discussed) GEAR UP is also interested in

helping students to successfully navigate the transitions to and within high school (i.e., from middle school to high school as well as from one grade to the next). What if anything would you say about students' transitions this school year?

b. In what ways, if any, have you collaborated with teachers in other grades [for Grade 9 teachers, collaboration with Grade 10 teachers; for Grade 10 teachers, collaboration with Grade 9 teachers] about student transitions to/within high school? For Grade 9 teachers, have you continued any efforts that you began through GEAR UP related to collaborating with teachers at the middle school level to support student transition from middle school to high school? Are there any opportunities to collaborate more, and if so, what suggestions do you have?

c. What do you think you/your school does well to help students with on-time promotion?

d. What more do you think you/your school could do to support students in successfully transitioning to and within high school? [Probe for any involvement in summer activities that addressed transition.]

e. In general, what indicators of successful transition have you seen? Challenges?

9. **What is your perception about the college-going culture at this school? What might GEAR UP do to improve college-going culture? (*Probe for any changes in attitudes/perceptions since the inception of GEAR UP at the school.)***

a. What activities outside of GEAR UP promote a college-going culture at your school?

b. How involved/knowledgeable are you about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events? [Probe for GEAR UP website (www.texasgearup.com), Texas Gateway and TEA's iTunes U page, GEAR UP activities/events (e.g., GEAR UP conference)]

c. What statewide activities/events have you participated in this school year?

d. Did you utilize statewide resources this school year? If yes, how did you use them? If not, why not? Did you find them useful? Why or why not?

e. What facilitators and barriers are there to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events?

f. To what extent do you use these resources with students in other grades other than the GEAR UP (current grade)?

10. Is there anything else you would like to share related to GEAR UP and GEAR UP goals at this school?

That concludes the focus group. Thanks so much for your ideas and your time.

D.15 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: Teacher Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group: *GEAR UP is a federally funded strategy to promote college awareness and academic achievement in high-need middle and high schools across the country. In support of that goal, GEAR UP also supports school-wide improvements and professional development that can help current and future students. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals and the impact of the program. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. Note that there are no right and wrong answers to the questions in this session, and that the goal is for all participants to contribute to the discussion. We expect this focus group will take approximately 50–55 minutes.*
  - Convey to each participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) participation is voluntary; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participating in the focus group at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) data will be maintained in secure areas.*
  - Ask permission to record the focus group: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Evaluation team members will have access to the recording, and the Texas Education Agency will only have access to a de-identified written transcript. If at least one person chooses not to have the focus group recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes. We will not include your name(s) in these notes or the transcript.*
  - Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and complete the consent form. Do you have any questions before we begin?*
  - Note to facilitator: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Reserve 5 minutes to discuss focus group purpose and obtain signatures.
  - Each focus group should have no more than 10 participants. The focus group is open to any teacher of a GEAR UP student in the 2016–17 school year. We anticipate only one teacher focus group per school. If possible, the group of teachers should include both standard-level and advanced-level teachers as well teachers in tested and non-tested subjects. If appropriate given GEAR UP planning at the school, a focus group may be held with a vertical team of teachers. (NOTE: Facilitator will be trained to probe/check for differences in group particularly when group is mixed.)

Materials

- Name tag (first names only), pen for each participant
- Paper (to write down their thoughts)
- Chart paper and markers to be used by facilitator
- Digital Voice Recorder

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. **Please tell me your first name, how long you have been working at this school, and how long you have been a teacher (3 min).**
    a. What grade(s)/subjects do you primarily teach? (Facilitator: Note # of core content teachers – math, science, English, social studies, # teach AP courses/dual credit courses)
    b. Have you participated in one of our focus groups previously? [Ask in particular if session includes teachers of GEAR UP students from 2015–16.] Note: Teachers who participated in fall do not need to be asked probes regarding prior years or summer 2016, focus will be on since fall site visit.
2. **Have you heard of GEAR UP before today? When did you first hear about GEAR UP and what it might mean to you as a teacher? What do you know about it, about GEAR UP goals? (5-8 min.) (Have the GEAR UP goal sheet to share.)**

a. If little or no knowledge at all, provide brief description of program (2 min.)
b. If knowledge, probe using these questions:
c. At this point, how ready do you feel that students and families are for reaching the goals of GEAR UP (to succeed in high school and be college ready)? Tell us how you might have answered the same or differently last semester/last year? What do you perceive to be the major challenges with regard to the students and families you serve in reaching goals of the program? [Probe for student support services, and student/family activities/events.]
d. Many of the Grade 11 students have been participating in GEAR UP for the past four years. Given what you know about the goals, have you noticed any differences in this year's Grade 11 students compared to Grade 11 students in previous years?
e. To what extent, if any, have you interacted with the GEAR UP team in your school/district (coordinator, the IPSI Educator Outreach Coach, College Preparation Advisor(s), family liaison, data clerk) to understand your role in helping to meet GEAR UP goals? What kind of information does this person/people provide? What expectations do you have of GEAR UP staff in helping the school/district meet these college readiness goals?
f. If any Grade 9 or 10 teachers: In what ways, if any, do you continue to interact with GEAR UP staff this year as you work with Grade 9 or 10 students who are not the primary recipients of the program, but rather, may benefit from sustained GEAR UP strategies?
g. How often do Grade 11 students miss class time due to GEAR UP activities? How often do students make up missed class time and work? Do you work with GEAR UP staff to ensure students make up work? How are you notified by GEAR UP staff that students will miss class time for GEAR UP activities? Is the method sufficient for your planning purposes? How does the amount of time missed for GEAR UP activities compare to the amount of time missed for other school activities? How does the timeliness of made up work for GEAR UP activities compare to the timeliness of made up work for other school activities? Why do you think these differences exist?

3. **For those of you who have not participated in a GEAR UP focus group, to your knowledge, have you participated in any GEAR UP-sponsored professional development over the past four years? What about during summer 2016? So far during this school year? For those of you who participated in the fall focus group, have you participated in any GEAR UP-sponsored professional development since we last spoke? (10 min.)**
    a. If yes, what programs/workshops/events do you recall? [Probe for participation in pre-AP/AP training, increasing academic rigor in general, differentiation strategies, vertical alignment, college admission requirements, project-based learning, professional learning communities, and data-driven instruction offered by GEAR UP and financial literacy curriculum PD provided by TG. Ask them to recall details on the sessions including length of training and delivery format.]

b. If no, were you invited to participate? If yes, why did you not participate? [Probe for scheduling conflicts, inability for others to cover classes, status as non-core content teacher, other factors. Also probe for recent non-GEAR UP funded PD to better understand PD goals for the school.]
c. What do you know about GEAR UP goals of teacher professional development (PD)? If little or no knowledge of professional development goals, provide brief description of PD and vertical alignment goals (from local GUIDES data). (3 min.)

4. **For teachers who participated in GEAR UP-sponsored professional development, what did you think of the PD? To what extent has it been pertinent to your work? (8-10 min.)**
   a. Were any of the PD sessions particularly successful (i.e., you would recommend that new teachers take the same PD)? Why/why not? Why were some sessions less successful and suggestions for improving less successful sessions? [Probe for successes/issues with delivery, make up of group, content, timing, etc. Probe for any that participated in prior year that continue to be of value (sustainability).]
   b. What strategies have you taken away from these PD sessions? (List on chart paper if available.) Did you incorporate them into your instruction? If yes, how? If no, why not? [Probe again for differentiated instruction, project based learning, improving academic rigor if appropriate.]
   c. For those receiving PD through TG, have you utilized any of these financial literacy curriculum materials? If so, what is your perception of these materials and their usefulness in the classroom? Have you used any other financial literacy curricula in your classroom? Is this material well-received by students?
   d. How familiar are you with college entrance and application processes? Financial aid for students? Is this something you have had training in? Are these issues you discuss with students (discussion can include classroom activities). How do you see that changing? Do you discuss these issues at an individual level, with an entire class, or both?
   e. Are there factors at school that have helped you implement strategies/content learned at PD? Were there barriers that prevented you from using the PD or resources obtained through PD? How did you overcome these barriers? Will you be able to sustain implementation in the future or might additional training be needed? [Probe for areas of agreement/disagreement and differences based on subjects taught.]
   f. Have you worked with the IPSI Educator Outreach Coach last school year or this school year? How have you found working with the coach? What strategies from the coach have you been able to implement in your classes? What barriers exist that prevent you from implementing other strategies? In what ways has the coach's work and support of PD been helpful to you? What, if anything, might be helpful to you with respect to having a coach?
   g. Do you feel that the PD you have received helps you service a wide-range of students (such as ELL students)?

5. **Looking to the future, what other professional development subjects or workshops would be most helpful to you in supporting student achievement and/or supporting students/families to be ready for college? (5 min.)** ***(Facilitator list and group responses on Chart Paper if available.) Probe for college admissions and financial aid training.***
   a. Do you see a need to have any PD that builds on PD you participated in so far?
   b. If not already clear, what PD might teachers new to the school need to participate in to be ready to support GEAR UP goals?
   c. Are there any ways that GEAR UP has influenced your practice outside of specific PD? If so, do you think you will continue those practices going forward?

d. Is there any additional PD that you would like to have to help you make your students more college ready?

6. GEAR UP seeks to improve the readiness of students to succeed in rigorous high school courses (e.g., advanced courses, college credit courses) and, later, attend college. Is there more that you think your school or GEAR UP could be doing to prepare more students for such a future? (5 min.)

a. Overall, how prepared do you believe students are for enrolling in advanced courses at your school? What has helped facilitate this preparedness? What do you think could make them better prepared? How do you help students who may struggle in advanced courses? What resources do you refer them to for additional help?

b. How/to what extent have PD opportunities supported you as a teacher in improving rigor? (NOTE: this may have already been addressed in earlier responses.)

c. Overall, how challenging would you say courses are for students at your school? For students in your classes? To what extent do they/don't they challenge students at a level that will prepare them for college? Are there some students who consistently receive content in a manner that is not challenging enough (e.g., ELL students)? [Probe for AP, dual credit and honors classes and ask whether participants teach any honors/advanced (AP) classes, college credit courses and future plans for such classes.]
[Grade 9/10 probe: Have you had to adjust how to challenge Grade 9 or 10 students this year relative to last year's GEAR UP cohort?]

d. One specific goal is to increase the number of advanced courses offered and to increase enrollment in advanced courses. This includes AP courses and dual credit courses more broadly. Have you met with colleagues, the GEAR UP coordinator or the College Preparation Advisor around these issues? [Probe for understanding the role of these staff as compared to teachers and for being introduced to resources (Graduation Toolkit). Probe for use of GEAR UP website, and if using how.] What steps might you suggest to help the school to succeed at these goals? To what extent do you think you might sustain this goal beyond the GEAR UP cohort of students? [Grade 9/10 Probe: How does the enrollment in advanced courses and the number of advanced course sections in the past two years compare to the numbers when the GEAR UP cohort was in these grades? Have the numbers remained the same? Increased? Decreased?]

e. Are you aware of any cases in which students who could have been successful in advanced courses, but were not enrolled in them? If yes, why were they not enrolled in the advanced courses? What role, if any, did you play in the decision?

f. Discuss any facilitators or barriers to improving academic rigor at your school (e.g., teacher enthusiasm/resistance, student skill levels, student motivation). [Grades 9 and/or 10 sustainability probe: any changes since when you worked with the GEAR UP cohort in 2014–15 and/or 2015–16?] How motivated do you find the GEAR UP students to be in comparison to other cohorts of students? How motivated are GEAR UP students to take advanced courses and to get ready for college?

g. What steps do you take when students are struggling in classes to help them get needed supports to be more successful? How aware are you of supports for students and how to connect students with needed supports? What GEAR UP supports, specifically, are you aware of? Would you recommend them to students? Why or why not? Do students seem motivated to seek these supports (GEAR UP or non-GEAR UP)? Who else (such as parents, peers, GEAR UP staff, and school staff) encourages students to seek academic supports?

h. To what extent do you believe that any increases in academic rigor will be able to be sustained over time? What factors might influence sustainability? For Grades 9 and/or 10 teachers, in what ways, if any, have you continued instructional practices or student

support services that you offered to GEAR UP students last year to the current cohort of Grade 9 and 10 students?

i. How would you assess the school's effort to prepare more Grade 11 students to enroll and succeed in advanced/AP math courses? What successes or challenges have you found with Grade 11 students so far this school year?

j. Students at your school may have taken the TSIA, PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, and/or ACT. To what extent do you see yourself as playing a role in preparing students for success on these college entrance exams? What successes/challenges have you seen associated with student performance on college entrance exams?

k. Overall, to what extent would you say that your students are academically prepared for college? What about their knowledge of college requirements?

7. **What has been your role with helping students understand the requirements/options for their chosen endorsement path and Foundation High School Program (graduation plan) more generally?**
   a. How prepared do you feel to help students on these? How successful have students been at meeting endorsement requirements?
   b. What about helping students graduate with a distinguished level of achievement? [If mathematics teacher: Algebra II is one of the requirements for distinguished level of achievement. Did the majority of the cohort take Algebra II last year or are they taking Algebra II this year? If last year: How prepared is the current group of Grade 10 students to complete Algebra II at a college ready level? How does the current group compare to the GEAR UP cohort? If this year: How prepared have students been to complete Algebra II at a college ready level? How does this cohort compare to previous cohorts? What supports might students need to achieve in Algebra II at this level? What role do you play in helping students to get any needed support to be successful?]
   c. What has been your role with helping students graduate with an endorsement(s) or with a distinguished level of achievement? How successful have students been at meeting endorsement requirements?
8. **This GEAR UP grant has a performance measure that schools will participate in vertical alignment trainings and meetings. In vertical alignment, teachers across different grades work together to promote student transition and curriculum alignment. This includes alignment with middle school teachers/curriculum as well as across high school grade levels. What can you tell us about vertical alignment activities at your school? (7 min.) (NOTE: If a vertical alignment team is identified for their own focus group, this group will focus on a deeper discussion related to this item.)**
   a. To your knowledge what activities occurred at your school focused on facilitating vertical alignment in the past four years? Going on now? If not, why do you think this is? Are there plans to begin working on vertical alignment? [Probe for vertical alignment across high school grades as well as between the middle and high school level. Probe for distinction between training and implementation of vertical alignment.]
   b. Have you participated in vertical alignment activities? [If yes, probe for number of days engaged in vertical alignment preparation/implementation, extent of involvement and topics covered, frequency of meetings, composition of the vertical team. Ask teachers their perceptions of vertical alignment activities and future plans for their vertical team. Probe to see whether they know if activities are GEAR UP-funded. If No, probe for reasons for not participating (time, scheduling, teaching non-core content area).]
   c. What are your perceptions of the value of vertical alignment? How does it contribute to student academic achievement and college readiness? [Probe for the role of vertical alignment in helping prepare teachers and students to handle the transition of students.

d. How successful has your school been at integrating strategies across grade levels to improve academic rigor (i.e., how challenging the courses are to students)? To increase the number of advanced courses offered by the schools? (Probe for future oriented planning around graduating college ready (distinguished/endorsements), college entrancement requirement knowledge, financial aid knowledge, 18 hours of college credit by graduation). Discuss any facilitators and barriers to vertical alignment with regard to each issue.

9. **In what other GEAR UP activities/events have you been involved (outside of PD and vertical alignment) this past summer or so far this school year?**
   a. What are your perceptions of these activities/events? [Probe for involvement in student activities, college visits, job site visits/job shadowing, parent/family events, etc.]
10. What is your perception about the college-going culture at this school? What might GEAR UP do to improve college-going culture? [*Probe for any changes in attitudes/perceptions since the inception of GEAR UP at the school.]*
    a. What other activities or programs (outside of GEAR UP) are promoting a college going culture at your school?
11. **How involved/knowledgeable are you about Texas statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events? [Probe for GEAR UP website (www.texasgearup.com), Texas Gateway and TEA's iTunes U page, GEAR UP activities/events (e.g., GEAR UP conference)?]**
    a. What statewide activities/events have you participated in this school year?
    b. Did you utilize statewide resources this school year? If yes, how did you use them? If not, why not? Did you find them useful? Why or why not?
    c. What facilitators and barriers are there to successful participation in/interaction with statewide GEAR UP activities/resources/events?
    d. To what extent do you use these resources with students in other grades other than the GEAR UP (current grade)?
    e. What other resources would you like to see GEAR UP provide for teachers on a statewide basis?
12. **Is there anything else you would like to share related to GEAR UP and GEAR UP goals at this school?**

That concludes the focus group. Thanks so much for your ideas and your time.

D.16 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Fall 2016: Community Partner Interview/Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and/or leaders of the focus group/interview as representatives of ICF and describe your roles in supporting the meeting (i.e., facilitator, note taker). If needed, a given community partner can be interviewed individually.
- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group/interview: The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The initial purpose of this focus group/interview is to better understand partners' roles in the GEAR UP program. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this focus group/interview to take approximately 30-40 minutes.
- Convey to participant(s) our confidentiality policy: (1) the focus group/interview is voluntary and data collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participation at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) focus group/interview data will be maintained in secure areas; and 5) please respect others' privacy by not sharing any information outside of the focus group/interview.
- Ask permission to record the focus group/interview: In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. If you or at least one person chooses not to have the focus group/interview recorded, we will not record the session but will take notes, though will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin: *Please review and sign the consent form.*
- Each focus group should have up to 8 participants: The focus group is open to any local partner of a GEAR UP grantee. More than one focus group may need to be conducted if there are a large number of local partners. If a partner identified as very important to the grantee as far as their role with GEAR UP cannot attend a focus group, a one on one interview (during site visit or after via telephone) may be conducted. Ideally at least some partners will have participated in GEAR UP activities/events/services but this is not required for participation in the focus group.
- Note to interviewer/facilitator: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate.

QUESTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us about GEAR UP. First, we would like some background on you and your organization.

1. Conduct introductions. Tell us about your organization(s).
   Probe for organizational background and context; role in the community; expertise in education, career services, mentoring, etc.

2. Tell us a little about how your partnership with the school came about and to what extent you work collaboratively as partners. What school officials or other partners have you met with this year regarding GEAR UP? How did you collaborate with these individuals? What are your goals for this partnership?

    a. **Is this a new or ongoing partnership?**
    b. **[If a new partnership] What is your impression so far about how your organization can support the GEAR UP program?**
    c. **What is the frequency/format of contact/meetings? What school or GEAR UP staff do you usually interact/work with?**
    d. **Is the level of collaboration appropriate from your perspective (e.g., with the school and/or with other partners)?**
    e. **What factors facilitate successful partnerships/collaborations? What are the barriers, if any, you have faced regarding engaging in a successful partnership? How have/will you overcome them?**
    f. **[If an ongoing partnership] How has your partnership evolved since it first began? How is it different this year?**

3. Please tell us about your role in the GEAR UP program with regard to activities/events/resources. If you were the sponsor or lead of the activity/event/resources please let us know that.

    a. **How are the GEAR UP students you work with identified to receive your services or resources? Do you have a role in identifying those in need of your resources or services?**
    b. **Have you provided support in college preparation and awareness, including financial aid?**
    c. **Have you provided supplemental academic assistance (mentoring/tutoring or other services to students, including summer programs)?**

    Also probe for: career exploration (job site visits, job shadowing, internships, etc.); college visits – where and when; college workshops – format and content; parent outreach activities

    d. **If you have not yet been involved in any activities/events/resource implementation – what is your plan to do so?**
    e. **In general, any plans/next steps for involvement in activities/events/resources?**

4. In your view, how successful were these activities/events/resources with regard to supporting the goals of GEAR UP (success in school/college readiness) or other goals of your partnership?

    a. **Impact/Outcomes (e.g., be clear about what the impact was on and to what extent the impact was felt; if appropriate probe for impact relative to cost)**
    b. **[If participant refers to an event] Attendance at an event – did it meet expectations?**
    c. **Support from GEAR UP/school – did the support meet expectations/needs?**
    d. **What factors facilitated success? Any barriers and challenges (e.g., scheduling, access to students, etc.)? What might you do differently next time or how did you handle any challenges?**

5. Are you aware of statewide Texas GEAR UP activities/events/resources, such as texasgearup.com or the Texas GEAR UP Conference?

    a. **If Yes: What are you aware of? Have you/will you participate/utilize? What factors are facilitators or barriers to participating/using?**
    b. **If No: What activities/events/resources from the state might you find useful or want to participate in?**

   c. **Are there any resources that you would like to have that would enhance your partnership with GEAR UP that you currently do not have?**

6. Based on what you have learned in your partnership so far, what would you change in order to help the program be more successful (at helping students to succeed in school and prepare for college)?

   a. **Ideas for future workshops/courses**
   b. **Ideas for scheduling/outreach**
   c. **Gaps in services**
   d. **In what ways, if at all, do you anticipate continuing this collaboration after the Texas GEAR UP SG grant ends?**
   e. **Have you continued any collaborations with middle school staff?**

7. What factors do you see as facilitating or hindering sustainability of the resources and/or services you offer through GEAR UP to the campus, district, staff, students, and/or parents?
8. What other final thoughts do you have about GEAR UP that you would like to share?

Thank you for your time.

D.17 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: Community Partner Interview/Focus Group Protocol

Facilitator Guidelines:

- Introduce yourself and/or leaders of the focus group as representatives of ICF and describe your roles in supporting the meeting (i.e., facilitator, note taker). If needed, a given community partner can be interviewed individually.
- Briefly discuss the purpose of the focus group/interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The initial purpose of this focus group/interview is to better understand the role partners play in the GEAR UP program. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this focus group/interview to take approximately 30-40 minutes.*
- Convey to participant(s) our confidentiality policy: *(1) the focus group/interview is voluntary and data collected will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop participation at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; (4) focus group/interview data will be maintained in secure areas; and (5) please respect others' privacy by not sharing any information outside of the focus group.*
- Ask permission to record the focus group/interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. If you choose not to have the focus group/interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *Please review and sign the consent form.*
- The focus group should have up to 8 participants. The focus group is open to any local partner of a GEAR UP grantee. Ideally at least some partners will have participated in GEAR UP activities/events/services but this is not required for participation in the focus group.
- Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate.

QUESTIONS

Thank you for agreeing to meet with us about GEAR UP. First, we would like some background on you and your organization.

1. **Conduct introductions. Tell us about your organization(s).**
    - ***a.*** **Probe for organizational background and context; role in the community; expertise in education, career services, mentoring, etc.**
2. **Tell us a little about how your partnership with the school came about and to what extent you work collaboratively as partners? What school officials or other partners have you met with this year regarding GEAR UP? How did you collaborate with these individuals? What are your goals for this partnership?**
    - *a. Is this a new or ongoing partnership?*
    - *b. [If a new partnership] What is your impression so far about how your organization can support the GEAR UP program?*
    - *c. What is the frequency/format of contact/meetings? What school or GEAR UP staff do you usually interact/work with?*
    - *d. Discuss current status of MOU*
    - *e. Is the level of collaboration appropriate from your perspective (e.g., with the school and/or with other partners)?*
    - *f. What factors facilitate successful partnerships/collaborations? What are the barriers, if any, you have faced regarding engaging in a successful partnership? How have/will you overcome them?*
    - *g. [If an ongoing partnership] How has your partnership evolved since it first began? How is it different this year?*
    - *h. How do the goals and objectives of your organization align with those of GEAR UP? Are you aware of any work/initiatives that GEAR UP does that is duplicative of your organization's work? If yes, how have you worked with GEAR UP to streamline the work? In which other areas do you think your organization and GEAR UP could streamline work?*
3. **Please tell us about your role in the GEAR UP program with regard to activities/events/resources? If you were the sponsor or lead of the activity/event/resource please let us know that.**
    - *a. How are the students you work with identified to receive your services or resources? Do you have a role in identifying those in need of your resources or services?*
    - *b. Have you provided support in college preparation and awareness, including financial aid?*
    - *c. Have you provided supplemental academic assistance (mentoring/tutoring or other services to students, including summer programs)? Also probe for: Career exploration (job site visits, job shadowing, internships, etc.); College visits/ college shadowing – where and when; College workshops – format and content; Parent outreach activities*
    - *d. If you have not yet been involved in any activities/events/resource implementation – what is your plan to do so?*
    - *e. In general, any plans/next steps for involvement in activities/events/resources? Probe specifically for summer activities if appropriate.*
4. **In your view, how successful were these activities/events/resources with regard to supporting the goals of GEAR UP (success in school/college readiness) or other goals of your partnership?**
    - *a. Impact/Outcomes (e.g., be clear about what the impact was on and to what extent the impact was felt; if appropriate probe for impact relative to cost)*
    - *b. [If participant refers to an event] Attendance of an event– did it meet expectations?*
    - *c. Support from GEAR UP / school -- did it meet expectations/needs?*

d. What factors facilitated success? Any barriers and challenges (e.g., scheduling, access to students, etc.)? What might you do differently next time or how did you handle any challenges?

5. Are you aware of statewide Texas GEAR UP activities/events/resources?

d. If Yes: What are you aware of? Have you/will you participate/utilize? What factors are facilitators or barriers to participating/using?

e. If No: What activities/events/resources from the state might you find useful or want to participate in?

f. Are there any resources that you would like to have that would enhance your partnership with GEAR UP that you currently do not have?

6. Based on what you learned this year, what would you change for next year in order to help the program be more successful (at helping students to succeed in school and prepare for college)?

a. Ideas for future workshops/courses

b. Ideas for scheduling/outreach

c. Gaps in services

d. In what ways, if at all, do you anticipate continuing this collaboration after the Texas GEAR UP SG grant ends?

e. Have you continued any collaborations with middle school staff?

7. What factors do you see as facilitating or hindering sustainability?

a. What other final thoughts do you have about GEAR UP that you would like to share?

8. What other final thoughts do you have about GEAR UP that you would like to share?

Thank you for your time.

D.18 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: Texas Education Agency Interview

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges in implementing GEAR UP. As an independent, external evaluator, ICF is seeking input that will help in describing the program and the vision for GEAR UP held by TEA. We expect this interview will last 45-60 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary and all data collected will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *You will indicate your consent to participate by answering the questions.*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate.

Interview Questions

Where appropriate describe anything that has changed over the time since you have been in this role when responding to questions.

1. **Please briefly describe any changes in your role at TEA more broadly and then specifically with Texas GEAR UP this year.**
    a. *Is your workload solely on GEAR UP or is your time also allocated to other projects?*
2. **First, I'd like to talk about your role in working with GEAR UP schools, districts, and collaborators. What is the extent of your GEAR UP role in working with district grantees?**
    a. *What types of supports/services do you provide? How is the support you provide similar or different across sites?*
    b. *What portion of your work is devoted to districts? Schools? Is your time evenly distributed among the schools and districts?*
    c. *How would you describe the level of buy-in from district leadership? Teachers? Administrators? Students? Parents? What, if anything, has your role been in influencing buy-in with each of these people?*
    d. *How frequently do you interact with district grantees? Schools? IPSI? Collaborators? Who initiates that contact? In what ways do you interact with each of these groups? In what ways, if any, are there differences in those interactions with high schools?*
    e. *How do you interact with GEAR UP staff who are in the districts/schools (e.g., College Preparation Advisors, Texas GEAR UP Coordinators, parent liaisons, data clerks, etc.)? What*

is the necessary skill set for staff in these positions? To what extent are those skills evident in the current staff? How do you see each role contributing or not to helping Texas GEAR UP SG to succeed?

f. *What factors facilitate your relationship with GEAR UP grantees? Have you faced any barriers? If so, have you been able to overcome those barriers or do you have plans to try to overcome?*

g. *What Support Center staff do you interact with most often? What changes, if any, would you make in your interaction with them? Any additional staff you would like to interact with more frequently or differently?*

3. How would you describe implementation of the program within schools/districts this year?

a. *What do you consider to be some of the primary implementation successes? Implementation challenges? How do you see your organization's role contributing or not to helping Texas GEAR UP SG to succeed?*

b. *To what extent are district grantees and collaborators adhering to their action plans as they implement GEAR UP? What is the process for modification if it is necessary?*

c. *How is TEA assessing progress by grantees on goals? Is GUIDES the only format or are you assessing/tracking progress in other ways? How satisfied is TEA with grantee progress on short-term goals to date (e.g., student support services, promotion, knowledge about college enrollment and financing college, academic rigor, PSAT/NMSQT, ACT/SAT, TSIA)? How satisfied is TEA with grantee progress toward long term goals to date (e.g., graduating on Foundation High School Plan with an endorsement or with Distinguished Level of Achievement, pre-AP/AP course offerings/course taking, opportunities to complete college credit, college application and enrollment)? Any key successes or challenges to date? To what extent does the GUIDES system continue to be a useful tool for progress monitoring?*

d. *How are you kept up to date regarding GEAR UP implementation within schools? What role, if any, does TEA have in the design of professional development, student and parent workshops or services this year? How satisfied are you with this role? What changes would you make regarding TEA's role in the design of these activities?*

e. *To what extent does GEAR UP address service gaps at the district level? School level? Are there any gaps that you feel GEAR UP has not yet been able to successfully address?*

f. *Based on GUIDES data and what you know through other sources, how satisfied are you with events to involve students? Parents? Teachers? Are there any specific GEAR UP-funded activities that have impressed staff at TEA? Disappointed staff at TEA?*

g. *What factors have facilitated GEAR UP implementation this year? What factors have hindered GEAR UP implementation this year? How have you addressed these challenges? What challenges are ongoing? What unexpected issues have you encountered?*

h. *Are there any additional GEAR UP activities or events you would like to see schools engaging in?*

4. With regard to Texas GEAR UP, who are the key players that you have worked with regularly this year and in what ways did you engage with them? (NOTE: This may include non-formal collaborators.)

a. *Who are the major (non-school) Texas GEAR UP collaborators this year? [probe for TG, AMS, Raise Achievement, Focus Training, Signal Vine, and GeoForce] What roles do / will they play in program implementation? Do they have a formal relationship with TEA or the IPSI Support Center? Are there particular collaborators you work closely with? Who? How? Has this changed from previous years? If IPSI is primary, how does IPSI keep you up to date on the work of the other collaborators?*

b. *In what ways do you/IPSI Support Center involve collaborators in GEAR UP activities? Has this changed from previous years? This may include involvement with grantees and/or with the statewide initiatives? Any collaborators you would like to see more/less involved?*
c. *What factors facilitate your relationship with GEAR UP collaborators this year? Have you faced any barriers? If so, have you been able to overcome those barriers or do you have plans to try to overcome?*
d. *To what extent have districts continued to work with the College Board by procuring services directly this year? How are you updated on this type of work? Are there any program gaps you'd like to see filled by a collaborator? Are you currently seeking any organization(s) to fill that gap?*

5. How would you describe the current status of the statewide initiative?

a. *What has been the primary focus of the statewide initiative this year? Is the focus shifting at all for the upcoming school year?*
b. *How much progress has been made? How satisfied are you with the progress?*
c. *Are there any new/revised topics that have been made available relevant to college readiness on the website? Are there any new topics relevant to college readiness not yet available that you would really like to see be part of the statewide initiative? What are plans/next steps to make progress? (NOTE: Be sure to document any progress in particular anything that parents or students might be aware of.)*
d. *What components of the statewide initiative have been rolled out so far this year? How? To who? Which of these components are new this year? How? To who? What steps, if any, has been taken to communicate to schools and families about information/resources available through the statewide initiative this year? If not, what are plans/next steps to make progress towards statewide initiative roll out?*
e. *Have any new GEAR UP professional learning opportunities been made available to educators (e.g., Project Share Gateway, face-to-face) this year? How are such opportunities communicated statewide?*
f. *If opportunities are available, how many educators, including those not at current GEAR UP campuses, are participating in such opportunities and what are some of the opportunities this year? Any challenges in tracking participation statewide? Plans to overcome those challenges? If opportunities not yet available, what are plans/next steps to make progress on making these available? Are there any additional opportunities you would like to offer?*
g. *What factors facilitate working on the GEAR UP statewide initiative this year? Have you faced any barriers? If so, have you been able to overcome those barriers or do you have plans to try to overcome?*

6. Anything else you would like us to know? Anything that would be important in our describing Texas GEAR UP?

This concludes our discussion. Thank you so much for your ideas and your time.

D.19 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: IPSI Interview Protocol

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges in implementing GEAR UP. As an independent, external evaluator, ICF is seeking input that will help in describing the program and the vision for GEAR UP held by TEA. We expect this interview will last 45-60 minutes.
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: (1) the interview is voluntary and all data collected will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data; and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.
- Ask permission to record the interview: In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking notes but will not include your name in reporting. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *You will indicate your consent to participate by answering the questions.*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Please briefly describe any changes this year in your role at IPSI more broadly and then specifically with Texas GEAR UP.**
   a. What new staff members at IPSI work on GEAR UP?
   b. What portion of time is devoted to GEAR UP among IPSI staff who work on GEAR UP?
   c. Please describe the changes in IPSI staff who focus on GEAR UP.
2. **First, I'd like to talk about your role in working with GEAR UP schools, districts, and collaborators. What is the extent of your GEAR UP role in working with district grantees? *For each of these where relevant, how has your role been different/stayed the same this year (with students in Grade 11) than in prior years)?***
   a. What types of supports/services do you and your staff provide? How is the support you and your staff provide similar or different across sites? How has this support changed since last year?
   b. What portion of your staff's and your work is devoted to districts? Schools?
   c. How would you and your staff describe the level of buy-in from district leadership? Teachers? School administrators? Students? Parents? What, if anything, has your role been in influencing buy-in with each of these people?

d. How frequently do you and your staff interact with district grantees? Schools? Who initiates that contact? In what ways do you and your staff interact with each of these groups?
e. In what ways, if any, are there differences in those interactions with each high school?
f. How would you describe the level of communication with TEA?
g. How do you and your staff interact with College Preparation Advisors? Specifically, how do you ensure that College Preparation Advisors receive necessary training, feedback, and tools to do their jobs effectively?
h. How do you and your staff interact with other GEAR UP staff who are in the districts/schools (e.g., Texas GEAR UP Coordinators, Parent Liaisons, Data clerks)? What is the necessary skill set for staff in these positions? To what extent are those skills evident in the current staff? Any challenges associated with transitions in staff?
i. What factors facilitate your relationship with GEAR UP grantees? Have you or your staff faced any barriers? If so, have you been able to overcome those barriers or do you have plans to try to overcome them?

3. How would you describe implementation of the program this year?

a. What do you consider to be some of the primary implementation successes? Implementation challenges? How do you see your organization's role contributing or not to helping Texas GEAR UP SG to succeed?
b. To what extent are district grantees and collaborators adhering to their action plans as they continue to implement GEAR UP? What is the process for modification if it is necessary? Have any grantees or collaborators modified their plan this year? In what ways?
c. How do you assess progress by grantees on goals? Is GUIDES/ASPR Progress Report the only format or are you assessing/tracking progress in other ways? If so, how satisfied are you with grantee progress toward long term district goals to date? Are you satisfied with grantee progress toward short term district goals to date? (Goals to probe for include: on-time promotion, student support services, knowledge about college enrollment and financing college, academic rigor, graduating on Foundation High School Plan with an endorsement or with Distinguished Level of Achievement, pre-AP/AP course offerings/course taking, opportunities to complete college credit, college entrance exams [SAT/ACT, PSAT/NMSQT, TSIA])? To what extent has the GUIDES/ASPR system been a useful tool for progress monitoring?
d. How does your data inform the technical assistance you provide to districts?
e. How are you kept up to date regarding GEAR UP implementation within schools? What role, if any, do you have in the design of professional development, student and parent workshops or services? If any, how satisfied are you with the way you receive this information and your role?
f. To what extent does GEAR UP address service gaps at the district level? School level?
g. Based on ASPR/GUIDES data and what you know through other sources, how satisfied are you with events to involve students? Parents? Teachers? Are there any specific GEAR UP-funded activities that have impressed staff at IPSI? Disappointed staff at ISPI?
h. What factors have facilitated GEAR UP implementation this year? What factors have hindered GEAR UP implementation this year? How have you addressed these challenges? What challenges are ongoing? What unexpected issues have you encountered?
i. Are there any additional GEAR UP activities or events you would like to see schools engaging in?

4. With regard to Texas GEAR UP, who are the key players that you have worked with regularly this year and in what ways did you engage with them? (NOTE: This may include non-formal collaborators.)

a. Who are the major (non-school) Texas GEAR UP collaborators this year? [probe for TG, Signal Vine, Focus Training, AMS Pictures, Raise Achievement, and GeoForce] What roles do / will they play in program implementation? Are they formal collaborators or more informal collaborators?

Any that you are trying to partner with more formally? Are there particular collaborators you work closely with? Who? How?

b. In what ways do you involve collaborators in GEAR UP activities? Has this changed from previous years? This may include involvement with grantees and/or with the statewide initiatives? Any collaborators you would like to see more/less involved?
c. What factors facilitate your relationship with GEAR UP collaborators this year? Have you faced any barriers? If so, have you been able to overcome those barriers or do you have plans to try to overcome?
d. To what extent have districts continued to work with the College Board by procuring services directly? How are you updated on this work?
e. Are there any program gaps you'd like to see filled by a collaborator? Are you currently seeking any other organization(s) to fill that gap?

5. How would you describe the current status of the statewide initiative?

a. What has been the primary focus of the statewide initiative this year? Is the focus shifting at all for the upcoming school year?
b. How much progress has been made? How satisfied are you with the progress?
c. Are there any new/ revised topics that have been made available relevant to college readiness on the website? Are there any new topics relevant to college readiness not yet available on the website that you would really like to see be part of the statewide initiative? What are plans/next steps to make progress? (NOTE: Be sure to document any progress in particular anything that parents or students might be aware of.)
d. What components of the statewide initiative have been rolled out so far this year? How? To whom? Which of these components are new this year? What steps, if any, have been taken to communicate to schools and families about information/resources available through the statewide initiative this year? If not, what are plans/next steps to make progress towards statewide initiative roll out?
e. Have any new GEAR UP professional learning opportunities been made available to educators (e.g., Texas Gateway, face-to-face) this year? How are such opportunities communicated statewide? Any challenges in tracking participation statewide?
f. If opportunities are available, how many educators, including those not at current GEAR UP campuses, are participating in such opportunities and what are some of the opportunities this year? Are there challenges to reaching educators on non-GEAR UP campuses? What plans do you have to overcome those challenges? Are there any additional opportunities you would like to offer? If opportunities not yet available, what are plans/next steps to make progress on making these available?
g. What factors facilitate working on the GEAR UP statewide initiative this year? Have you faced any barriers? If so, have you been able to overcome those barriers or do you have plans to try to overcome?

6. Anything else you would like us to know? Anything that would be important in our describing Texas GEAR UP?

This concludes our discussion. Thank you so much for your ideas and your time.

D.20 Texas GEAR UP State Grant Spring 2017: State Collaborator Interview Protocol

Interviewer Guidelines:

- Briefly discuss the purpose of the interview: *The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has contracted with ICF to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Texas GEAR UP grant program to better understand strategies that grantees use to meet program goals. The purpose of this interview is to better understand your role as a collaborator – how your collaboration with TEA came about and what services or input you provide or will provide to the GEAR UP program. Your contribution to the evaluation effort is extremely valuable and will give you the opportunity to share your perspective on the successes, benefits, and challenges associated with implementing GEAR UP. Please know that ICF is an independent, external evaluator. We expect this interview to take approximately 30-45 minutes.*
- Convey to interview participant our confidentiality policy: *(1) the interview is voluntary and all data collected will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law; (2) you can decline to answer any questions, or you can stop the interview at any time; (3) the information will be held in confidence by the evaluation team who have signed confidentiality agreements ensuring the protection of data (summary reports may indicate particular organizations by the roles they describe but challenges and successes will be reported confidentially); and (4) interview data will be maintained in secure areas.*
- Ask permission to record the interview: *In order to capture the discussion, I would like to record the session. Only evaluation team members will have access to the recording and the transcript, which will name the organization and individuals interviewed. If you choose not to have the interview recorded, we will be taking detailed notes. Any transcripts of the conversation shared with TEA will have all identifying information removed.*
- Ask if they have any questions for you before you begin. *You will indicate your consent to participate by answering the questions.*

Note to interviewer: Italicized questions are to be used as probes to encourage respondents to expand upon their responses. Consider prior responses to customize the inclusion, order, and language of questions as appropriate. ICF will review existing documents such as the original RFP and any in place agreements to guide questions where appropriate.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **In 2-3 sentences, please briefly describe your organization and your role in the organization.**
2. **Please describe your organization's role in supporting TEA/IPSI/AMS Pictures and specifically Texas GEAR UP.**
    a. *How, if at all, has this relationship changed over time? What changes do you hope to see in this relationship going forward?*
    b. *How would you describe the level of communication with TEA/IPSI Support Center/AMS Pictures? Who do you usually communicate with? How has this changed from previous years?*
    c. *In what ways, if at all, do you interact with GEAR UP Coordinators, College Preparation Advisors, Parent Liaisons, and/or Data Clerks? How has this changed from previous years?*
    d. *What types of supports/services does your organization provide to TX GEAR UP? How has this changed from previous years?*
    e. *What is the current status of the work? What is your organization's current level of involvement? How actively engaged is your organization? How do you see this changing going forward?*

f. Does your organization serve similar roles in other state or local GEAR UP initiatives? Has this changed from previous years?

3. What, if any, is the extent of your organization's involvement related to statewide GEAR UP initiatives and at each GEAR UP school (in the 4 districts, 6 high schools)?

Statewide Initiative

a. Are you involved in GEAR UP statewide efforts? If so, how?
b. What portion of your organization's work is devoted to supporting the state? Districts? Schools? Students? Parents? GEAR UP staff?
c. How frequently are these services provided? Who initiates/requests these services?
d. How has your involvement changed from previous years?

School Programs *[Note: Only ask if direct services to schools have begun. Some TEA collaborators may not work as directly with schools.]*

e. How is the support your organization provides similar/different across sites? Are there specific GEAR UP districts or schools that your organization primarily focuses on? If so, which ones and how was that decided? Who makes that sort of decision?
f. How frequently are these services provided? Who initiates/requests these services?
g. Has your organization's role changed as GEAR UP students progress through high school? How?
h. How has your involvement changed from previous years?
i. What, if any, progress do you see towards short-term and long-term GEAR UP goals (e.g., on-time promotion, student support services, knowledge about college enrollment and financing college, academic rigor, graduating on Foundation High School Plan or with Distinguished Level of Achievement, pre-AP/AP course offerings/course taking, opportunities to complete college credit, PSAT NMSQT/SAT/ACT/TSIA)?
j. What progress have you made so far this year in your goals:
    i. TG: student financial education programs, financial coaching to parents of Texas GEAR UP students, and will promote and explain financial coaching by printing and shipping posers and flyers to each of the six Texas GEAR UP high schools?
    ii. AMS: 40% of GEAR UP students using the website by the end of the grant?
    iii. GeoFORCE: Ongoing activities with students who first participated in the program in the summer following Grade 7 (2013); developing plans for summer 2017 activities?
    iv. Focus Training: advisor training to develop, implement, and support a leadership program for participants? Level of success of leadership program?
    v. Signal Vine: develop and implement a text messaging platform in spring 2017?
k. What are your goals for the coming year?

4. What, if any, are benefits you see in your organization's role as a GEAR UP collaborator?

a. [If new collaborator} What prompted your organization's interest in becoming a GEAR UP collaborator? What are the perceived benefits to TEA? Districts? Schools? Students? Parents? State?
b. What factors (facilitators) have helped the collaboration to succeed this year? Have you faced any barriers to a successful collaboration? If yes, have you been able to overcome the barriers and how? What could make it even better?

5. In what ways, if any, does your organization collaborate with other Texas GEAR UP collaborators?

a. What, if any, formal/informal opportunities are there to interact with other collaborators?

   b. *Are there particular collaborators you work closely with? Who? How? Is there any other collaborator that you'd like to work more closely with?*
   c. *What supports or resources does TEA/IPSI/AMS Pictures provide to you with regard to working with one another? Clarify any facilitators or barriers to collaboration. Are there any additional supports or resources you'd like to have from TEA/IPSI Support Center/AMS Pictures?*

6. **Do you have an agreement in place (MOU)? To what extent is your organization's current role aligned with the collaboration agreements initially established?**
   a. *If different, why is it different than intended?*
   b. *What factors have facilitated being able to fulfill this plan? What factors have hindered being able to fulfill this plan? Have you been able to overcome any barriers? To what extent do you anticipate being able to overcome these barriers?*

7. **Is there anything else that you would like to share about your work with Texas GEAR UP, TEA and/or other collaborators?**

This concludes our discussion. Thank you so much for your ideas and your time.

APPENDIX E: Case Studies

E.1 Overview of Findings from All Districts

The following are case studies on the programs operating in each of the four districts as part of the Texas Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) State Grant (SG) during the 2016–17 year. Findings are based on analysis of data collected during in-person site visits to all six participating schools across four districts during fall 2016 and spring 2017. During Year 5 of the grant, students in the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort were in Grade 11 in high school; so all site visits occurred in this setting. The purpose of presenting these case studies is to provide an overview of local perceptions of the implementation of grant activities during the 2016–17 school year. Viewpoints from important stakeholders, namely the students served through the grant and their parents, teachers of these students, administrators, and Texas GEAR UP SG coordinators in each district, have been incorporated.

These case studies provide important information for understanding grant implementation over time (longitudinally). Throughout these case studies when there are comments from individuals, staff responsible for the Texas GEAR UP SG in the district are referred to as Texas GEAR UP SG staff members; school principals, assistant principals, or other similar school leadership positions are referred to as school administrators.

These case studies examine perceptions of how grant implementation in each district is helping Texas GEAR UP SG primary cohort students become more postsecondary education aware and ready. The case studies include descriptions of activities and initiatives implemented during Year 5 (through April 2017) as perceived by site visit participants. It should be noted that since final site visits for the year occurred in April 2017, any implementation planning information in these case studies are for the remainder of the school year and summer 2017. Before discussing findings from individual districts, a brief overview of findings associated across all districts is provided.

E.1.1 Postsecondary Education Readiness

Across grantee districts, student postsecondary education readiness was assessed in a variety of ways, including the SAT/ACT for Grade 11 students and Texas Success Initiative Assessment (TSIA) as well as through Advanced Placement (AP) and dual credit course enrollment.[123] Three of the four districts hosted an SAT School Day in Year 5 to encourage more students to participate in the SAT. Though SAT scores were not available in the GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System (GUIDES), some Texas GEAR UP SG staff and students reported during spring site visits that scores were available for their review. In all schools, the College Preparation Advisor(s), and in some instances other on-campus college access programs, reported on their responsibility to register cohort students to participate in the SAT, although not all students showed up on the testing day. The ACT was also offered during the

[123] The TSIA is a standardized test used to determine readiness for college coursework and identifies needs for any developmental coursework. For more information see http://www.thecb.state.tx.us/index.cfm?objectid=C92F1DAA-D49E-03F0-0750060AA756E807.

spring semester, on Saturdays, but it was reported by Texas GEAR UP SG staff that not as many students took the ACT as took the SAT. According to Texas GEAR UP SG staff members, many different test preparation activities were offered to students including but not limited to, weekend or after-school boot camps, workbooks, practice tests, and online test preparation resources. Fewer cohort students who participated in the site visits took a section of the TSIA in Year 5 compared to those who reported in Year 4 that they participated in the TSIA;

School staff, including administrators and teachers, said AP and dual credit enrollment among Grade 11 students increased in Year 5. However, as expressed in Year 4, some participating teachers and Texas GEAR UP SG staff expressed concerns that some students were inappropriately placed in advanced courses, which disrupted the rigor of the courses that existed in previous years.

E.1.2 Collaboration and Sustainability

As in Year 4, high staff turnover, particularly among Texas GEAR UP SG staff and district/school administrators during Year 5 created barriers to grant implementation related to continuity of processes and routines, buy-in for the Texas GEAR UP SG project objectives, and acknowledgement of the grant value. As new Texas GEAR UP SG staff are hired or transferred from other positions, there is a period of transition to allow new staff to learn the program and/or the duties of new position. This transition period may take away direct service time for students. New positions were also added in Year 5 at Texas GEAR UP SG schools to support implementation, such as the Parent Liaison and Data Clerk positions. These new positions alleviated some of the workload from College Preparation Advisors and Coordinators.

Collaboration with community alliance partners continued to support implementation and promote sustainability of Texas GEAR UP SG activities and programs in Year 5. According to Texas GEAR UP SG staff members and community alliance staff members, the community alliance partners often collaborated on several key grant activities including, tutoring, mentoring, financial aid support services, test preparation, college visits, job site visits/job shadowing, and family events. The shared goals and collaboration encourages sustainability of grant activities beyond the grant funding. However, Texas GEAR UP SG staff members in one district noted that a caveat to successful collaboration was duplicative services offered by both community alliance partners and Texas GEAR UP SG. Because students were provided with similar services, some Texas GEAR UP SG staff found it difficult to accurately portray the services received by students in GUIDES, which made it difficult to measure progress towards Texas GEAR UP SG goals. Open communication between organizations may strengthen and build relationships and alleviate this issue to allow for successful collaboration.

E.1.3 Parental Engagement

Parental engagement with Texas GEAR UP SG continued to be low in most districts, but with the help of newly hired Parent Liaisons and Support Center's Family Engagement Trainer, Texas GEAR UP SG staff members reported that progress was made to increase parent engagement in Year 5.[124] The Parent Liaisons (often parents themselves) improved the

[124] The Family Engagement Trainer was hired by the Support Center to work with all four Texas GEAR UP SG districts on strategies to engage parents.

consistency and increased the number of parent events such as meetings, college visits, and personal phone calls. One district used social media to promote parent and family events. Continued efforts to engage parents in smaller group settings and at events they already attend (such as athletic events) may promote even more parental engagement in Year 6.

E.2 Case Study: District 1

E.2.1 Summary of Site Visit Findings

OVERVIEW

As part of the Year 5 Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation, ICF evaluators visited one District 1 high school in both fall 2016 and spring 2017. This case study provides a detailed description of the Texas GEAR UP SG implementation during this time (cohort in Grade 11). During both the fall and the spring site visits, the evaluation team conducted interviews and focus group discussions with Texas GEAR UP SG staff, teachers, parents, students, and school administrators (see Figure E.1 for a detailed participant list). This section of the report provides information about the Texas GEAR UP SG activities in District 1 during summer 2016 and during the 2016–17 school year, themes that emerged during the site visits in this district, challenges encountered, and future plans for the Texas GEAR UP SG within the district.

Figure E.1. District 1 Focus Group and Interview Participants

- Fall 2016 focus groups included:
  - 4 students
  - 6 parents
  - 4 school counselors
  - 3 school administrators
  - 5 Texas GEAR UP SG staff members
  - 3 teachers
- Fall 2016 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - College Preparation Advisor
  - Instructional Coach
- Spring 2017 focus groups included:
  - 6 students
  - 4 parents
  - 4 teachers
  - 2 Texas GEAR UP SG staff members
  - 4 community alliance partners
- Spring 2017 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - College Preparation Advisor
  - School administrator

CHANGES FROM YEAR 4

In Year 4, one individual held both the Parent Liaison and Data Clerk positions and split their time for both positions. In the beginning of Year 5, District 1 hired an individual fully devoted to parent engagement as the Parent Liaison in fall 2016, and the person who was previously both the Parent Liaison and Data Clerk became the full-time Data Clerk. According to the College Preparation Advisor the two separate positions alleviated much of the workload that previously fell upon the College Preparation Advisor and the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator, when increased parent engagement and expedited data shared and reported. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, “I feel we’re getting better and better in communication and getting to learn each other and getting to know each other.”

As discussed in the Year 4 Annual Implementation Report (Spinney et al., 2018), District 1 was in the final stages to open an early college high school (ECHS) to begin serving students in Year 5. The ECHS allows the district to provide enrolled students the opportunity to earn up to 60 hours of college credit through dual credit classes at the high school. The structure of the ECHS program requires that students begin in Grade 9; however, students in other grades would continue to have opportunities to participate in dual credit courses at the high school. According to a school administrator, the ECHS is a tool to sustain advanced course enrollment and rigor. While the ECHS has provided opportunities for more students to earn college credit

before high school graduation, the administrator also noted that it provides students the opportunity to experience the academic challenges they will likely face when they begin their college career. Additionally, this new initiative has already strengthened the college-going culture, which is a benefit to follow-on cohorts and will promote sustainability of postsecondary education readiness and awareness in the district.

DESCRIPTION OF YEAR 5 IMPLEMENTATION (2016–17)

College Visits, Job Site Visits, and Job Shadowing Activities

Texas GEAR UP SG staff noted the importance of college site visits in postsecondary readiness among the cohort as the trips provide a clear depiction of college life, culture, and academic setting. In Year 5, college visits expanded beyond college tours to include meet-ups with students and professors as well as opportunities to attend college lectures. According to some students from the site visit, these new activities helped students continue to narrow the list of postsecondary options they will consider and the factors they consider, such as class size, programs offered, and overall comfortability.

According to some students who were undecided in what they would like to study in college, job site visits, and shadow activities, and college visits, helped cohort students determine postsecondary plans as it provided them the opportunity to learn about the daily responsibilities of their desired career, as well as ask professionals any questions they may have. Students reported that they discussed a desire to participate in or coordinate job site visits or shadow activities with the Coordinator or the College Preparation Advisor. In some cases, the discussion led to opportunities to shadow a professional in their interested career field. According to the Coordinator, many of the contacts and plans made for job site visits and shadow activities stemmed from their ability to leverage resources, both personal and professional, in various areas of the community, including a local university, district community alliances, and district staff. When students discussed their decision to participate in a job shadow opportunity related to their field of interest or endorsement, some reported that the job shadow helped them determine what they want to study in college. A student said, “I thought I wanted to be a social worker, so I job shadowed somebody that does the job and I don’t want to be [in that field] now, so it helped me figure out where I want to be.”

Endorsements and Progress towards High School Graduation

Experiences varied across students who reported they changed their endorsement. Some students noted that they would be required to take more or fewer classes in a specific subject (e.g., mathematics classes) if they wished to change their endorsement, which sometimes required them to enroll in more courses in a subject than anticipated the following school year. Other students reported that they only had to switch one class when they changed their endorsement, which did not impact their schedule for the following school year. Students who wanted to change their endorsement noted that they visited, or planned to visit, their counselor to do so. Students reported that a successful change in endorsement depended on their graduation track and whether or not they would be able to graduate with the new endorsement criteria. If these requirements were not possible to meet, students reported that they were not permitted to change their endorsement. Administrators in District 1 noted that counselors normally limit their work with the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students since the Texas GEAR UP SG staff work exclusively with the Grade 11 cohort, but because endorsements are

considered part of the high school graduation process, counselors must be consulted on this topic and not the Texas GEAR UP SG staff.

Community Alliances

District 1 worked with various community alliances in Year 5, particularly on the high school campus. On the high school campus, Texas GEAR UP SG staff discussed collaborations with community alliance programs that provide tutoring, mentoring, and financial support or services in the form of one-on-one advising and assistance in scholarships and financial aid applications by respective staff. The relationship between the Texas GEAR UP SG staff and community alliance staff on campus was described as amicable and mutually beneficial by both the Texas GEAR UP SG team and the community alliance teams on the high school campus. According to one community alliance member, "I'm in the office with [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] so we work close. We do a lot of support for them as well as they do a lot of support for us." It was noted by one community alliance representative in the focus group that the organizations on campus help one another plan and execute family events and tutoring for students as well as administer test preparation events/activities for AP and college entrance assessments.

Postsecondary Education Readiness Assessment

It was reported by students, and confirmed by multiple Texas GEAR UP SG staff members that Texas GEAR UP SG students were given the opportunity to take the SAT and ACT in the spring semester of Year 5. The SAT was administered on a designated SAT School Day in March 2017. The Coordinator, College Preparation Advisor, and school counselors registered all cohort students for the SAT School Day. Additionally, the Texas GEAR UP SG team provided snacks for students and helped to proctor the SAT. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, a majority of the cohort students participated in the SAT School Day. Students were also able to participate in the ACT on a Saturday, according to the Coordinator.

Students continued to participate in the TSIA in the spring semester of Year 5 as they did in the fall semester, which was paid for by Texas GEAR UP SG funds. Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported various sources of test preparation for students. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, approximately 40 students took the TSIA at this time, some of which were first-time takers and others retook sections they previously failed. Texas GEAR UP SG staff planned to hold a TSIA testing day in summer 2017 to increase TSIA completion and pass rates among these students.

Test preparation sessions for students were organized and implemented by the Texas GEAR UP SG team. These sessions included weekend boot camps and workbooks that provided practice questions and test-taking strategies. Some students noted online test preparation activities that were offered through College Board and Edgenuity, which allowed them to take practice SAT questions and identify their strengths and weaknesses through what the Coordinator labeled as diagnostic testing.[125] All students from the site visit who acknowledged participation in test preparation believed that it helped them do better on the test and that it was beneficial. According to the students, these test preparation opportunities were advertised via fliers and paper catalogs provided by the Coordinator. A parent noted that test preparation

[125] Edgenuity is a company that provides various online tools and resources that help educators create personalized instruction and engagement for students. More information can be found at https://www.edgenuity.com/.

activities were also available and facilitated by a different campus program via a mobile app. Despite the various test preparation activities offered to students, one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member noted her surprise "by the amount of students that just didn't care and slept through" the test.

Parent Engagement

The new Parent Liaison is also the parent of a cohort student and was able to leverage her status to increase credibility among other parents. The Parent Liaison engaged with parents at school football games, Texas GEAR UP SG parent meetings, on Texas GEAR UP SG college visits, and via personal phone calls. The Parent Liaison began a new initiative in Year 5 known as Parent University. This was an outreach program that tracked parent attendance and engagement with Texas GEAR UP SG activities. For every activity participated in, parents were awarded points; those with enough points "graduated" from Parent University. A GEAR UP staff member said, "I believe this program has made it where it gives them something to look forward to, not just your kid going to college, but some of them didn't graduate."

District 1 continued to offer activities for parents to promote postsecondary education readiness and access. Activities such as financial aid workshops, holiday social events, back-to-school nights, and college trips were all well-received by parents who participated in site visits, both in content and delivery. According to one parent, the Texas GEAR UP SG team has improved parent outreach and said, "They started doing emails and they started doing texts and Facebook…so it's just gotten better. They've done more things as each year goes along; they do a little bit more to have more meetings."

Parents expressed interest in future events that focus on soft skills and college lifestyle preparation for students. Some parents in the site visit focus groups expressed concern with their children who will be first-generation college students and the lack of personal responsibility as well as inexperience with time management. Although parents continue to be concerned about these issues, the Texas GEAR UP SG staff hosted parent workshops that incorporate these topics and how to handle those scenarios with their child. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "We put real life scenarios in there…we talk[ed] about time management."

Teacher Support, Professional Development (PD), and Vertical Teaming

According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, various PD opportunities were offered in Year 5 for teachers, including mentorship training, Google Classroom training led by the Texas GEAR UP SG Educator Outreach Coach, and workshops at the Texas GEAR UP SG state conference.[126, 127] Teachers from the site visit generally were not able to differentiate PD offered through the school, district, or Texas GEAR UP SG; however, their familiarity with the Texas GEAR UP SG Educator Outreach Coach's instruction-based PD (e.g., differentiated instruction, voice-and-choice, technology, online comic boards) was well known, associated with Texas GEAR UP SG, and was reported to be well received by all teachers. In addition to PD, it was noted by some teachers who participated in the site visit focus group that supplies (i.e. books,

[126] Google Classroom is a platform used by schools to encourage a paperless educational system.
[127] The Educator Outreach Coach was hired by the Support Center to service all four Texas GEAR UP SG districts with professional development.

tutors) provided by Texas GEAR UP SG were valuable additions to curriculum implementation in their classrooms.

According to the teachers from the site visit, no formal vertical teaming session conversations were facilitated in Year 5 by the district or school as a result of Texas GEAR UP SG. However, according to one school faculty member, vertical teaming meetings did formally take place in the form of planning periods and lectures about data collaboration, instructional planning, and in-class strategies to enhance student learning. Some teachers noted that informal vertical teaming discussions occurred during their common planning periods. English Language Arts teachers who participated in the site visits reported that they conducted informal vertical teaming with middle school teachers, but content area teachers in all other subjects indicated that this was not the case. One teacher's description noted, "While the district has gone through phases where we've spent a lot of time on vertical alignment, we haven't done much of that [here]."

Dual Credit and Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

As reported in previous years, an administrator recognized the increase in Grade 11 students enrolled in AP and other advanced courses in Year 5 as well as the increase in the number of students academically unprepared to be enrolled in these courses. In many cases, as reported by some teachers during the site visit, the increased enrollment in pre-AP and AP classes forced teachers to lower the academic rigor of the curriculum. A teacher reported, "I don't think pre-AP is true pre-AP…Most of our APs I think do what AP strategies requires but I still don't think the rigor is quite there." In spring 2017 the topic of academic rigor in pre-AP and AP courses was not as prevalent among Texas GEAR UP SG staff or faculty; they instead focused efforts on TSIA completion and passage to increase students' eligibility for dual-credit courses. This shift, according to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, is due to the low number of students who passed the TSIA, whether it be in sections or the whole test. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "That's what I'm afraid of, our TSI[A], completing all three areas. And dual credit, enrolling them more into dual-credit classes."

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

SAT/ACT Student Success and Completion

Due to the perceived lack of readiness among students, the Texas GEAR UP SG team decided to postpone the SAT School Day from fall 2016 to spring 2017. The Texas GEAR UP SG team expressed concern over the students' lack of perceived effort to prepare and succeed in the assessment. Additionally, according to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, students were unable to attend the Saturday ACT assessment offered in spring 2017 because, "There were some that were working, couldn't get off, they forgot, and there were some that had sporting events…And some just didn't want to wake up early and come." Additionally, it was reported by some Texas GEAR UP SG staff that students are poor test takers, and are "fearful of failing, not receiving the scores they want."

Tutoring

The Texas GEAR UP SG team reported that tutoring for cohort students was coordinated in Year 5 by instructional coaches; they worked with teachers to schedule sessions with students from the local university who served as tutors. Some teachers acknowledged the tutoring as helpful, but overall teachers reported that the tutoring did not have a large impact because the

tutors were not qualified in terms of the curriculum or content of the class, which was confirmed by tutors when they reported in the fall 2016 focus group that the subject in which they tutor students isn't the subject that they are majoring in in college. Teachers were more concerned by the lack of tutor content knowledge in the fall, but in the spring it seemed to be a matter of communication. A teacher stated in spring 2017, in regard to their tutor experience, "I would have liked to have had more input…so maybe even me not having input just me having forewarning so I would know it's coming." Furthermore, some teachers opposed in-class tutoring because they felt it took away from class time and they were hesitant to trust tutors' content knowledge, based on previous experiences with Texas GEAR UP SG tutors from.

FUTURE PLANS

Parent Engagement

One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member discussed plans to conduct parent events during school athletic events and to broaden reach by collaborating with additional community organizations (e.g., churches, feeder school staff, etc.). Other on-campus community alliance representatives mentioned they plan to continue to collaborate with the Texas GEAR UP SG team, and vice versa, on tasks including parent outreach and providing financial aid and college readiness support.

Financial Aid Completion and Readiness

The Texas GEAR UP SG team reported planned efforts to prepare students and their families for financial aid applications, particularly the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA). These efforts will include creating Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID accounts for students and parents, as well as continuing to review information in one-on-one advising sessions (e.g., due dates, tax information, etc.) It was reported by a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member that FAFSA and Pell grants will be discussed in these one-on-one advising sessions with students, as well as other loan and scholarship information. One obstacle noted by a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member in planning for submission of FAFSAs in fall 2017, was the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Data Retrieval Tool, which was not functioning at the time of the spring 2017 site visits. Texas GEAR UP SG staff noted the potential impact on timely submission of FAFSAs and the potential eligibility of some students based on their FAFSA completion.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Texas GEAR UP SG staff were satisfied with the one-on-one advising opportunities students received and said that a major focus for Year 6 will be to continue to offer student support services, such mentoring and job shadowing opportunities, related to financial aid, test preparation, and tutoring to support college academic readiness. According to the Texas GEAR UP SG team parent engagement and outreach efforts will continue to use the best practices gleaned from the Parent Liaison.

E.3 Case Study: District 2

E.3.1 Summary of Site Visit Findings

OVERVIEW

As part of the Year 4 Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation, ICF evaluators visited two District 2 high schools in both fall 2016 and spring 2017. This case study provides a detailed description of the Texas GEAR UP SG implementation during this time. During both the fall and the spring site visits, the evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups with Texas GEAR UP SG staff, teachers, parents, cohort (Grade 11) students, school administrators, and campus alliances (see Figure E.2 for a detailed participant list). This section of the report provides information about the Texas GEAR UP SG activities in District 2 during summer 2016 and during the 2016–17 school year, themes that emerged during the site visits, challenges encountered, and plans for the Texas GEAR UP SG within the district.

Figure E.2. District 2 Focus Group and Interview Participants

- Fall 2016 focus groups included:
  - 7 students
  - 7 teachers
  - 2 College Preparation Advisors
- Fall 2016 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - 2 school counselors
  - Other school staff member
- Spring 2017 focus groups included:
  - 5 teachers
  - 9 students
  - 2 parents
  - 2 Texas GEAR UP SG staff members
- Spring 2017 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - 3 College Preparation Advisors
  - 2 school administrators
  - 1 community alliance staff

CHANGES FROM YEAR 4

In Year 5, District 2 hired a new Director of Federal Grants. Additionally, the Texas GEAR UP SG team hired an individual who worked part-time as the Data Clerk and part-time as the Parent Liaison during the fall 2016 semester. In spring 2017, the Texas GEAR UP SG team hired a full-time Parent Liaison and moved the part-time Data Clerk to full-time data-oriented tasks. One high school in the district hired the third principal in three years two weeks prior to the site visit in fall 2016.

DESCRIPTION OF YEAR 5 IMPLEMENATION (2016–17)

College Visits and Visibility

College visits in terms of the content of the trips as well as the level of engagement among students during the activities in Year 5 were reported to have been successful. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member on college visits, “I would say we’ve done a decent amount…I’m just guessing 10 trips for that particular institution.” Individual college visits varied in some of the types of activities offered, but included discussions with faculty and students, tours of various department buildings, and participation in a “virtual” audio tour. According to one student participant in the focus group, “It was fun, we got to see different things, and how college students go to school.” In addition to traditional college visits, college culture was

introduced in new ways to the Texas GEAR UP SG students in Year 5. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff described a small scale college fair that was held in a cafeteria on a high school campus. The event included fraternity and sorority college students from historically black colleges who spoke about extracurricular activities and civic involvement.

According to some Texas GEAR UP SG staff, views differed between the high school administration and Texas GEAR UP SG staff on the importance of college visits. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member said, “The academic dean at the [school] says if they’re failing they shouldn’t be going on a field trip which completely defeats the purpose of what we’re trying to do here.”

Advanced Enrollment and Dual Credit

Perspectives on advanced course enrollment and dual-credit also differed across Texas GEAR UP SG staff, students, and administrators. According to one school administrator, “I think we have the capacity [for higher advanced enrollment] but the hard part is if [students] want or can do…I have yet to figure out why they don’t want to do that piece. They’d rather do the regular classes, it’s like they’re afraid of the risk or challenge.” Students who participated in the site visit focus groups, however, seemed to be interested in the opportunity to enroll in the courses; one student remarked, “It’s cool because we’re taking college classes at the same time and if you pass all of them then you…graduate high school with an associate’s [degree].” Texas GEAR UP SG staff also seemed confident in the students’ ability to understand the purpose of advanced enrollment and dual-credit opportunities as well as their capacity to make informed decisions about enrolling in these course. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member described her discussions with students on the matter: “We've had a lot of different people have different opinions about which is better, but I just like to give the facts…So new kids who are trying to get in I make sure I have that conversation with them.” The high ratio of students compared to the small number of Pre-AP/AP courses offered was a challenged noted by some teachers in Year 5 as well. According to one focus group of teachers, “It's one thing that we see the school is too huge. There are too many students, less number of AP [courses] with respect to the number of students we have.” In some instances, teachers in the focus group reported over 30 students in one class.

Postsecondary Education Readiness Assessment

In Year 5, students were provided the opportunity to participate in test preparation activities prior to the SAT and ACT. Test preparation activities included online resources via Khan Academy that offered practice questions, test preparation binders that contained registration information, an SAT test preparation class held on Saturdays, and an SAT test booklet. Despite the variety of resources, it was noted by Texas GEAR UP SG staff that the test preparation activities were not at full capacity and did not make the positive impact on students’ scores. Furthermore, the perception of what constituted actual test preparation varied by individual and led to a variety of discussions on whether or not test preparation was actually offered. Perceived test preparation ineffectiveness stemmed from instructor capacity as well as students’ lack of initiative to participate. According to Texas GEAR UP SG staff, the district paid for professional development for teachers on test preparation activities for students, but one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member reported, “Some of the teachers were trained in January and were expected to do a certain amount of hours…and unfortunately students aren’t showing up … so teachers are getting defeated…” Parents who participated in the site visit parent focus group also recalled

that teachers offered SAT test preparation instruction to students during lunch. Teachers who participated in focus groups were not aware of the test preparation administered by other teachers; one teacher remarked in a focus group about their participation in preparation "Not really, we've provided them calculators…But specifically ACT or SAT [test preparation], no."

The College Preparation Advisors noted that they were trained by the Support Center to administer test preparation as well, but they were limited to teaching SAT test-taking strategies and not the content being tested. The inconsistency of test preparation activities offered, limited information provided by the Support Center trainers to Texas GEAR UP SG staff, and the low levels of student participation led some individuals to believe that SAT scores were negatively impacted. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "It's hard and they didn't prepare enough and they wish we had sessions. That's something that's been very frustrating for me and [other colleagues] is that there hasn't been any prep for no good reason. There's no reason somebody can tell me that we couldn't have prep." Some students reported they did not spend as much time to prepare as they could have. One student mentioned, "I read through the packet that was given to me by [the College Preparation Advisor] and did practice questions online, but I only did that for two days. I should've studied a whole week before I took the test." According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "A lot of the feedback I've gotten is they felt a lot more comfortable with the ACT than the SAT because we just had an April ACT date and a March SAT [date]. So I had a lot of feedback of 'Oh the ACT felt so much more simple and straightforward'."

Teacher Professional Development and Vertical Teaming

Teacher professional development is offered at the school and district as well as through the Texas GEAR UP SG. According to a school administrator, "The district provides professional development two days out of the month. And teachers are supposed to register and go to those different professional development trainings that are offered. That's district-wide but we also have it at our school." School administrators also described Challenge Day, a multi-day PD event provided through Texas GEAR UP SG funds, as "a week of team-building between students and teachers within the school," to foster relationships and improve the negative school culture. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member elaborated by saying: "We did four days of Challenge Day; it's like group therapy basically. You stick 100 kids and 5 adults in a room for a day, and they break them down and build them back up and we all realize we have stuff inside that we have to deal with it." Though school administrators were not familiar with any Texas GEAR UP SG sponsored PD, they were familiar with Challenge Day. Some teachers in the site visit focus group were aware of the Support Center Educator Outreach Coach, but did not recall any type of interaction.

Vertical teaming among teachers across grades and departments was not reported by teachers to be a formal process, but rather informal and irregular. As one teacher described it, "When we see other teachers at the middle school…for professional development, I always ask 'what topic are you guys studying' but it's nothing really concrete." Additionally, teachers in the focus group agreed that "it would be helpful if we could speak with the teachers of incoming students who are going to be juniors next year." School administrators, however, reported that vertical teaming activities take place at the grade level, which may potentially indicate some confusion

or varying perception about the term vertical teaming between teachers and administrators in the district.[128]

Community Alliances

Texas GEAR UP SG staff remarked that other on-campus organizations were helpful when activities for students and parents were implemented and coordinated, particularly if the on-campus organization and Texas GEAR UP SG shared the same goal. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "We work very closely with the college access partners in the library and we work [really closely] with the college and career readiness director." Activities that Texas GEAR UP SG conducted with other organizations include financial aid workshops, parent nights, college and career fairs, and other large events. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member said, "These next two weeks we're doing a series of workshops in the classroom so it's eight different days that we're going to be in class [covering] different subjects. We're going to help them complete the Apply Texas and the FSA ID's…There's only three of us, we need more help, partners." Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff said they would like to share more data between the organizations on campus to improve the accuracy of reported activities and students who received services in Year 6. One individual mentioned, "Something we've attempted to do, but it's above my level of collaboration is gathering their data…because they are providing these services…. So that's a lot valuable data we're losing in terms of which students are being serviced and in what ways."

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Administration Turnover

According to both Texas GEAR UP SG staff and faculty, turnover among administrators has taken a toll on morale and has contributed to the lack of a clear objective within the district community. One teacher stated: "I know the big challenge here at my school is lack of leadership. This is my third year here and this is the third principal that we've had. Next year will be the fourth principal so there's really a big void in our leadership here at the school and it's impacting the whole campus." The administration turnover has also implicated the efforts of the Texas GEAR UP SG to gain buy-in, with one staff member stating: "They don't mean to be resistant but, it's [Texas GEAR UP SG implementation] one more thing on their plate that they don't necessarily want to deal with."

Communication and Grant Spending

Texas GEAR UP SG staff noted difficulties in effectively communicating with the district and vice versa, particularly because of the staffing structure in place where the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator serves as a liaison between the district and the rest of the Texas GEAR UP SG staff. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member said, "Because of the lack of communication and organization, those meetings could sometimes be very frustrating." Another staff member mentioned, "Maybe I have no choice but to assume, by the time the information gets to me…it seems like it comes from the top, which I don't know, it could be, it could not be." In addition to the miscommunication between the district and Texas GEAR UP SG team on planning and

[128] Vertical teaming is a strategy that allows schools to align instruction across grade levels, increase academic rigor, achieve sustainability, and ease the academic transition from middle school to high school and between grades.

facilitating events, Texas GEAR UP SG staff noted the inability to spend grant funds on some Texas GEAR UP SG activities. Texas GEAR UP SG staff were uncertain as to whether the restricted use of grant funds was because of the expenses were not permitted by the district or because district staff did not clearly communicate what they did or did not permit grant funds to be used for. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member said, "The big question in my mind and talking to some other folks, we've been wondering 'geez we have all this money but what can we spend it on?" An example that was brought up by Texas GEAR UP SG staff was the inability to purchase food for Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students while on a college visit earlier in the year.

Parent Engagement

In Year 5, as in previous years, parent engagement was a challenge for the Texas GEAR UP SG staff. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "Parental engagement numbers have not been all that great…When you're being pulled in different directions at random it ultimately does affect your work." One of the big factors that the Texas GEAR UP SG team feel is inhibiting parent participation is the transportation aspect. According to one administrator, "So transportation is an issue for parents to come here and there's no public transportation that comes here so they wouldn't be able to get on the bus to come here for parent nights or to go on a field trip with us to a college." Texas GEAR UP SG staff also recognized the efforts of the Support Center's Family Engagement Trainer. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member reported that they discussed different parent outreach strategies, ideas for activities during monthly meetings, and parent engagement training with the Support Center Family Engagement Trainer. The importance of hosting events focused on financial aid awareness and preparation were seen by Texas GEAR UP SG staff to be critical as students, and their families, prepare for their postsecondary plans. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member: "We want to make sure we do the FAFSA money [events] on Saturdays. We bring in partners from the community who know how to do this kind of work, maybe bring in a tax company who will do some for free." Parents in the focus group specifically cited parent nights earlier in the year that involved assistance from Texas GEAR UP SG to create FSA profiles as an event that helped them and their children plan for postsecondary education.

FUTURE PLANS

Parent Outreach

Texas GEAR UP SG staff noted that new goals were set by the district to emphasize parent outreach, including one 15 minute phone call with each cohort parent during the school year. Specifically, one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member mentioned, "We're supposed to split up the cohort and contact a parent. We haven't met our numbers so they want us to split the cohort between the whole [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] group and contact each parent to follow up with them." Topics such as grades, attendance, and parents' goals are to be discussed on these phone calls. Texas GEAR UP SG staff expected this new task to be challenging as they recognized parents to be either busy with work or unavailable to talk during the daytime hours.

Student Advising

Texas GEAR UP SG staff, particularly the College Preparation Advisors, noted their plans to focus more on specific individual postsecondary plans and readiness during student advising sessions in Year 6. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member said, "My goal as an advisor next

year is to have each one of my [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] students walk away with a concrete plan for their future. It's something we've been planning on doing, this is why I'm planning on doing it." Part of this future student advising includes a stronger focus on tailored information to individual students on various postsecondary education options, like for four-year colleges, community colleges, as well as vocational and trade school, instead of general and less-specific information provided in previous years.

CONCLUSION

Overall, Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported the communication structure with the district to be difficult to work around, and in many cases hindered their ability to execute implementation of the grant in terms of student activities and college visits. Additionally, district personnel implemented more stringent policies regarding the use of grant funds, which were unclear to Texas GEAR UP SG staff. As noted by some Texas GEAR UP SG staff, the lack of clarity on how to spend grant funds hindered the effectiveness of Texas GEAR UP sponsored events, particularly college visits. Additionally, SAT test preparation activities, although offered, did not facilitate the impact on students' performance that was desired. Parent engagement has continued to be a challenge due to the lack of sufficient available transportation.

E.4 Case Study: District 3

E.4.1 Summary of Site Visit Findings

OVERVIEW

ICF evaluators visited one District 3 high school in fall 2016 and spring 2017 as part of the Year 5 Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation. This case study provides a detailed description of the Texas GEAR UP SG implementation during this time. During each of these site visits, the evaluation team conducted interviews and focus groups with Texas GEAR UP SG staff, teachers, parents, students, and a school administrator (see Figure E.3 for detailed participant list). This section of the report provides information about the Texas GEAR UP SG activities in District 3 during summer 2016 and during the 2016–17 school year, themes that emerged during the site, challenges encountered, and future plans for the Texas GEAR UP SG in the district.

Figure E.3. District 3 Focus Group and Interview Participants

- Fall 2016 focus groups included:
  - 7 students
  - 7 parents
  - 10 teachers
  - 3 Texas GEAR UP SG staff members
  - 3 counselors
  - 3 community alliances
- Fall 2016 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - College Preparation Advisor
  - School administrator
- Spring 2017 focus groups included:
  - 8 students
  - 4 parents
  - 4 teachers
  - 3 Texas GEAR UP SG staff members
  - 4 community alliances
- Spring 2017 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - College Preparation Advisor
  - School administrator

CHANGES FROM YEAR 4

Similar to Year 4, the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator position saw another transition in the beginning of the spring 2017 semester in January. Many Texas GEAR UP SG staff and school administrators were optimistic about hiring the new Coordinator as the turnover for the position was frequent in previous years and ultimately led to having to retrain and learn new routines in implementing the Texas GEAR UP SG. Some Texas GEAR UP SG staff noted the transition between the previous Coordinator and the new one hired in spring 2017 was difficult. According to one parent, “I’m hoping that [the Coordinator] will come in and just pick it up and let’s run with the ball again,” referring to the transition period between hiring a new Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator. Additionally, a new associate superintendent in the district was also hired during the same period.

DESCRIPTION OF YEAR 5 IMPLEMENTATION (2016–17)

College Visits and Job Site Visits

College visits continued to be a staple activity implemented by the Texas GEAR UP SG team in Year 5. Unlike past years, it was reported by some Texas GEAR UP SG staff that the college visit selection process became more strategic as this year the visits focused on choosing the colleges visited based on geographical distance and student interest. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, “We only repeated one [college visit] from last year…so we’ve been trying to increase our selectivity and our range of schools in terms of how far they are.”

Restrictions on how long students can ride on a school bus has influenced the Texas GEAR UP SG team to hire charter buses for college visits since they are not subject to the time limitations imposed on local school buses. As reported by a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, each college visit included a lead chaperone, often parents or Texas GEAR UP SG staff. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member described parent involvement in one college site visit as, "I had two parents…go to the trip. They were very engaged. They liked it and were asking good questions and that was the experience we had, almost a full bus so it was good." Another Texas GEAR UP SG staff member reported that college site visit activities included an admissions presentation by a representative at the college, tours of the student dormitories, a campus tour, participation in a class lecture, and a financial aid presentation. However, some Texas GEAR UP SG staff indicated that the college visits were not as successful as in previous years; one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member said that, "they [students] don't want to go, so this year the trips are open for other grades because we don't have enough students to go on those field trips." In addition to college visits, job site visits were viewed by some individuals from on-campus community alliances as a helpful tool in identifying, reaffirming, or challenging a student's career choice. According to one on-campus community alliance member, their organization and the Texas GEAR UP SG team collaborated in planning job site visits. Citing one example, a community alliance member recalled, "Recently we took a trip to [a local hospital] … where a student was set on being a social worker…We walked into [the local hospital] and walked into NICU and she's like 'never mind I don't want to do this.'"

Community Alliances

Generally, both the on-campus community alliance organizations and Texas GEAR UP SG staff reported a good working relationship and worked to reach shared goals of one-on-one advising and student preparation for postsecondary education. In spring 2017, a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member discussed past duplicative efforts to plan college trips, conduct student advising sessions, and implement similar events. Other Texas GEAR UP SG staff described the on-campus community alliances as helpful partners when they planned and prepared for events, and exchanged student information. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "We do exchange scholarship information or trip information or event information regularly." This level of communication was seen as helpful by some Texas GEAR UP SG staff to meet benchmarks, but other team members noted that it was difficult in collect data from some community alliances; in some cases this affected progress towards Texas GEAR UP SG goal detailed in GUIDES.

Postsecondary Education Readiness Assessment

In preparation for the SAT and ACT, the Texas GEAR UP SG team offered various test preparation activities to support student readiness. These activities included out-of-school classes offered on the weekend, practice tests both in booklets and online via Khan Academy, online resources including EduGuide and Naviance, and other paper materials handed out by the College Preparation Advisor.[129,130] In particular, one student noted that they used the Khan

[129] According to http://www.eduguide.org/, EduGuide provides tools to schools, colleges, and groups developed to raise student achievement.

[130] Naviance provides consulting services, professional development, and a curriculum meant to help students develop soft skills and critical thinking skills to help prepare them for college. See http://www.naviance.com/ for additional information.

Academy, “Because you can study on your own time here at school and just study, it helps you out.” At the time of the spring 2017 site visits, the SAT scores were not fully known, but when asked about whether students were prepared for postsecondary education and assessment, one teacher said in regards to AP test results, “I think their AP scores are going to be much higher. We’ll see that group [Texas GEAR UP SG cohort] far exceed the others but that...funding from [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] really, really helped.””

According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, the College Preparation Advisor registered over 200 the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students for the SAT on SAT School Day on March 1st, but 60 students did not show up according to the College Preparation Advisor. At the time of the spring site visit, the College Preparation Advisor planned to register the Texas GEAR UP SG cohort students for the May and June SAT, as well as the June ACT. Of the students that participated in the focus groups, most understood what SAT and ACT scores were needed to be accepted into the colleges they were considering, with one student saying, “I remember when talking to [Texas GEAR UP SG staff member] he gave me this graph and it showed the names of all the colleges and the price range and also showing how you need these scores, the SAT and ACT in order for admission.” Additionally, there was an equal split in the spring 2017 student focus group between those students that found the SAT to be difficult and those that found it to be easy.

Parent Engagement

According to a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, no new outreach activities took place in Year 5. The Parent Liaison determined outreach strategies based on her experience as a parent. She said, “This is what I would want as a parent; you try to make whatever you can to seek me out.” Despite the personal connection with Texas GEAR UP SG parents by the Parent Liaison, some parents during the site visits noted that they were not been comfortable showing up to events due to previous perceptions of the Texas GEAR UP SG team and the frequent staff turnover.

Teacher Support, Professional Development, and Vertical Teaming Activities

Teachers said that they received PD facilitated through the Texas GEAR UP SG grant during Year 5 from various sources and in different areas. According to one teacher, “The previous Coordinator was very vocal about what do you need, how can we help, what can we purchase, and she made it easy to do.” Most teachers were aware of the PD opportunities and classroom support provided to them by Texas GEAR UP SG. One teacher mentioned, “I think there’s quite a bit of money that is available through [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] for the cohort, especially for our school; it makes things possible that wouldn’t be.” Teachers highlighted Texas GEAR UP SG support that includes AP test preparation books, novels, and other miscellaneous classroom supplies. Some PD that teachers received, either through the Texas GEAR UP SG or through another source, were unique to their specific department or subject. For example, the Road Runner initiative, sponsored by a local college, provided English Language Arts teachers with tools to help students improve their reading and writing and raise student interest through inquiry-based learning. The SpringBoard book, provided through College Board, was part of a training that took place over two Saturdays and two to three school days.[131] This training was

[131] SpringBoard is a mathematics and English Language Arts instructional program that promotes engagement and learning for students in Grades 6 – 12. More information can be found at https://springboard.collegeboard.org/.

funded by Texas GEAR UP SG, and provided mathematics teachers with classroom implementation strategies to incorporate school goals in curriculum for each class. It was further noted by a teacher, that the "book really helps you because it helps them [students] to think about what they're learning and it makes our job a little easier so it prompts all [of] those organic questions." All teachers were, to varying degrees, familiar with the Texas GEAR UP SG Educator Outreach Coach through personal interaction in PD sessions or from other means of contact. Teachers reported that they participated in workshops led by Texas GEAR UP SG Educator Outreach Coach on classroom management, behavior management, and Google Classroom. However, this was not consistent across content areas; science teachers specifically said that they never worked with Educator Outreach Coach, usually due to schedule conflicts. According to one teacher, "I wanted to go to her Google Classroom workshop but it was a scheduling conflict for me."

Vertical alignment activities were acknowledged by most of the teachers in the focus groups as either as activities conducted in the past or planned to occur during Year 6. Teachers confirmed that vertical alignment activities were conducted by subject, and involved both the middle and high school. English Language Arts (ELA) teachers specifically cited the Road Runner initiative as a promotor of vertical alignment because it has been in the district for three years, starting in the lower grades and working its way up. According to one ELA teacher, "We've tried in the past to get vertical alignment in our department and our schools and it's fallen through. This is the first time it looks like it's going to be successful." Part of this potential success, as stated by the same teacher, stems from an efficient and organized master teacher, a position that is filled by one teacher in each subject department. Mathematics teachers reported that their department vertically aligned, all the way from Algebra I to Calculus. The science department, however, was not reported to be vertically aligned, with one science teacher saying, "I think it is needed, I honestly do think it is needed in science. I think it's something that's necessary for us…I would like for the middle school and high school to get a little more cohesive with science, especially with science."

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

Texas GEAR UP State Grant Team Turnover

The turnover within the Texas GEAR UP SG team, specifically the Coordinator and the district associate superintendent positions, was viewed by some Texas GEAR UP SG staff as a challenge to the implementation of the grant within the school. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "It's been a little challenging with the change as far as the Coordinator. That was a little challenging." Difficulties that ensued following the shifts in the Coordinator and associate superintendent positions were based on the new staff's time to learn about the Texas GEAR UP SG and build relationships with the counselors and advising team. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "So far our new Coordinator is learning the process… in conjunction with our associate superintendent, they're trying to merge the counseling team with the advising team and all the others involved to work in sync."

Parent Participation and Engagement

Texas GEAR UP SG staff held varying views on parent participation in grant-funded activities and events. Generally, parent engagement and outreach has been viewed as a challenge. For example, according to one community alliance member on Texas GEAR UP SG parent

outreach, the parent engagement levels are "not for a lack of effort. I think it's just on the parent side." Another community alliance member added that one of the potential reasons for this challenge is the small, tight-knit community, where "a lot of them are involved with their churches or their kids are in sports…We just try to navigate as well as we can with parental involvement." Some of the Texas GEAR UP SG staff members perceived parental engagement and understanding of grant goals as below its potential. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, parents did not completely absorb the information given to them, saying that "truthfully, no, maybe next year it's [the information] going to impact." This could possibly be because the students will be seniors and chronologically closer to college enrollment.

FUTURE PLANS

Student College Readiness and Selection

Texas GEAR UP SG staff specifically cited the need to address academic and soft skill gaps among the cohort as they enter Grade 12 and prepare for college. One of the means to achieve this goal will be collaboration with teachers to coordinate various workshops and class instruction activities to improve students' academic skills. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, Texas GEAR UP SG staff have already started to work with teachers to address this challenge; staff worked with the English department with the intent to help prepare students to write stronger essays. In addition, Texas GEAR UP SG staff members also noted their plans to use data to identify and track colleges of interest to students, students' college application progress, and FAFSA submissions. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "We're using the data to meet those goals and I feel that's going to help us a lot more."

CONCLUSION

Overall, Texas GEAR UP SG staff expressed concern about the turnover in the Coordinator and associate superintendent positions. Additionally, there were varying views on the grant implementation effectiveness due to the change in leadership. Among the Texas GEAR UP staff and students, college visits were, for the most part, seen as helpful for determining postsecondary plans. Among the Texas GEAR UP SG staff, and students reported college visits also being helpful. Parent engagement has continued to pose a challenge to Texas GEAR UP SG staff and other on-campus community alliances.

E.5 Case Study: District 4

E.5.1 Summary of Site Visit Findings

OVERVIEW

As part of the Year 5 Texas GEAR UP SG evaluation, ICF evaluators visited two District 4 high schools in both fall 2016 and spring 2017. This case study provides a detailed description of the Texas GEAR UP SG implementation during this time. The evaluation team conducted interviews with the Texas GEAR UP SG staff, teachers, community alliances, parents, students, and school administrators (see Figure E.4 for detailed participant list). This section of the report provides information about the Texas GEAR UP SG activities occurring during summer 2016 and during the 2016–17 school year, themes that emerged during the site visits in this district, challenges encountered, and future plans for the Texas GEAR UP SG in the district.

Figure E.4. District 4 Focus Group and Interview Participants

- Fall 2016 focus groups included:
  - 16 students
  - 3 parents
  - 9 teachers
  - 4 school counselors
- Fall 2016 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - Texas GEAR UP SG staff member
  - 3 high school administrators
  - 2 College Preparation Advisors
- Spring 2017 focus groups included:
  - 9 students
  - 7 parents
  - 5 teachers
  - 6 community alliance
- Spring 2017 interviews were conducted with:
  - Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator
  - 2 Texas GEAR UP SG staff members
  - 2 College Preparation Advisors
  - 3 high school administrators

CHANGES FROM YEAR 4

A College Preparation Advisor from Year 4 was hired as the Texas GEAR UP SG District Coordinator in Year 5 The new coordinator was well-liked by most site visit participants. According to an individual in one of the collaborator organizations that collaborated with Texas GEAR UP SG, the new Coordinator "had the most education [among the College Preparation Advisors] and similar levels of experience" as the previous Coordinator.

Other district staff changes included the anticipated retirement of the Director of Federal Grants. One Texas GEAR UP SG staff member discussed the importance of the position and said, "[the loss of the Director of Federal Grant Programs] is going to be the biggest challenge, especially for the next year" due to this person's involvement in planning for the grant and knowledge about the grant.

DESCRIPTION OF YEAR 5 IMPLEMENTATION (2016–17)

College Visits and Educational Field Trips

It was noted by a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member that the new Coordinator makes "a bigger effort, or more of an effort, to really make college visits more personable to our students so we don't go and get the traditional college tour that everybody gets. Or we get the traditional college tour plus a student panel, or we hear from a professor, or we hear from a specific department." This increased effort by the Texas GEAR UP SG staff to make college visits more informative

for students was also reiterated by students in the focus group. According to one student, "I think they're getting deeper into details because we're getting closer to that level. I feel like they explain a lot more things…they talk about the majors and where they're going to be in buildings, around the campus, and more stuff like that." College visits also included parents along with students, a new initiative in Year 5. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "This past Saturday we took a visit to [College] with our top 25% of students and we took parents. So that's one thing we haven't really done in the past. At least not successfully." In addition to college visits, one College Preparation Advisor described other educational field trips to various points of academic interest (e.g., art centers, libraries, etc.) that took place as a means of opening up new education and career paths for students to pursue.

Despite the perceived success among Texas GEAR UP SG staff and students of college visits and other educational field trips, some teachers at both schools expressed hesitation about the benefits of those visits given the missed classroom instruction. According to one teacher, "Again, all these field trips they go on, they're missing class and that's a big flaw." Some teachers, however, recognized the benefit of the college visits despite students missing classes. One teacher mentioned, "the negatives, yes, they do miss a lot of class. There are more positives, I've been to a few field trips. They just get exposed and come back with newer ideas to think outside the box." Changes could be made to better suit teachers, as one teacher said, "I think if you're going to do college trips, spacing them out would be better. Having two in one week is not good for the kids because then they're not in the classroom."

Postsecondary Education Readiness Assessment

Various test preparation activities for the SAT and ACT were offered to students at both high schools in the district. These activities included SAT after-school workshops and boot camps, online resources through Khan Academy, and various practice tests and questions. The afterschool workshops and boot camps, as described by a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "took place six to eight weeks prior to the SAT School Day, with around 10 students total." In the student focus groups, many students found value in these supports, particularly the preparation activity that focused on test-taking strategies; students said "[instructor] went over some math problems and had us easily solve them without doing all the other [calculations]…like on the no calculator part, it helped out on that part." More students, however, participated in other test preparation activities, particularly Khan Academy. According to many students in both schools' focus groups, they were able to access the resources via their cell phones as well as on a computer. Although many students in the student focus groups found the test preparation activities helpful, one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member observed, "I think they restrain themselves from putting themselves in positions where they're outside of their comfort zone."

Generally, the Texas GEAR UP SG staff were satisfied with the student turnout of the first SAT School Day; according to a College Preparation Advisor at one school, "All the students participated in the SAT School Day." It was expected by the Texas GEAR UP SG staff that all students would take the SAT twice—the spring 2017 SAT School Day and the fall 2017 SAT School Day. An administrator mentioned that the SAT School Day initiative will be sustained after Texas GEAR UP SG, as well as the TSIA testing.

Parent Engagement

Texas GEAR UP SG staff described an overall improvement since Year 4 in parent engagement. More consistent event times as well as school Parent Liaisons helped to facilitate

this improvement. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, “I’d say it’s improved…I think it’s been more consistent.” The consistent parent meetings and activities during the week and on the weekends has helped bring in new parents at each event, according to a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member. In addition to more consistent parent events, an administrator said their school’s Parent Liaison “worked with us to have a more involvement and get to know the parents more…It’s repeating the successes and coming up with new ideas for the future.” according to an administrator. According to Texas GEAR UP SG staff, “parent meetings are an hour and a half, with three sessions of 20 minutes, plus an introduction and closing period.”

It was noted by Texas GEAR UP SG staff that parents were most receptive to social media postings about upcoming parent events and other information that were offered at the parent events. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, “Some parents are on Facebook so some parents hear [about parent events] through that.” Information on parent events is also presented in varying ways, whether it be from the Texas GEAR UP SG staff directly, alumni from that district, or guest speakers associated with community alliances. The information is also translated into Spanish during the parent nights, which was reported by one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member as an asset to outreach efforts for Spanish speaking parents.

Teacher Professional Development and Vertical Teaming

Generally, most of the teachers were aware of professional development opportunities or resources that were paid for by Texas GEAR UP SG, however, only some of those teachers reported attending. Some of the professional development activities came from College Board, out-of-state conferences, the Support Center, and guest speakers hired through the district. One teacher recalled one of the conferences, saying, “We went to Houston last month for an AP conference. I really didn’t know what to expect. I thought it was going to be training and I get there and we’re listening to best practices from different people…So I know that was through [Texas] GEAR UP [SG].” According to one teacher, “The only support I know is for resources. I’ve been able to purchase some materials through [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] money like books and stuff.” Some teachers recalled the trainings that they did attend, most notably through College Board.

The Educator Outreach Coach was viewed as very helpful by one teacher who explained, “I loved all the resources that we were provided with from [Educator Outreach Coach] …It was really eye opening.” One administrator continued to add that, “The PBL training has been good for teachers and [Educator Outreach Coach] coming in and training with them, that’s one of our [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] initiatives as well.” Some teachers noted that the professional development lessons were, however, nearly impossible to implement in the classroom due to time constraints and the level of implementation needed for the technology. Additionally, some teachers mentioned that they would have liked to have more input in the supplies invested in by Texas GEAR UP SG staff. In one example, a teacher said, “I specifically told them I didn’t want the AP books and if they had given me that money I could’ve used it another way.”

Teachers said vertical teaming did not take place at the district level, but rather informally at each school due to staff turnover. One teacher mentioned, “They try, they desperately try, but it just doesn’t happen. The department and part of the district but there’s a lot of restructuring this year and I don’t really know what direction they’re heading in.” There were some instances in which teachers at the high school interacted with their colleagues at different grade levels in planning meetings, but no instances primarily focused on vertical teaming.

Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, and Academic Rigor

All teachers who taught AP or dual credit classes reported that there were students who were not adequately prepared to participate in their classes. According to one teacher, "The one thing that bothers me quite a bit, because of [Texas] GEAR UP [SG] there were a lot of students forced into AP classes. To be honest with you, [they] had no business being in those classes. They didn't make the grades; they didn't pass the tests. And I know [passing course and test grades are] not a requirement for AP." Despite the overall agreement among teachers on students' academic readiness for AP and dual credit classes, teachers from one of the two schools in the district noted that, "Most students find the AP classes challenging, but all students plan on taking an AP class next year."

Community Alliances

Texas GEAR UP SG staff discussed the relationships with other on-campus organizations, as well as the roles those organizations play in achieving Texas GEAR UP SG goals and vice versa. Some specific goals that community alliances support include job site visit coordination, student registration for the SAT, with financial aid applications assistance, and Apply Texas profile creation. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, "They've been to our Apply Texas Profile drives, they've been to our SAT registration drives. We've had four to five of those already. We worked with them pretty frequently." Texas GEAR UP SG staff also reported that they discussed how organizations will help to prepare students for their senior year obtain various financial aid resources.

CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTATION

IRS Data Retrieval Tool

At the time of the site visits, the IRS Data Retrieval tool used to link the FAFSA with the tax identification information of the parent, was not working, indefinitely. This was brought up by some Texas GEAR UP SG staff members as an issue for the future in different ways. The first, according to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, is that it means that parents would need to bring in their IRS tax form or it would need to be ordered from the IRS, which can take weeks. Since parent engagement was already reported as a challenge, the lengthened process may make it even more difficult, or prevent families from completing the FAFSA. According to a Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, the second impact would be on students' parents who might be reluctant to provide information. To counter this potential problem, Texas GEAR UP SG staff met with students and connected them with on-campus community alliances that assist in financial aid applications. It was noted that many of the on-campus community alliances are Spanish speaking advisors who can continue to build a relationship and assist students who are more comfortable speaking in Spanish.

FUTURE PLANS

Student Advising and Parent Engagement

Texas GEAR UP SG staff mentioned plans to increase the number of one-on-one meetings held with each student in Year 6. According to one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member, one school held one-on-one meetings with 67% of students and the other school had one-on-one meetings with 54% of students at the time of the site visit. In addition to student advising, parent engagement was viewed as another area that could be improved upon; one Texas GEAR UP SG staff member observed that, "Now that we have this group of parents that are more actively

engaged, how do we maximize their involvement and maybe empower them with some responsibility to reach out to other parents or spread the gospel of [Texas] GEAR UP [SG]?" A school administrator further reiterated that the need to focus on "sustainability, parent involvement, academic support, college, financial aid, and scholarships" will also need to be prevalent in Year 6.

CONCLUSION

College field trips offered more in-depth content and information for students as reported by Texas GEAR UP SG staff. This was made possible through student panel sessions, faculty question and answer presentations, and financial aid specific presentations. According to teachers, AP classes included many students who were not academically ready for the course pace and content and each stated that the AP classes they taught included students who should not have been in them. Texas GEAR UP SG staff noted the potential challenges due to the failure of the IRS Data Retrieval to function at the time of the 2017 spring site visits, including the role it would play in parent engagement and the number of students able to apply to for financial aid.

APPENDIX F: Implementation Analyses Technical Detail

F.1 Characteristics of Students Participating in Texas GEAR UP State Grant

Table F.1. Primary Cohort Student Demographic Characteristics by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of Students	Hispanic/Latino Students	Limited English Proficient
High School H	352	98.0%	9.1%
High School I	330	97.6%	4.5%
High School J	182	42.3%	1.6%
High School K	456	65.4%	14.9%
High School L	110	50.0%	5.5%
High School M	299	88.0%	6.0%
Total	**1729**	**78.7%**	**8.2%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.

F.2 Advanced Course Taking

Table F.2. Enrollment of Primary Cohort Students in Advanced Courses, by Grade Level and Number of Advanced Courses: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)*

Advanced Course Enrollment Status	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Not enrolled in any advanced course	1,370	68.2%	885	46.0%	957	44.4%	850	45.4%	753	43.6%
Enrolled in 1 advanced course	234	11.6%	583	30.3%	271	12.6%	158	8.4%	263	15.2%
Enrolled in 2 advanced courses	190	9.5%	131	6.8%	191	8.9%	154	8.2%	148	8.6%
Enrolled in 3 advanced courses	216	10.7%	141	7.3%	229	10.6%	207	11.0%	329	19.0%
Enrolled in 4 advanced courses	n/a	n/a	184	9.6%	507	23.5%	505	26.9%	236	13.6%
Total	**2,010**	**100.0%**	**1,924**	**100.0%**	**2,155**	**100.0%**	**1,874**	**100.0%**	**1,729**	**100.0%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: There were no social studies advanced courses offered in Grade 7.
*Percentage of advanced course enrollment was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(16) = 1291.4$, $p < 0.001$

Table F.3. Pre-AP and AP Advanced Course Offerings and Enrollment, by Program Year and Content Area: Year 4 (Grade 10) and Year 5 (Grade 11)

Content Area	Year 4 (*n*=1874)		Year 5 (*n*=1729)	
	Number of Available Courses	Enrolled Students	Number of Available Courses	Enrolled Students
Mathematics				
Pre-AP Courses*	4	*n*=314 (16.8%)	4	*n*=431 (24.9%)
AP Courses	0	*n*=0 (0%)	2	*n*=31 (1.8%)
English Language Arts				
Pre-AP Courses	2	*n*=703 (37.5%)	0	*n*=0 (0%)
AP Courses**	1	*n*=1 (<0.1%)	3	*n*=413 (23.9%)
Science				
Pre-AP Courses***	4	*n*=658 (35.1%)	4	*n*=393 (22.7%)
AP Courses****	1	*n*=1 (<0.1%)	4	*n*=53 (3%)
Social Studies				
Pre-AP Courses*****	5	*n*=461 (24.6%)	1	*n*=1 (<0.1%)
AP Courses******	2	*n*=114 (6.1%)	3	*n*=409 (23.7%)
Total Available Pre-AP Courses	**15**	**-**	**9**	**-**
Total Available AP Courses	**4**	**-**	**12**	**-**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of pre-AP math enrollment was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(1) = 36.6$, $p < 0.001$
**Percentage of AP ELA enrollment was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(1) = 502.3$, $p < 0.001$
***Percentage of pre-AP science enrollment was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(1) = 66.7$, $p < 0.001$
****Percentage of AP science enrollment was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(1) = 55.3$, $p < 0.001$
******Percentage of pre-AP social studies enrollment was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(1) = 484.5$, $p < 0.001$
******Percentage of AP social studies enrollment was significantly different across years: $\chi^2(1) = 223.8$, $p < 0.001$

Table F.4. Enrollment of Primary Cohort Students in Advanced Courses, by Content Area, Grade Level, and School: Year 3 (Grade 9)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

Grade and Content Area	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M	Total
n* (Grade 9, Year 3)	**475**	**474**	**197**	**572**	**117**	**320**	**2,155**
Mathematics (Algebra I and Other)	50.1%	37.1%	19.3%	29.2%	96.6%	31.3%	44.6%
English Language Arts	59.4%	46.2%	35.5%	26.6%	100.0%	38.1%	38.6%
Science	46.1%	38.2%	21.8%	26.7%	100.0%	35.9%	38.4%
Social Studies	42.9%	25.9%	18.8%	26.6%	100.0%	35.3%	34.6%
n* (Grade 10, Year 4)*	**402**	**375**	**210**	**474**	**107**	**306**	**1,874**
Mathematics	60.0%	36.5%	15.7%	25.9%	90.7%	58.8%	43.3%
English Language Arts	66.2%	42.4%	21.9%	31.2%	97.2%	40.2%	45.1%
Science	54.5%	34.9%	20.5%	28.9%	98.1%	45.8%	41.4%
Social Studies	49.3%	35.5%	18.1%	28.5%	96.3%	22.2%	36.0%
n* (Grade 11, Year 5)**	**352**	**330**	**182**	**456**	**110**	**299**	**1,729**
Mathematics	26.7%	46.4%	23.1%	19.1%	100.0%	48.8%	36.6%
English Language Arts	38.4%	37.3%	25.3%	25.2%	100.0%	43.8%	38.2%
Science	21.9%	40.9%	13.7%	21.7%	97.3%	78.3%	39.2%
Social Studies	31.0%	47.0%	10.4%	22.1%	9.1%	42.5%	30.1%

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2016.

* Grade 9, Percentage of enrollment was significantly different across schools for each subject area. Mathematics: $\chi^2(5) = 252.5$, $p < 0.001$; ELA: $\chi^2(5) = 274.9$, $p < 0.001$; Science: $\chi^2(5) = 256.1$, $p < 0.001$; Social Studies $\chi^2(5) = 289.5$, $p < 0.001$.

** Grade 10, Percentage of enrollment was significantly different across schools for each subject area. Mathematics: $\chi^2(5) = 303.4$, $p < 0.001$; ELA: $\chi^2(5) = 275.9$, $p < 0.001$; Science: $\chi^2(5) = 247.6$, $p < 0.001$; Social Studies $\chi^2(5) = 265.3$, $p < 0.001$.

***Grade 11, Percentage of enrollment was significantly different across schools for each subject area. Mathematics: $\chi^2(5) = 316.6$, $p < 0.001$; ELA: $\chi^2(5) = 221.6$, $p < 0.001$; Science: $\chi^2(5) = 524.1$, $p < 0.001$; Social Studies $\chi^2(5) = 127.5$, $p < 0.001$.

Table F.5. Algebra II Completion Rate for Students with Endorsement by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Completed Algebra II Prior to Grade 11	Currently Enrolled in Algebra II	Not Enrolled
School H	308	31.2%	57.5%	11.4%
School I	286	24.8%	60.5%	14.7%
School J	169	24.3%	24.3%	51.5%
School K	437	48.1%	23.8%	28.1%
School L	109	82.6%	11.9%	5.5%
School M	297	39.1%	44.4%	16.5%
Overall	**1,606**	**38.9%**	**39.9%**	**21.3%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.

*Percentage of Algebra II completion was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(10) = 306.8$, $p < 0.001$

Table F.6. Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) and AP Course Completion Rate by School and LEP Status, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	*n*		Completed Pre-AP/AP Course Prior to Grade 11		Currently Enrolled in First Pre-AP/AP Course		Currently Enrolled in Pre-AP/AP Course Grade 11		Not Enrolled	
	Total	LEP	Total	LEP	Total	LEP	Total	LEP	Total	LEP
School H	352	32	80.1%	75.0%	5.7%	3.1%	57.1%	43.8%	14.2%	21.9%
School I	330	15	68.2%	46.7%	4.8%	13.3%	60.3%	40.0%	27.0%	40.0%
School J	182	3	58.8%	66.7%	1.6%	0.0%	32.4%	66.7%	39.6%	33.3%
School K	456	68	75.4%	69.1%	2.2%	2.9%	26.8%	14.7%	22.4%	27.9%
School L	110	6	99.1%	83.3%	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	16.7%	0.9%	16.7%
School M	299	18	64.2%	66.7%	4.0%	0.0%	45.5%	27.8%	31.8%	33.3%
Overall	**1729**	**142**	**72.8%**	**68.3%**	**3.5%**	**3.5%**	**42.7%**	**26.8%**	**23.7%**	**28.2%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: Differences across schools: Total students who completed pre-AP/AP course: $\chi^2(5) = 82.26$, $p < 0.001$; LEP students who completed Pre-AP/AP course: $\chi^2(5) = 4.58$, $p < 0.001$.

Table F.7. Dual Credit Course Enrollment and Completion Rate by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Completed Dual Credit Course	Currently Enrolled in Dual Credit Course	Never Enrolled
School H	352	0.0%	10.5%	89.5%
School I	330	0.0%	9.1%	90.9%
School J	182	3.8%	0.5%	95.6%
School K	456	0.0%	4.6%	95.4%
School L	110	0.0%	42.7%	57.3%
School M	299	8.7%	15.7%	75.6%
Overall	**1729**	**1.9%**	**10.6%**	**87.5%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of dual credit course enrollment and completion was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(10) = 269.3$, $p < 0.001$

F.3 Endorsements

Table F.8. Percentages of Primary Cohort Students by Endorsements and by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

Grade and Content Area	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M	Total
n	**352**	**330**	**182**	**456**	**110**	**299**	**1729**
Arts and Humanities	15.6%	12.7%	6.6%	9.2%	.9%	7.7%	10.1%
Business and Industry	17.9%	33.0%	23.6%	43.9%	28.2%	41.8%	33.0%
Multidisciplinary Studies	0.0%	0.9%	20.9%	11.0%	8.2%	1.0%	6.0%
Public Service	31.5%	40.0%	35.2%	30.3%	0.9%	16.7%	28.7%
STEM	22.4%	0.0%	6.6%	1.5%	60.9%	32.1%	15.1%
Not on Foundation	7.4%	4.8%	4.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
No Endorsements	5.1%	8.5%	2.2%	4.2%	0.9%	0.7%	4.2%

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students with endorsements in Grade 11 was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(30) = 699.6$, $p < 0.001$

F.4 PSAT Completion and Mean Scores

Table F.9. Percentage of Year 5 Primary Cohort Students That Has Ever Taken the PSAT, Year 3 (Grade 9)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	*n*	Took PSAT*	Did Not Take PSAT
School H	352	72.7%	27.3%
School I	330	65.5%	34.5%
School J	182	72.5%	27.5%
School K	456	73.2%	26.8%
School L	110	93.6%	6.4%
School M	299	81.9%	18.1%
Overall	**1729**	**74.4%**	**25.6%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of PSAT participation was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 45.3$, $p < 0.001$

Table F.10. PSAT Scores of Primary Cohort Students: Mean Scores and Percentage that Met the College Board's PSAT/NMSQT College and Career Readiness Benchmarks by School, Fall 2016 Test Administration (Grade 11)

School	*n*	Took PSAT*	Mean Scores**	Met College Board's College and Career Readiness Benchmark Combined Score (Score=970)
School H	352	51.4%	873	13.9%
School I	330	49.7%	828	7.3%
School J	182	55.5%	857	12.6%
School K	456	56.4%	857	12.1%
School L	110	92.7%	914	34.5%
School M	299	68.9%	881	18.7%
Overall	**1729**	**58.5%**	**866**	**14.2%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of PSAT participation in Grade 11 was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 85.7$, $p < 0.001$
**Average PSAT score was significantly different across schools: $F(5, 1005) = 5.35$, $p < 0.001$

F.5 TSIA Participation and Completion

Table F.11. TSIA Participation and Scores of Primary Cohort Students by School, Year 3 (Grade 9)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	*n*	Took TSIA: ELA*	Passed TSIA: ELA (>/=351)	Took TSIA: Mathematics**	Passed TSIA: Mathematics (>/=350)
School H	352	102 (29.0%)	36 (35.3%)	102 (29.0%)	19 (18.6%)
School I	330	72 (21.1%)	19 (26.4%)	72 (21.8%)	9 (12.5%)
School J	182	45 (24.7%)	24 (53.3%)	17 (9.3%)	8 (47.1%)
School K	456	37 (8.1%)	29 (78.4%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
School L	110	79 (71.8%)	51 (64.6%)	77 (70.0%)	27 (35.1%)
School M	299	130 (43.5%)	63 (48.5%)	126 (42.1%)	30 (23.8%)
Overall	**1729**	**465 (26.9%)**	**222 (47.7%)**	**394 (22.8%)**	**93 (23.6%)**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of TSIA ELA participation was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 242.1$, $p < 0.00$
**Percentage of TSIA Math participation in Grade 11 was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 364.1$, $p < 0.001$

F.6 On-Time Promotion Rate

Table F.12. On-Time Promotion Rate of Cohort Students by Schools compared to State, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Percentage of Cohort Students Eligible for On-Time Promotion to Grade 11	Percentage Point Difference Between Texas GEAR UP Cohort and State-Wide Students
School H	414	80.2%	-13.9%
School I	382	74.3%	-19.8%
School J	217	76.0%	-18.1%
School K	495	84.4%	-9.7%
School L	107	99.1%	+5.0%
School M	307	86.3%	-7.8%
Overall	**1922**	**82.0%**	**-12.1%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: This data only includes the students who remained at the same school through the end of the school year in Year 4 of implementation.
*Percentage of on-time promotion rate was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(10) = 73.4$, $p < 0.001$

Table F.13. Students' Academic Preparedness for Postsecondary Education, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	*n*	% met
School H	352	9.7%
School I	330	14.8%
School J	182	84.6%
School K	456	2.2%
School L	110	47.3%
School M	299	29.8%
Total	**1729**	**22.4%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: The criteria used in selecting students who are considered knowledgeable and academically prepared for college are based on the student participating in one "in-person" college visit and one of the following: 1) Met or exceeded the Texas Success Initiative (TSI) criteria in both English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics on the TSI assessment (ELA score >= 351, Mathematics >= 350), 2) Completed one or more math courses beyond Algebra II, 3) Enrolled in a coherent sequence of CTE courses as part of a four-year plan of study, and 4) at the end of the 5th year, students' personal graduation plan (PSP) includes the FHSP with a multidisciplinary endorsement.

F.7 Student Support Services: Tutoring

Table F.14. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Tutoring in Any Subject and Average Number of Hours Tutored by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)		
	n	% of Students Received Tutoring*	Average Hours of Tutoring**
High School H	352	50.3%	3.29
High School I	330	40.9%	2.32
High School J	182	87.4%	7.22
High School K	456	17.1%	21.65
High School L	110	7.3%	8.31
High School M	299	66.2%	22.97
Total	**1729**	**43.7%**	**11.05**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of Students Received Tutoring was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 400.4$, $p < 0.001$.
**Average hours of tutoring received by students was significantly different across schools: $F(5, 749) = 43.6$, $p < 0.001$.

Table F.15. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Mathematics Tutoring and Average Number of Hours Tutored in Mathematics by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)		
	n	% of Students Received Tutoring*	Average Hours of Tutoring**
High School H	352	22.2%	1.92
High School I	330	27.6%	1.63
High School J	182	58.8%	4.73
High School K	456	7.2%	3.38
High School L	110	4.5%	4.20
High School M	299	22.7%	7.01
Total	**1729**	**22.1%**	**3.70**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students receiving mathematics tutoring was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 226.4$, $p < 0.001$.
**Average hours of tutoring received by students was significantly different across schools: $F(5, 376) = 7.7$, $p < 0.001$.

Table F.16. Primary Cohort Students Receiving English Language Arts Tutoring and Average Number of Hours Tutored in English Language Arts by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)		
	n	% of Students Received Tutoring*	Average Hours of Tutoring**
High School H	352	7.7%	1.00
High School I	330	6.7%	1.55
High School J	182	59.9%	4.11
High School K	456	7.5%	3.31
High School L	110	7.3%	5.69
High School M	299	40.5%	25.50
Total	**1729**	**18.6%**	**11.69**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students receiving ELA tutoring was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 405.5$, $p < 0.001$.
**Average hours of tutoring received by students was significantly different across schools: $F(5, 315) = 50.2$, $p < 0.001$.

Table F.17. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Science Tutoring and Average Number of Hours Tutored in Science by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)		
	n	% of Students Received Tutoring*	Average Hours of Tutoring**
High School H	352	10.5%	1.16
High School I	330	1.8%	1.00
High School J	182	27.5%	2.31
High School K	456	0.0%	-
High School L	110	0.0%	-
High School M	299	6.7%	2.48
Total	**1729**	**6.5%**	**1.89**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students receiving science tutoring was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 191.3$, $p < 0.001$.
**Average hours of tutoring received by students was significantly different across schools: $F(3, 109) = 3.7$, $p < 0.05$.

Table F.18. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Social Studies Tutoring and Average Number of Hours Tutored in Social Studies by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)		
	n	% of Students Received Tutoring*	Average Hours of Tutoring**
High School H	352	35.2%	2.92
High School I	330	18.2%	2.09
High School J	182	19.8%	2.18
High School K	456	0.0%	-
High School L	110	0.0%	-
High School M	299	29.8%	9.04
Total	**1729**	**17.9%**	**4.44**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students receiving social studies tutoring was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 224.7$, $p < 0.001$
**Average hours of tutoring received by students was significantly different across schools: $F(3, 305) = 11.5$, $p < 0.001$

F.8 Student Support Services: Mentoring

Table F.19. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Mentoring and Average Number of Hours Mentored, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)		
	n	% of Students Received Mentoring*	Average Hours of Mentoring
High School H	352	27.6%	7.4
High School I	330	37.9%	2.2
High School J	182	27.5%	3.5
High School K	456	23.0%	3.0
High School L	110	6.4%	1.3
High School M	299	91.6%	6.6
Total	**1729**	**38.1%**	**5.0**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Percentage of students receiving mentoring was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 479.8$, $p < 0.001$

F.9 Student Support Services: Counseling

Table F.20. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Counseling and Average Number of Hours Counseled, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)		
	n	% of Students Received Counseling*	Average Hours of Counseling
High School H	352	92.6%	1.9
High School I	330	94.5%	2.8
High School J	182	98.4%	5.1
High School K	456	87.7%	2.0
High School L	110	91.8%	1.2
High School M	299	95.7%	10.0
Total	**1729**	**92.8%**	**3.9**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students receiving counseling was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 31.2$, $p < 0.001$

Table F.21. Primary Cohort Students Who Met with College Preparation Advisors, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Number of Students Who Met with College Preparation Advisors	%
High School H	352	260	73.9%
High School I	330	206	62.4%
High School J	182	179	98.4%
High School K	456	378	82.9%
High School L	110	102	92.7%
High School M	299	263	88.0%
Total	**1729**	**1388**	**80.3%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017

*Percentage of students who met with college preparation was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 137.0$, $p < 0.001$.

F.10 Student Support Services: Financial Aid Services

Table F.22. Primary Cohort Students Receiving Services Related to Financial Aid and Average Number of Hours Served, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Grade 11 (Start of School Year–February 28, 2017)						
	n	% of Students Received Counseling	Average Hours of Counseling	% of Students Received Mentoring	Average Hours of Mentoring	% of Students Received Counseling/Mentoring Related to Financial Aid*	Average Hours of Counseling/Mentoring Related to Financial Aid**
High School H	352	66.5%	.74	2.8%	.80	66.5%	.77
High School I	330	56.1%	1.28	2.7%	2.67	56.1%	1.41
High School J	182	98.4%	4.73	6.6%	2.21	98.4%	4.88
High School K	456	74.6%	1.30	4.4%	1.68	75.0%	1.39
High School L	110	82.7%	.54	0.0%		82.7%	.54
High School M	299	89.0%	1.84	.3%	1.00	89.0%	1.84
Total	**1729**	**74.9%**	**1.73**	**3.0%**	**1.79**	**75.0%**	**1.80**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.

*Percentage of students receiving counseling/mentoring services related to financial aid was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 164.4$, $p < 0.001$.

**Average hours of financial aid services received by students was significantly different across schools: $F(5, 1291) = 80.8$, $p < 0.001$.

F.11 Educational Field Trips

Table F.23. Primary Cohort Students Participating in At Least One Educational Field Trip, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of GEAR UP Students	Participated At Least One Educational Field Trip*	No Participation
High School H	352	13.9%	86.1%
High School I	330	17.0%	83.0%
High School J	182	44.0%	56.0%
High School K	456	2.9%	97.1%
High School L	110	0%	100%
High School M	299	74.2%	25.8%
Overall	**1729**	**24.3%**	**75.7%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students participating in an educational field trip was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 623.5$, $p < 0.001$.

F.12 College Visits

Table F.24. Primary Cohort Students Participating in College Visits, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	*n*	Number of college Visits offered	% of students participated 1 college tour *	% of students participated 2 college tours	% of students participated 3 college tours	% of students participated 4 or more college tours	% of students participated in any college tour (total)
School H	352	9	20.5%	7.7%	2.3%	0.3%	30.7%
School I	330	12	23.0%	17.6%	9.1%	3.6%	53.3%
School J	182	13	65.9%	23.1%	1.1%	0.5%	90.7%
School K	456	14	36.8%	3.5%	1.3%	0.7%	42.3%
School L	110	7	20.9%	6.4%	6.4%	17.3%	50.9%
School M	299	21	38.1%	9.0%	3.0%	0.0%	50.2%
Overall	**1729**	**76**	**33.1%**	**10.2%**	**3.6%**	**2.1%**	**49.0%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students participating in one college tour was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 155.0$, $p < 0.001$.

F.13 Job Site Visits/Job Shadowing

Table F.25. Primary Cohort Students Participating in Job Site Visits and/or Job Shadowing, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	*n*	Number of Job Site Visits and/or Job Shadowing offered	% Students Participating in Job Site Visits/Job Shadowing*
School H	352	7	29.8%
School I	330	4	22.1%
School J	182	9	53.3%
School K	456	3	37.5%
School L	110	1	57.3%
School M	299	8	59.2%
Overall	**1729**	**32**	**39.7%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
*Percentage of students participating in a job site visit and/or job shadowing was significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(5) = 131.5$, $p < 0.001$.

F.14 Summer Programs

Table F.26. Primary Cohort Students Participating in Summer Student Events, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School		College Tour	Family Event	Job Shadowing	Job/ Site Visit	Parent Family Workshop	Math/Science Educational Field Trip	Other Educational Field Trip	Student Workshop	Total
High School H	Number of Events	13	3	2	5	8	5	5	28	69
	Average Number of Student Participants	16	17	10	3	23	13	22	39	25
	Total number of Participating Students	71	32	1	12	121	14	94	152	229
	% (*n*= 402)	17.7%	8.0%	0.2%	3.0%	30.1%	3.5%	23.4%	37.8%	57.0%
High School I	Number of Events	17	2	2	6	8	6	3	27	71
	Average Number of Student Participants	13	19	10	3	16	12	11	37	22
	Total number of Participating Students	75	21	1	14	65	15	31	140	166
	% (*n*= 375)	20.0%	5.6%	0.3%	3.7%	17.3%	4.0%	8.3%	37.3%	44.3%
High School J	Number of Events	6	0	1	1	0	0	2	19	29
	Average Number of Student Participants	13	0	20	8	0	0	6	53	39
	Total number of Participating Students	26	0	1	8	0	0	8	99	101
	% (*n*= 210)	12.4%	0.0%	0.5%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	47.1%	48.1%
High School K	Number of Events	4	0	0	0	0	1	2	7	14
	Average Number of Student Participants	15	0	0	0	0	22	19	146	81
	Total number of Participating Students	28	0	0	0	0	22	19	145	145
	% (*n*= 474)	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	4.0%	30.6%	30.6%
High School L	Number of Events	4	0	1	0	0	1	2	7	15
	Average Number of Student Participants	10	0	3	0	0	13	12	39	24
	Total number of Participating Students	20	0	3	0	0	13	12	34	35
	% (*n*= 107)	18.7%	0.0%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	12.1%	11.2%	31.8%	32.7%
High School M	Number of Events	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	41	45
	Average Number of Student Participants	21	8	0	0	0	0	33	48	46
	Total number of Participating Students	38	8	0	0	0	0	33	178	184
	% (*n*=306)	12.4%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.8%	58.2%	60.1%
Total	**Number of Events**	**46**	**6**	**6**	**12**	**16**	**13**	**15**	**129**	**243**
	Average Number of Student Participants	**14**	**16**	**10**	**3**	**19**	**13**	**17**	**49**	**33**
	Total number of Participating Students	**258**	**61**	**6**	**34**	**186**	**64**	**197**	**748**	**860**
	% (*n*=1,874)	**13.8%**	**3.3%**	**0.3%**	**1.8%**	**9.9%**	**3.4%**	**10.5%**	**39.9%**	**45.9%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
Note: Percentages were calculated based on Grade 10 enrollment rates.

F.15 Student Participation in Workshops/Events

Table F.27. Number of Grade 11 Student Events/Workshops, Average Number of Participants, and Average Event Length by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of Events	Average Number of Participants (range)	Average Activity Length (in hours)
High School H	33	42 (1-225)	2.1
High School I	28	66 (1-445)	2.0
High School J	76	45 (1-167)	1.2
High School K	37	55 (1-394)	1.1
High School L	14	37 (1-106)	1.2
High School M	65	29 (1-450)	2.1
Total	**253**	**44 (1-450)**	**1.6**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through Feb. 28, 2017.

Table F.28. Primary Cohort Students Participating in Student Workshops/Events, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of GEAR UP Students	Participated At Least One Student Event	No participation
High School H	352	83.8%	16.2%
High School I	330	93.3%	6.7%
High School J	182	99.5%	0.5%
High School K	456	95.2%	4.8%
High School L	110	100.0%	0.0%
High School M	299	89.6%	10.4%
Overall	**1729**	**92.3%**	**7.7%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.

F.16 Parent Events

Table F.29. Number of Grade 11 Family Events, Average Number of Student Participants, and Average Event Length by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of Events	Average Number of Participants (range)	Average Activity Length (in hours)
High School H	12	14 (1-42)	1.0
High School I	11	21 (7-51)	1.1
High School J	20	19 (1-162)	1.5
High School K	5	7 (2-13)	1.6
High School L	1	1 (1-1)	1.0
High School M	10	19 (1-107)	2.3
Total	**59**	**17 (1-162)**	**1.5**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.

Table F.30. Primary Cohort Students Participating in Parent and/or Family Workshops/Events, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Number of GEAR UP Students	Participated At Least One Parent and/or Family Event	No Participation
High School H	352	16.2%	83.8%
High School I	330	26.7%	73.3%
High School J	182	42.3%	57.7%
High School K	456	3.3%	96.7%
High School L	110	0.9%	99.1%
High School M	299	38.5%	61.5%
Overall	**1729**	**20.4%**	**79.6%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.

Table F.31. Parent Participation in Parent Events/Workshops, by School, 2016–17 (Grade 11)

School	Number of GEAR UP Students	No Participation	Participated in one to two parent events	Participated in at least 3 parent events
High School H	352	53.1%	27.0%	19.9%
High School I	330	60.6%	20.9%	18.5%
High School J	182	64.3%	22.0%	13.7%
High School K	456	89.0%	9.4%	1.5%
High School L	110	77.3%	20.9%	1.8%
High School M	299	24.1%	31.1%	44.8%
Overall	**1729**	**61.7%**	**21.0%**	**17.3%**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.

F.17 Professional Development Events

Table F.32. Number of PD Events Available to Texas GEAR UP SG Teachers, by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)[a]

School	Differentiated Instruction	Advanced Instructional Strategies	PBL	Vertical Teaming	Financial Literacy	GEAR UP Specific	Total PD Events*
High School H	39	13	8	4	0	6	54
High School I	44	16	11	4	0	7	60
High School J	3	2	2	2	1	3	9
High School K	4	5	4	0	0	3	8
High School L	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
High School M	20	24	6	15	0	6	47
Overall	**110**	**61**	**31**	**25**	**1**	**27**	**181**

Source: Texas Education Agency, Texas GEAR UP SG Annual Performance Report Data, February 28, 2017.
[a] A PD event can include multiple content. Therefore, the total number of events might be smaller than the sum of contents.

Table F.33. Number of Texas GEAR UP SG Teachers Receiving at least one PD, by PD Type and by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Differentiated Instruction	Advanced Instructional Strategies	PBL	Vertical Teaming	Financial Literacy	GEAR UP Specific	Total Participating Teachers[a]
High School H	82	43	44	12	0	63	87
High School I	85	51	31	7	0	20	91
High School J	26	9	9	25	16	6	38
High School K	5	6	5	0	0	4	8
High School L	0	17	0	0	0	1	18
High School M	81	79	23	30	0	11	86
Overall	**279**	**205**	**112**	**74**	**16**	**105**	**328**

Source: Texas Education Agency, GEAR UP Integrated Data Entry System through February 28, 2017.
[a] One teacher participated in multiple events with multiple categories. Therefore, the total number of participating teachers might be smaller than the sum of content categories.

APPENDIX G: Student and Parent Outcomes Analyses Technical Detail

To facilitate ease of reading, much of the data provided in Chapter 3 have been summarized to highlight issues of particular interest. This Appendix provides more detailed tables related to the range of findings reported in Chapter 3.

G.1 Survey Administration, 2016–17

A total of 1,199 students submitted the Texas GEAR UP SG Spring 2017 student survey. In order to ensure data integrity to the extent possible, analyses included only surveys in which respondents completed at least 50% of the survey, or for odd number denominators, the next highest possible response rate. Due to the nature of the skip logic used in programming the survey, there were four possible pathways for completing the survey, as shown in Table G.1. Each pathway included a different total number of possible questions as well as a different number of questions required for completion to meet the requirement that 50% of the questions would be completed. This was taken into consideration when cleaning data, as a student may have been considered as completing fewer questions than the designated cut-off point of the survey in one pathway, but may have completed above a cut-off point or the next highest possible response rate in another.

Table G.1. Skip Logic Questions Responsible for Determining Survey Pathways

Skip Logic Question	Survey
Has participating in GEAR UP activities at your school helped you to decide to go to college after high school graduation?	Student
Did you take the entire TSI/TSIA?	Student
Have you met with the College Preparation Advisor at your school in the 2016–17 school year?	Student
Based on the classes you have taken in high school between fall 2014 and spring 2017, are you on track to graduate with an endorsement?	Student
Do you currently have a child in Grade 11? Please complete the survey thinking about this child.	Parent
Have you met with the GEAR UP College Preparation Advisor at your child's school in the 2016–17 school year?	Parent

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student and Parent Surveys (Spring 2017).

In addition to excluding the 62 surveys in which respondents did not answer 50% of the questions, the evaluation team also excluded surveys based on dissent to taking the survey and the prior completion of the survey. As shown in Table G.2 below, of the 1,199 cases, 38 cases were excluded for dissenting to take the survey and 177 indicated they had already completed

the survey. After data cleaning (a standard practice to prepare data for analysis by removing invalid responses), 921 student surveys (77% of the surveys received) remained for analyses.[132]

Table G.2. Excluded Student Surveys, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Reason for Exclusion	Number of Student Surveys Excluded
Dissented to take the survey or did not answer to consent item	38
Declared that they already took surveys in the other format (online or paper) or did not answer	177
Completed less than 50% of survey (50% of survey items missing)	62
Total Excluded	277
Total Received	**1,199**
Total Remaining for Analysis	**921***

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Out of the 922 cases, 10 had completed only the first pathway question, but only one of those ten completed 51% of their survey whereas the other nine completed at least 71% of the survey. After reviewing the case more, the evaluation team also noticed that the case did not indicate a grade. This irregularity and uncertain validity led the evaluation team to remove from analysis moving forward.

Table G.3 documents all of the reasons why parent surveys were excluded, including the aforementioned reasons, along with the number of excluded surveys for each reason. Additionally, if a parent completed the survey and their child was not in the Texas GEAR UP SG grade, they were also excluded from analysis. After data cleaning (a standard practice to prepare data for analysis by removing invalid responses), 352 parent surveys (77% of the surveys received) remained for analyses.

Table G.3. Excluded Parent Surveys, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Reason for Exclusion	Number of Parent Surveys Excluded
Dissented to take the survey or did not answer to consent item	39
Declared that they already took surveys in the other format (online or paper) or did not answer	36
Child was not in Grade 11	9
Completed less than 50% of survey (50% of survey items missing)	23
Total Excluded	107
Total Received	**459**
Total Remaining for Analysis	**352**

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).

Improved practices in survey administration and student oversight will help to address the most frequent reasons for exclusion (e.g., reiterating the need to complete the consent page of the survey, completing less than 50% or other cut-off point of the survey, and indicating a different grade from survey primary cohort) to minimize the need for exclusion in the future.

All of the analyses in this report are based on the cleaned survey data. Spring 2017 is the second year that all students completed the survey online, as paper versions of the survey were not requested by any of the schools (except for parents, in which five of the six schools requested paper parent surveys). In an effort to analyze responses for items that included a

[132] Reasons for exclusion included the following: dissenting to taking the survey or simply not answering the question, indicating the student is in a grade other than Grade 11, and completing less than 50%, or other cut-off point, of the survey items. Excluding surveys based on lack of data is a generally accepted practice within an evaluation, given the perception that the lack of completeness of a high number of items may indicate disinterest or a lack of focus on the part of the respondent. The surveys are voluntary for the students and some students responded by indicating that they did not wish to complete the survey.

response option of "other," the research team analyzed open-ended data for patterns and trends. Where appropriate, new categories were developed and data were recoded using the additional options. Future surveys will include these response options. Respondents could skip any item in the survey or stop the survey at any time. Survey results indicate the number of respondents who answered the given item; in many cases, this number is lower than the total number of surveys completed. Additionally, for items that included response options of "Not Applicable (N/A)," survey results calculated included the percentages of responses based on the number of respondents who selected options other than N/A.

G.2 Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

All surveys were collected anonymously; respondents were directed to not put their name on the survey. However, students and parents were asked to complete background items; see Table G.4 and G.5, respectively, below for responses to items about ethnicity/race, gender, free- or reduced-price lunch participation, language spoken, and parent education level.

The majority of the students (82% of respondents) and parents (72% of respondents) identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino in spring 2017, which aligns with data from spring 2016. In addition, the majority of students reported speaking English at home (68%) and with their friends (50%), which is also similar to previously reported data. Sixty-eight percent of parents also reported they spoke English at home.[133] Parents reported participation in free- or reduced-price lunch in similar percentages over time from 2013 through 2017, ranging from 75% in fall 2015 and 86% in spring 2013. In spring 2017, 82% of parents indicated their child participated in free- or reduced-price lunches.

[133] Parents were not asked about the language used to speak with friends.

Table G.4. Student Survey Respondent Demographic Characteristics: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)*

	Year 1 (*n*=1,385)	Year 2 (*n*=1,295)	Year 3 (*n*=1,333)	Year 4 (*n*=1,132)	Year 5 (*n*=922)
Ethnicity/Race					
Asian	<1%	1%	1%	<1%	<1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	<1%	2%	3%	1%	2%
Black or African American	11%	7%	8%	10%	8%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	79%	81%	67%	70%	82%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	<1%	<1%	0%	<1%	<1%
White	4%	3%	8%	6%	4%
Two or more races	2%	2%	2%	0%	2%
Race unknown/Do not wish to share	2%	4%	12%	2%	2%
Gender					
Female	49%	48%	49%	49%	51%
Male	51%	52%	51%	51%	49%
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Participation*					
Yes	62%	67%	66%	--	--
No	17%	18%	20%	--	--
Not sure	22%	19%	14%	--	--
Language Spoken at Home					
English	66%	56%	55%	61%	68%
Spanish	27%	13%	13%	12%	2%
Both English and Spanish	7%	30%	31%	26%	28%
Other or Multiple	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Language Spoken with Friends					
English	90%	78%	78%	80%	50%
Spanish	3%	3%	3%	1%	9%
Both English and Spanish	6%	19%	18%	19%	39%
Other	<1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding; The total *N* represents the total number of survey respondents, not the number of students who answered each individual survey item in this table. The percentages in the table reflect the percentage of respondents who answered each question.
*Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Participation item not included in the Year 4 and Year 5 surveys.

Table G.5. Parent Survey Respondent Demographic Characteristics: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

	Year 1 (*n*=401)	Year 2 (*n*=471)	Year 4 (*n*=741)	Year 5 (*n*=352)
Ethnicity/Race				
Asian	0%	<1%	2%	<1%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1%	<1%	<1%	0%
Black or African American	3%	5%	13%	14%
Hispanic or Latino of any race	88%	86%	71%	72%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	1%	0%
White	6%	5%	12%	6%
Two or more races	<1%	<1%	1%	2%
Race unknown/Do not wish to share	2%	3%	22%	6%
Child Gender				
Female	58%	56%	50%	56%
Male	42%	44%	50%	44%
Parent Gender*				
Female	86%	85%	--	--
Male	14%	15%	--	--
Free- or Reduced-Price Lunch Participation				
Yes	86%	85%	75%	82%
No	11%	8%	17%	16%
Not sure	3%	6%	9%	3%
Language Spoken at Home				
English	--	56%	66%	68%
Spanish	--	21%	14%	14%
Both English and Spanish	--	23%	20%	18%
Other or Multiple	--	0%	<1%	<1%
Parent's Highest Level of Education				
Less than high school	57%	14%	10%	10%
High school		36%	31%	38%
Some college	26%	29%	26%	26%
2-year college	7%	9%	10%	10%
4-year college	8%	8%	8%	8%
More than a 4-year college	3%	4%	4%	6%
I do not wish to answer this question	--	--	12%	3%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017).

Notes: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding; the total *n* represents the total number of survey respondents, not the number of parents who answered each individual survey item in this table. The percentages in the table reflect the percentage of respondents who answered each question. Parent gender item not included in the Fall 2015 and Spring 2017 surveys; language spoken at home not included in the Fall 2013 parent survey; the option "I do not wish to answer this question" when asking parent's highest level of education is only available in the Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 survey. Given the low parent response rate in Year 3, parent survey results are not reported. In fall 2015 of Year 4, parent surveys were administered again due to low response rates in spring 2015.

G.3 Comparisons by School and Content: Advanced Courses

Table G.6. Students' Plans to Take Advanced Courses: Percentages by Level of Agreement and Content Area, Comparisons Across Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?	Year*	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am planning to take an advanced course in mathematics next year.*	Year 1	1,215	11.2%	20.6%	37.5%	30.7%
	Year 2	1,235	10.1%	20.4%	39.8%	29.7%
	Year 3	1,131	7.3%	24.6%	42.7%	25.5%
	Year 4	1,021	8.7%	26.2%	37.8%	27.2%
	Year 5	903	13.7%	30.1%	35.5%	20.6%
I am planning to take an advanced course in English/writing next year.*	Year 1	1,207	9.8%	22.8%	40.1%	27.3%
	Year 2	1,240	8.1%	20.8%	39.7%	31.4%
	Year 3	1,131	5.0%	21.7%	45.8%	27.5%
	Year 4	1,024	6.9%	25.5%	37.6%	30.0%
	Year 5	904	11.6%	27.5%	37.1%	23.8%
I am planning to take an advanced course in science next year.*	Year 1	1,210	11.4%	21.0%	36.3%	31.3%
	Year 2	1,243	8.8%	22.3%	38.2%	30.7%
	Year 3	1,127	5.9%	24.4%	41.7%	28.0%
	Year 4	1,029	8.0%	28.0%	36.5%	27.5%
	Year 5	905	12.2%	35.1%	34.1%	18.6%
I am planning to take an advanced course in social studies next year.	Year 1	--	--	--	--	--
	Year 2	--	--	--	--	--
	Year 3	--	--	--	--	--
	Year 4	1,028	8.5%	30.5%	34.7%	26.3%
	Year 5	902	11.3%	31.9%	35.0%	21.7%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages of those who responded with some level of agreement may not total exactly 100% due to rounding.
*Student perceptions differed significantly from Year 1 to Year 5 on *strongly agreeing* to plans to take an advanced course for Mathematics: $\chi^2(4) = 33.1$, $p < 0.001$; English Language Arts: $\chi^2(4) = 17.2$, $p < 0.01$; and Science: $\chi^2(4) = 49.5$, $p < 0.001$.

Table G.7. Student Differences by School: Student Plans for Taking Advanced Mathematics, English Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Mathematics*					
High School H	190	10.0%	30.5%	41.1%	18.4%
High School I	171	14.0%	28.1%	36.3%	21.6%
High School J	108	14.8%	26.9%	38.0%	20.4%
High School K	207	16.4%	39.6%	28.5%	15.5%
High School L	29	17.2%	34.5%	27.6%	20.7%
High School M	198	13.1%	22.7%	36.9%	27.3%
Overall	903	13.7%	30.1%	35.5%	20.6%
English Language Arts					
High School H	192	8.9%	31.8%	37.0%	22.4%
High School I	171	12.3%	19.3%	42.7%	25.7%
High School J	108	11.1%	27.8%	37.0%	24.1%
High School K	207	11.6%	32.9%	36.2%	19.3%
High School L	29	10.3%	37.9%	34.5%	17.2%
High School M	197	14.2%	23.4%	33.5%	28.9%
Overall	904	11.6%	27.5%	37.1%	23.8%
Science*					
High School H	193	9.3%	33.7%	39.9%	17.1%
High School I	169	11.8%	28.4%	38.5%	21.3%
High School J	108	13.9%	35.2%	31.5%	19.4%
High School K	207	11.6%	46.9%	29.5%	12.1%
High School L	29	13.8%	44.8%	27.6%	13.8%
High School M	199	14.6%	28.6%	32.2%	24.6%
Overall	905	12.2%	35.1%	34.1%	18.6%
Social Studies*					
High School H	191	8.9%	29.3%	37.7%	24.1%
High School I	170	10.6%	21.2%	43.5%	24.7%
High School J	107	13.1%	37.4%	29.0%	20.6%
High School K	207	11.6%	45.9%	29.0%	13.5%
High School L	29	10.3%	41.4%	27.6%	20.7%
High School M	198	13.1%	24.7%	35.9%	26.3%
Overall	902	11.3%	31.9%	35.0%	21.7%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages of those who responded with some level of agreement may not total exactly 100% due to rounding.
*Student responses differed significantly across schools for Mathematics: χ^2 (15) = 26.8, $p < 0.05$; Science: χ^{2}(15) = 31.1, $p < 0.01$; and Social Studies: χ^2 (15) = 43.4, $p < 0.001$.

Table G.8. Students' Self-Reported Participation in Advanced Courses: Percentages by Participation Rate and Content Area, Comparisons Across Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)*

Have you participated in this activity during this school year?	Year	n	Yes	%	No	%
Taking a pre-AP or AP mathematics course	Year 1	1,364	1,085	79.5%	279	20.5%
	Year 2	1,237	194	15.7%	1,043	84.3%
	Year 3	1,126	590	52.4%	536	47.6%
	Year 4	1,080	593	54.9%	487	45.1%
	Year 5	874	432	49.4%	442	50.6%
Taking a pre-AP or AP English/language arts course	Year 1	1,362	1,063	78.0%	299	22.0%
	Year 2	1,256	464	36.9%	792	63.1%
	Year 3	1,170	755	64.5%	415	35.5%
	Year 4	1,078	664	61.6%	414	38.4%
	Year 5	873	418	47.9%	455	52.1%
Taking a pre-AP or AP science courses	Year 1	1,355	1,041	76.8%	314	23.2%
	Year 2	1,255	440	35.1%	815	64.9%
	Year 3	1,168	666	57.0%	502	43.0%
	Year 4	1,070	583	54.5%	487	45.5%
	Year 5	860	398	46.3%	462	53.7%
Taking a pre-AP or AP social studies course	Year 1	-	-	-	-	-
	Year 2	1,264	601	47.5%	663	52.5%
	Year 3	1,155	644	55.8%	511	44.2%
	Year 4	1,074	531	49.4%	543	50.6%
	Year 5	866	393	45.4%	473	54.6%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages of those who responded with some level of agreement may not total exactly 100% due to rounding.
*Student responses differed across years (since Year 1, with the exception of social studies as the item was not asked until Year 2): Mathematics: $\chi^2(4) = 1070.4$, $p < 0.001$; ELA: $\chi^2(4) = 517.5$, $p < 0.001$; Science: $\chi^2(4) = 488.6$, $p < 0.001$; Social studies: $\chi^2(3) = 19.1$, $p < 0.001$.

G.4 Comparisons by School: Aspirations, Expectations, and College Plans

Table G.9. Students' and Parents' Educational Aspirations and Expectations Over Time: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

	n	High School or Less	Some College	Two-Year College Degree	Four-Year College Degree	More than a Four-Year College Degree
Parent Aspirations (Year 1)	373	2.4%	9.4%	8.8%	79.4%	
Parent Expectations (Year 1)	363	2.5%	9.9%	19.6%	68.0%	
Parent Aspirations (Year 2)	467	3.8%	6.4%	8.4%	36.8%	44.5%
Parent Expectations (Year 2)	466	4.7%	7.1%	14.2%	37.1%	36.9%
Parent Aspirations (Year 4)	729	4.8%	5.8%	13.6%	32.5%	43.3%
Parent Expectations (Year 4)	735	3.6%	5.6%	11.4%	37.6%	41.9%
Parent Aspirations (Year 5)	352	3.7%	4.0%	8.2%	37.8%	46.3%
Parent Expectations (Year 5)	350	2.6%	6.0%	10.9%	46.6%	34.0%
Student Aspirations (Year 1)	1,269	5.9%	14.6%	17.0%	62.5%	
Student Expectations (Year 1)	1,156	6.7%	17.8%	30.0%	45.4%	
Student Aspirations (Year 2)	1,251	10.6%	7.5%	13.5%	31.5%	36.9%
Student Expectations (Year 2)	1,238	14.2%	10.2%	18.1%	34.5%	23.0%
Student Aspirations (Year 3)	1,326	9.0%	6.8%	12.4%	39.7%	32.1%
Student Expectations (Year 3)	1,324	11.3%	11.0%	18.7%	37.3%	21.6%
Student Aspirations (Year 4)	1,129	9.9%	6.6%	11.6%	41.5%	30.4%
Student Expectations (Year 4)	1,128	11.6%	9.2%	18.8%	41.6%	18.8%
Student Aspirations (Year 5)	920	12.7%	6.5%	11.2%	43.0%	26.5%
Student Expectations (Year 5)	917	11.8%	8.8%	22.0%	39.9%	17.4%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017); Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Fall 2015, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Year 1 (Grade 7) surveys only asked about four-year degree or higher whereas all other years asked about four-year degree and more than a four-year degree separately. Given the low parent response rate in Year 3, parent survey results are not reported. In fall 2015 of Year 4, parent surveys were administered again due to low response rates in spring 2015. Additionally, low parent response rates in Years 1, 2, 4, and 5 warrant caution in interpreting the trend data included on parent surveys.

Table G.10. Students' Educational Aspirations by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	n	Some High School	High School	Some College	Two-Year College Degree	Four-Year College Degree	More than Four-Year College Degree
High School H	195	2.1%	12.8%	4.6%	12.3%	43.1%	25.1%
High School I	172	2.3%	10.5%	11.6%	12.2%	36.0%	27.3%
High School J	109	3.7%	8.3%	9.2%	11.9%	41.3%	25.7%
High School K	213	1.4%	11.3%	6.1%	12.2%	49.8%	19.2%
High School L	32	3.1%	3.1%	6.3%	6.3%	37.5%	43.8%
High School M	199	2.0%	10.1%	3.0%	8.5%	43.7%	32.7%
Overall	920	2.2%	10.5%	6.5%	11.2%	43.0%	26.5%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Students' educational aspirations were NOT significantly different across schools: $\chi^2(25) = 36.1$, $p > .05$

Table G.11. Students' Educational Expectations by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	n	Some High School	High School	Some College	Two-Year College Degree	Four-Year College Degree	More than Four-Year College Degree
High School H	193	0.0%	12.4%	10.4%	26.9%	36.8%	13.5%
High School I	171	1.2%	16.4%	13.5%	18.1%	32.2%	18.7%
High School J	108	0.0%	9.3%	8.3%	23.1%	33.3%	25.9%
High School K	213	0.5%	11.7%	7.5%	24.9%	43.2%	12.2%
High School L	32	3.1%	6.3%	3.1%	9.4%	59.4%	18.8%
High School M	200	0.0%	7.5%	6.0%	19.0%	46.5%	21.0%
Overall	917	0.4%	11.3%	8.8%	22.0%	39.9%	17.4%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
*Students' educational expectations differed significantly across schools: $\chi^2(25) = 54.0$, $p < .001$

Table G.12. Parents' Educational Aspirations by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	n	Less than High School	High School	Some College	Two-Year College Degree	Four-Year College Degree	More than Four-Year College Degree
High School H	57	0.0%	1.8%	7.0%	8.8%	35.1%	47.4%
High School I	60	0.0%	1.7%	3.3%	6.7%	35.0%	53.3%
High School J	58	3.4%	8.6%	1.7%	8.6%	39.7%	37.9%
High School K	48	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.4%	47.9%	41.7%
High School L	15	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	26.7%	60.0%
High School M	114	0.9%	2.6%	6.1%	7.0%	36.8%	46.5%
Overall	352	0.9%	2.8%	4.0%	8.2%	37.8%	46.3%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Parents' educational aspirations for their children were NOT significantly across schools: $\chi^2(25) = 26.9$, $p > .05$

Table G.13. Parents' Educational Expectations by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	*n*	Less than High School	High School	Some College	Two-Year College Degree	Four-Year College Degree	More than Four-Year College Degree
High School H	57	0.0%	0.0%	10.5%	14.0%	38.6%	36.8%
High School I	60	0.0%	3.3%	6.7%	11.7%	40.0%	38.3%
High School J	58	0.0%	6.9%	8.6%	8.6%	48.3%	27.6%
High School K	48	0.0%	2.1%	4.2%	8.3%	62.5%	22.9%
High School L	15	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	46.7%	46.7%
High School M	112	0.0%	1.8%	3.6%	11.6%	46.4%	36.6%
Overall	350	0.0%	2.6%	6.0%	10.9%	46.6%	34.0%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Parents' educational expectations for their children were NOT significantly across schools: $\chi^2(20) = 20.7$, $p > .05$

Table G.14. Parent Educational Aspirations by Expectations, Year 5 (Grade 11)

	n	Expect Some High School	Expect High School	Expect Some College	Expect Two-Year College Degree	Expect Four-Year College Degree	Expect More than Four-Year College Degree
Aspire for Less than High School	3	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%
Aspire for High School or Less	10	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	10.0%	60.0%	10.0%
Aspire for Some College	14	0.0%	0.0%	64.3%	0.0%	14.3%	21.4%
Aspire for Two-Year College Degree	29	0.0%	17.2%	20.7%	48.3%	13.8%	0.0%
Aspire for Four-Year College Degree	132	0.0%	1.5%	3.0%	15.2%	73.5%	6.8%
Aspire for More than Four-Year College Degree	162	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	33.3%	64.8%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table G.15. Students' Educational Aspirations by Expectations, Year 5 (Grade 11)

	n	Expect Some High School	Expect High School	Expect Some College	Expect Two-Year College Degree	Expect Four-Year College Degree	Expect More than Four-Year College Degree
Aspire for Some High School	20	10.0%	5.0%	10.0%	10.0%	45.0%	20.0%
Aspire for High School	97	1.0%	64.9%	13.4%	7.2%	7.2%	6.2%
Aspire for Some College	60	0.0%	31.7%	43.3%	20.0%	1.7%	3.3%
Aspire for Two-Year College Degree	103	0.0%	13.6%	19.4%	57.3%	9.7%	0.0%
Aspire for Four-Year College Degree	395	0.3%	1.3%	4.6%	28.9%	61.8%	3.3%
Aspire for More than Four-Year College Degree	241	0.0%	0.4%	0.8%	3.3%	39.4%	56.0%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

Table G.16. Student Differences by School: Attending College is Important for My Career Goals and Future, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
High School H	192	3.6%	5.7%	39.6%	51.0%
High School I	170	5.9%	6.5%	38.8%	48.8%
High School J	107	5.6%	1.9%	27.1%	65.4%
High School K	208	1.9%	7.2%	48.6%	42.3%
High School L	30	3.3%	6.7%	33.3%	56.7%
High School M	200	3.0%	2.5%	33.0%	61.5%
Overall	907	3.7%	5.1%	38.4%	52.8%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
* Student levels of agreement differed significantly across schools: $\chi^2(15) = 34.9$, $p < .01$.

G.5 Discussions and Knowledge about College and Financial Aspects of Postsecondary Education

Table G.17. Students' Primary Source of Information, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Primary Source of Information Topics	*n*	College Preparation Advisor	Another Source (School Counselor, AVID, ADVISE TX)	Both College Preparation Advisor and Another Source	I Have Not Learned about This Topic
College entrance exam requirements	872	43%	11%	28%	18%
Scholarship Opportunities	870	38%	13%	33%	15%
Student financial aid information (i.e. FAFSA, Pell grants, student loans, etc.)	864	38%	15%	30%	19%
Academic tutoring	864	27%	20%	28%	25%
Personal advice	850	28%	19%	30%	24%
Enrolling in dual-credit courses	864	32%	20%	30%	18%
Enrolling in pre-AP/AP courses	861	31%	23%	31%	15%
Selecting the right college(s) to apply to	865	39%	15%	31%	16%
Information on selecting majors in college	866	39%	16%	28%	18%
Participating in PSAT/NMSQT, SAT, or ACT test preparation	864	40%	15%	32%	14%
Participating in TSI/TSIA test preparation	867	36%	16%	27%	22%
The transfer of credit(s) from dual-credit or AP courses to college	868	31%	16%	27%	26%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: *n* represents the total number of students who responded to the item. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table G.18. Students' Reported College Information Sources: Percentages by Source, Year 1 (Grade 7) – Year (Grade 11)

Select the sources of information that have helped you to think about your future college education. (Select all that apply)	Year 1 (*n*=1,339)	Year 2 (*n*= 1,146)	Year 3 (*n*= 1,308)	Year 4 (*n*=1,119)	Year 5 (*n*=918)
Research on GEAR UP website*	15.0%	14.7%	18.2%	22.2%	25.3%
Information from GEAR UP staff/events*	28.8%	46.2%	33.6%	37.6%	40.0%
Information from or discussions with parents/family members*	60.8%	48.7%	41.8%	44.8%	45.0%
Information from or discussions with friends or other people my age*	33.2%	38.3%	39.7%	40.7%	47.7%
Information from or discussions with teachers/ school counselors*	50.3%	37.4%	35.9%	39.0%	46.0%
Research that I have done on my own*	34.0%	29.2%	35.9%	39.6%	44.6%
College field trip	--	--	51.7%	--	62.1%
College fair	--	--	26.2%	30.3%	47.6%
Program other than GEAR UP (e.g., AVID, Breakthrough)	1.3%	21.6%	20.9%	23.0%	21.6%
Watching sports	.5%	21.1%	20.1%	20.0%	15.6%
Television		21.0%	21.7%	23.1%	21.1%
Information from a class activity or assignment	0.4%	45.1%	47.3%	38.5%	40.5%
Other (please specify other sources)*	5.2%	1.8%	2.1%	4.2%	2.7%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
*There were significant differences across all time points for: GEAR UP website $\chi^2(4) = 60.1$, $p < 0.001$; GEAR UP staff/events $\chi^2(4) = 85.3$, $p < 0.001$; discussions with friends $\chi^2(4) = 52.4$, $p < 0.001$; discussions with parents/family members $\chi^2(4) = 128.3$, $p < 0.001$; discussions with teachers/school counselors $\chi^2(4) = 64.9$, $p < 0.001$; research done on my own $\chi^2(4) = 61.8$, $p < 0.001$; other reasons $\chi^2(4) = 32.7$, $p < 0.001$.

Table G.19. Students' Reported College Information Sources by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	GEAR UP Website	Discussions with GEAR UP Staff/Information at GEAR UP Events
High School H	195	29.2%	42.6%
High School I	172	31.4%	51.2%
High School J	109	24.8%	33.9%
High School K	213	10.8%	25.4%
High School L	32	34.4%	37.5%
High School M	200	30.0%	46.5%
Overall	921	25.3%	40.0%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
*There were significant differences across schools for: GEAR UP website $\chi^2(5) = 32.5$, $p < 0.001$; GEAR UP staff/events $\chi^2(5) = 33.8$, $p < 0.001$

Table G.20. Students' Average Perceived Knowledge of College Terms and Concepts: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)*

College Term/Concept	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Importance/Benefit of College	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9
General Requirements for College Acceptance	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6
ACT	1.8	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.6
SAT	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.6	2.8

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" are scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge; 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable; 3 – Knowledgeable; 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable.
* Students' self-reported knowledge differed significantly across time points: SAT: $F(4, 6062) = 154.7$, $p < 0.001$; ACT: $F(4, 5955) = 118.5$, $p < 0.05$; General requirements for college acceptance: $F(4, 6003) = 13.7$ $p < 0.001$; Importance/benefit of college: $F(4, 6032) = 6.9$, $p < 0.001$.

Table G.21. Average Students' Perceived Knowledge of College Terms by School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Response Option	*n*	SAT*	*n*	ACT*	*n*	General Requirements for College Entrance*	*n*	Importance / Benefit of College
High School H	Not knowledgeable	193	8%	191	14%	188	14%	191	12%
	Slightly knowledgeable		19%		25%		28%		20%
	Knowledgeable		48%		40%		42%		42%
	Extremely knowledgeable		25%		22%		17%		26%
High School I	Not knowledgeable	171	7%	164	13%	167	8%	170	6%
	Slightly knowledgeable		21%		32%		29%		23%
	Knowledgeable		55%		42%		48%		43%
	Extremely knowledgeable		17%		13%		15%		28%
High School J	Not knowledgeable	106	12%	106	19%	104	19%	104	13%
	Slightly knowledgeable		19%		18%		25%		21%
	Knowledgeable		50%		45%		30%		32%
	Extremely knowledgeable		19%		18%		26%		35%
High School K	Not knowledgeable	211	11%	209	20%	209	21%	209	15%
	Slightly knowledgeable		33%		32%		38%		23%
	Knowledgeable		46%		37%		33%		37%
	Extremely knowledgeable		10%		11%		8%		24%
High School L	Not knowledgeable	32	3%	32	9%	32	9%	31	10%
	Slightly knowledgeable		31%		34%		47%		32%
	Knowledgeable		47%		44%		31%		32%
	Extremely knowledgeable		19%		13%		13%		26%
High School M	Not knowledgeable	197	4%	196	11%	192	14%	193	9%
	Slightly knowledgeable		14%		33%		20%		19%
	Knowledgeable		56%		42%		50%		35%
	Extremely knowledgeable		26%		14%		17%		38%
Overall	Not knowledgeable	910	8%	898	15%	892	15%	898	11%
	Slightly knowledgeable		22%		29%		29%		22%
	Knowledgeable		51%		41%		41%		38%
	Extremely knowledgeable		19%		15%		15%		30%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
*Students' self-reported knowledge differed significantly across schools for the following items: General requirements for college acceptance: χ^2 (15) = 57.1, $p < 0.001$; SAT: χ^2 (15) = 51.6, $p < 0.001$; ACT: χ^2 (15) = 27.6, $p < 0.05$.

Table G.22. Average Students' Perceived Knowledge of College Terms, By School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	SAT	*n*	ACT	*n*	General Requirements for College Entrance	*n*	Importance / Benefit of College
High School H	193	2.91	191	2.69	188	2.61	191	2.82
High School I	171	2.82	164	2.57	167	2.70	170	2.93
High School J	106	2.75	106	2.62	104	2.63	104	2.88
High School K	211	2.55	209	2.39	209	2.27	209	2.71
High School L	32	2.81	32	2.59	32	2.47	31	2.74
High School M	197	3.05	196	2.60	192	2.70	193	3.02
Overall	910	2.82	898	2.57	892	2.56	898	2.86

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
*Students' self-reported knowledge differed significantly across schools each item: SAT: $F(5, 904) = 8.3$, $p < 0.001$; ACT: $F(5, 892) = 2.4$, $p < 0.05$; General requirements for college acceptance: $F(5, 886) = 6.1$, $p < 0.001$; Importance/benefit of college: $F(5, 892) = 2.4$, $p < 0.05$.

Table G.23. Average Parents' Perceived Knowledge of College Terms, By School, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	Response Option	*n*	Financial Aid and the Costs/Benefits of Your Child Pursuing a Postsecondary Education*	*n*	General Requirements for College Entrance*	*n*	Importance/ Benefit of College
High School H	Not knowledgeable	57	12.3%	57	5.3%	54	3.7%
	Slightly knowledgeable		33.3%		36.8%		14.8%
	Knowledgeable		40.4%		43.9%		51.9%
	Extremely knowledgeable		14.0%		14.0%		29.6%
High School I	Not knowledgeable	60	6.7%	59	11.9%	60	5.0%
	Slightly knowledgeable		41.7%		37.3%		18.3%
	Knowledgeable		46.7%		45.8%		58.3%
	Extremely knowledgeable		5.0%		5.1%		18.3%
High School J	Not knowledgeable	58	8.6%	58	6.9%	58	1.7%
	Slightly knowledgeable		27.6%		31.0%		22.4%
	Knowledgeable		44.8%		43.1%		46.6%
	Extremely knowledgeable		19.0%		19.0%		29.3%
High School K	Not knowledgeable	48	25.0%	48	22.9%	46	6.5%
	Slightly knowledgeable		47.9%		45.8%		21.7%
	Knowledgeable		22.9%		29.2%		39.1%
	Extremely knowledgeable		4.2%		2.1%		32.6%
High School L	Not knowledgeable	15	26.7%	15	13.3%	15	6.7%
	Slightly knowledgeable		6.7%		13.3%		13.3%
	Knowledgeable		60.0%		73.3%		20.0%
	Extremely knowledgeable		6.7%		0.0%		60.0%
High School M	Not knowledgeable	114	8.8%	114	7.9%	113	3.5%
	Slightly knowledgeable		29.8%		26.3%		11.5%
	Knowledgeable		50.0%		51.8%		44.2%
	Extremely knowledgeable		11.4%		14.0%		40.7%
Overall	Not knowledgeable	352	11.9%	351	10.3%	346	4.0%
	Slightly knowledgeable		33.5%		32.8%		16.5%
	Knowledgeable		43.8%		45.9%		46.5%
	Extremely knowledgeable		10.8%		11.1%		32.9%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).
* Parents' self-reported knowledge differed significantly across schools for the following items: Financial aid and the costs/benefits of your child pursuing a postsecondary education: χ^2 (15) = 36.1, $p < 0.01$; General requirements for college acceptance: χ^2 (15) = 34.9, $p < 0.01$.

Table G.24. Percentage of Parents Who Reported Engaging in Discussions with GEAR UP Staff about College Entrance Requirements By School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Yes
High School H	57	64.9%
High School I	60	80.0%
High School J	58	79.3%
High School K	47	36.2%
High School L	15	86.7%
High School M	113	89.4%
Overall	350	74.9%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017.
Note: Data are responses to the following question: "Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about the availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?"
*Parent-reported engagement in discussions about the availability of financial aid differed significantly across schools: χ^2 (5) = 55.6, p < 0.001.

Table G.25. Percentages of Students Who Do and Do Not Credit Texas GEAR UP SG in Helping Them Determine Their Postsecondary Plans, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Yes, GEAR UP helped me decide to go to college	No, I was already planning on going to college	No, I still don't plan to go to college	Does not apply; I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school but I do plan to go to college	Does not apply: I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school and II do not plan to go to college
High School H	195	62.1%	24.6%	6.2%	6.2%	1.0%
High School I	172	66.9%	19.2%	7.6%	4.1%	2.3%
High School J	109	56.9%	27.5%	0.9%	12.8%	1.8%
High School K	213	38.5%	38.5%	8.5%	12.7%	1.9%
High School L	32	43.8%	40.6%	9.4%	6.3%	0.0%
High School M	200	64.5%	29.0%	5.0%	1.0%	0.5%
Overall	921	56.8%	28.7%	6.2%	6.9%	1.4%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Percentages in Table G.25 reflect the response rates prior to removing respondents that selected the following response option: "Does not apply, I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school but I do plan to go to college," or "Does not apply, I am not aware I have participated in GEAR UP at my school and I do no not plan to go to college." In corresponding Figure 4.10, however, when including the "Does not apply" options, the following percentages of total responses for these two options are as follows: Year 1 (Grade 7): 10.8% (*n*=1,363), Year 2 (Grade 8): 6.2% (*n*=1,287), Year 3 (Grade 9): 7.2% (*n*=1,313), Year 4 (Grade 10): 8.7% (*n*=1,132), and Year 5 (Grade 11): 8.3% (*n*=921). Due to anonymity, responses are not linked to an individual respondent, thus comparisons over time are based on aggregate responses.
*Student responses differed significantly across schools: χ^2 (20) = 74.4, p < 0.001.

Table G.26. Students' Perceived Knowledge about Financial Aid Terms, Year 5 (Grade 11)

How much do you know about each of the following?	*n*	No Knowledge	Slightly Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	Extremely Knowledgeable
FAFSA[a]	903	26.8%	41.1%	26.2%	5.9%
Federal Pell Grants	887	49.3%	32.7%	14.4%	3.6%
Federal student loans	899	20.9%	38.3%	32.6%	8.2%
Federal work-study	890	41.1%	32.6%	21.6%	4.7%
Scholarships	894	5.9%	21.0%	46.3%	26.7%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
[a] FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. However, the survey items used only the acronym.

Table G.27. Percentage of Students Who Reported Engaging in Discussions with GEAR UP Staff about Financial Aid, By School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Yes
High School H	190	76.3%
High School I	170	89.4%
High School J	108	59.3%
High School K	210	53.3%
High School L	32	68.8%
High School M	198	80.3%
Overall	908	72.0%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Data are responses to the following question: "Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about the availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?"
*Student-reported engagement in discussions about the availability of financial aid differed significantly across schools $\chi^2(5) = 79.3$, $p < 0.01$

Table G.28. Student Differences by School: Perceived Affordability of College, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	*n*	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
Community College						
High School H	189	6.3%	9.5%	24.9%	38.6%	20.6%
High School I	171	5.8%	9.4%	28.7%	31.6%	24.6%
High School J	105	2.9%	10.5%	30.5%	33.3%	22.9%
High School K	213	3.3%	9.9%	32.4%	34.7%	19.7%
High School L	32	9.4%	6.3%	31.3%	31.3%	21.9%
High School M	197	2.5%	5.6%	19.3%	36.5%	36.0%
Overall	907	4.4%	8.7%	27.0%	35.1%	24.8%
Four-Year College						
High School H	189	10.1%	15.3%	39.7%	28.6%	6.3%
High School I	169	10.7%	15.4%	34.9%	27.8%	11.2%
High School J	104	6.7%	15.4%	34.6%	33.7%	9.6%
High School K	206	8.3%	11.2%	45.6%	30.1%	4.9%
High School L	31	9.7%	12.9%	41.9%	29.0%	6.5%
High School M	193	5.7%	11.4%	31.1%	32.6%	19.2%
Overall	892	8.4%	13.5%	37.8%	30.3%	10.1%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.
* Student-reported perceived affordability of college differed significantly across schools: Local community college: $\chi^2(20) = 33.6$, $p < .05$; Public 4-year college: $\chi^2(20) = 38.9$, $p < 0.01$

Table G.29. Parents' and Students' Perceptions of Affordability, Year 5 (Grade 11)

Type of Postsecondary School	*n*	Definitely Not	Probably Not	Not Sure	Probably	Definitely
Student						
Local public community college	907	4.4%	8.7%	27.0%	35.1%	24.8%
Public 4-year college	892	8.4%	13.5%	37.8%	30.3%	10.1%
Parent						
Local public community college	350	2.6%	7.7%	--	49.1%	40.6%
Public 4-year college	350	5.1%	18.0%	--	49.4%	27.4%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017) and Parent Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. *Not Sure* option not included in Parent Survey.

Table G.30. Students' Reported Reasons For Not Planning on Continuing Education After High School: Year 1 (Grade 7)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

If you do not continue your education after high school, what would be the reason(s)? (Select all that apply)	Year 1 (*n*= 680)	Year 2 (*n*= 689)	Year 3 (*n*= 810)	Year 4 (*n*=27)	Year 5 (*n*=67)
Family commitments	16.0%	15.8%	16.8%	11.1%	13.4%
	n=109	*n*=109	*n*=136	*n*=3	*n*=9
I need to work after HS	17.8%	21.8%	22.0%	37.0%	43.3%
	n=121	*n*=150	*n*=178	*n*=10	*n*=29
I want to work after HS	33.4%	37.9%	30.0%	55.6%	58.2%
	n=227	*n*=261	*n*=243	*n*=15	*n*=39
I will not need more than HS to succeed	6.0%	6.2%	4.4%	14.8%	25.4%
	n=41	*n*=43	*n*=36	*n*=4	*n*=17
I want to join the military service after HS	23.1%	18.1%	18.3%	22.2%	11.9%
	n=157	*n*=125	*n*=148	*n*=6	*n*=8
It costs too much/I cannot afford it	47.5%	38.9%	45.6%	40.7%	34.3%
	n=323	*n*=268	*n*=369	*n*=11	*n*=23
My grades are not good enough	21.8%	19.3%	24.0%	37.0%	38.8%
	n=148	*n*=133	*n*=194	*n*=19	*n*=26
My performance on college entrance exams	--	--	--	22.0%	22.4%
	--	--	--	*n*=6	*n*=15
Other	7.4%	5.2%	6.4%	22.0%	10.4%
	n=50	*n*=36	*n*=52	*n*=6	*n*=7

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2013, Spring 2014, Spring 2015, Spring 2016, Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding. Due to the skip logic used in the student survey, a small percentage of students were presented with this question. As a result, the number of students who answered these items was significantly lower for Year 4 (Grade 10) and Year 5 (Grade 11) than in previous years.

Table G.31. College Visits and College Student Shadowing Correlation with Student Knowledge and Plans for Taking Advanced Courses

Survey Item	Knowledge Topic Area	Means		*Correlation Result*
Have you participated in this activity during this school year (Year 5)? ***College visits/college student shadowing***	Importance/benefit of college	Yes	3.05	$r(831) = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.56	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in mathematics	Yes	2.78	$r(834) = 0.20$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.37	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in ELA	Yes	2.88	$r(834) = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.50	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in Science	Yes	2.72	$r(831) = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.37	
	Planning to take a pre-AP or AP course in Social Studies	Yes	2.79	$r(832) = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$
		No	2.45	

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: The Means column lists the average level of knowledge reported by students for each of the topic areas. Response options to the question "How much do you know about each of the following?" are scaled as follows: 1 – No Knowledge; 2 – Slightly Knowledgeable; 3 – Knowledgeable; 4 – Extremely Knowledgeable. "Yes" and "No" refers to whether or not the student reported participating in this activity during Year 5 (Grade 11).

G.6 Perceptions of Texas GEAR UP State Grant Activities

Table G.32. Student Differences by School: Participation in Select GEAR UP Activities, Year 5 (Grade 11)

School	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M	Overall
Tutoring, Any Subject*	*n*=195	*n*=172	*n*=109	*n*=213	*n*=32	*n*=200	*n*=921
	56.4%	58.1%	57.8%	36.2%	43.8%	58.0%	52.1%
Tutoring, Mathematics*	*n*=180	*n*=160	*n*=101	*n*=200	*n*=30	*n*=186	*n*=857
	39.4%	48.8%	46.5%	29.0%	46.7%	44.1%	40.8%
Tutoring, English/Language Arts*	*n*=179	*n*=158	*n*=102	*n*=201	*n*=30	*n*=190	*n*=860
	33.0%	25.3%	31.4%	15.4%	20.0%	38.4%	28.0%
Tutoring, Science*	*n*=179	*n*=158	*n*=101	*n*=198	*n*=30	*n*=190	*n*=856
	34.1%	22.2%	33.7%	16.2%	30.0%	36.3%	28.0%
Tutoring, Social Studies*	*n*=177	*n*=158	*n*=99	*n*=200	*n*=30	*n*=188	*n*=852
	41.2%	46.8%	31.3%	16.0%	3.3%	38.8%	33.3%
Mentoring*	*n*=175	*n*=158	*n*=101	*n*=197	*n*=30	*n*=187	*n*=848
	21.1%	25.3%	45.5%	12.7%	16.7%	34.2%	25.6%
College Preparation Advisor*	*n*=194	*n*=171	*n*=108	*n*=208	*n*=30	*n*=199	*n*=910
	51.0%	67.8%	38.0%	20.7%	56.7%	70.4%	50.1%
GEAR UP Summer Program*	*n*=180	*n*=158	*n*=100	*n*=197	*n*=30	*n*=188	*n*=853
	32.8%	36.1%	26.0%	18.3%	16.7%	37.2%	29.7%
Academic or Career Counseling/Advising*	*n*=178	*n*=159	*n*=101	*n*=197	*n*=30	*n*=187	*n*=852
	38.8%	45.9%	51.5%	25.9%	16.7%	49.7%	40.3%
Job Site Visiting/Shadowing*	*n*=175	*n*=157	*n*=100	*n*=197	*n*=30	*n*=189	*n*=848
	35.4%	26.8%	35.0%	22.8%	20.0%	66.7%	37.3%
College Visits/College Student Shadowing*	*n*=177	*n*=160	*n*=100	*n*=197	*n*=30	*n*=185	*n*=849
	58.8%	68.1%	56.0%	48.2%	66.7%	82.2%	63.1%
Educational Field Trips*	*n*=178	*n*=158	*n*=100	*n*=197	*n*=31	*n*=185	*n*=849
	64.6%	70.9%	60.0%	49.2%	71.0%	82.7%	65.8%
Financial Aid Counseling/Advising*	*n*=176	*n*=158	*n*=101	*n*=198	*n*=30	*n*=187	*n*=850
	29.0%	32.3%	36.6%	11.1%	20.0%	32.1%	26.7%
Family Cultural Events (Students' participation)	*n*=176	*n*=158	*n*=101	*n*=197	*n*=30	*n*=185	*n*=847
	27.8%	24.7%	30.7%	26.4%	23.3%	37.8%	29.3%
Family Cultural Events (Parents' participation)*	*n*=176	*n*=157	*n*=102	*n*=196	*n*=30	*n*=185	*n*=846
	22.2%	24.2%	36.3%	21.4%	26.7%	32.4%	26.5%
Other School Workshops about Benefits/Options of College*	*n*=176	*n*=159	*n*=100	*n*=197	*n*=30	*n*=187	*n*=849
	32.4%	30.2%	37.0%	21.8%	33.3%	46.0%	33.1%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages include those who responded yes to the following item: "Have you participated in this activity in this school year (2015–2016)?"
Note: Students had four separate items, each item asking about a topic of tutoring (Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies). The information in this table merges these variables.

*The degree to which average student responses differed across schools varied: Tutoring, any subject: χ^2 (5) = 30.8, $p < 0.001$; Tutoring, mathematics: χ^2 (5) = 18.5, $p < .01$; Tutoring, English/language arts: χ^2 (5) = 30.3, $p < 0.001$; Tutoring, science: χ^2 (5) = 27.9, $p < 0.001$; Tutoring, social studies: χ^2 (5) = 59.9, $p < 0.001$; Mentoring: χ^2 (5) = 48.7, $p < 0.001$; College Preparation Advisor: χ^2 (10) = 153.7, $p < 0.001$; GEAR UP Summer Program: χ^2 (5) = 24.4, $p < 0.001$; Academic or Career Counseling/Advising: χ^2 (5) = 38.4, $p < 0.001$; Job Site Visiting/Shadowing: χ^2 (5) = 99.1, $p < 0.001$; College Visits/College Student Shadowing: χ^2 (5) = 53.1, $p < 0.001$; Educational Field Trips: χ^2 (5) = 51.3, $p < 0.001$; Financial Aid Counseling/Advising: χ^2 (5) = 36.1, $p < 0.001$; Family Cultural Events (Parents' participation): χ^2 (5) = 13.1, $p < 0.05$; Other School Workshops about Benefits/Options of College: χ^2 (5) = 26.7, $p < 0.001$.

Table G.33. Student Differences by School: Average Perceptions of Effectiveness of Select GEAR UP Activities, Year 5 (Grade 11)

GEAR UP Activity	*n* and Rating of Effectiveness	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M	Overall
Tutoring, Any Subject*	*n*	96	89	54	62	13	101	415
	Not Effective	3.1%	1.1%	11.1%	6.5%	0.0%	9.9%	5.8%
	Slightly Effective	33.3%	30.3%	31.5%	50.0%	46.2%	31.7%	34.9%
	Mostly Effective	43.8%	49.4%	38.9%	30.6%	38.5%	47.5%	43.1%
	Very Effective	19.8%	19.1%	18.5%	12.9%	15.4%	10.9%	16.1%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.80	2.87	2.65	2.50	2.69	2.59	2.69
Tutoring, Mathematics	*n*	64	69	41	46	13	71	304
	Not Effective	14.1%	2.9%	4.9%	6.5%	0.0%	7.0%	6.9%
	Slightly Effective	14.1%	30.4%	22.0%	41.3%	38.5%	21.1%	25.7%
	Mostly Effective	43.8%	42.0%	39.0%	34.8%	30.8%	47.9%	41.8%
	Very Effective	28.1%	24.6%	34.1%	17.4%	30.8%	23.9%	25.7%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.86	2.88	3.02	2.63	2.92	2.89	2.86
Tutoring, English/Language Arts	*n*	52	34	28	24	5	63	206
	Not Effective	3.8%	2.9%	10.7%	12.5%	0.0%	9.5%	7.3%
	Slightly Effective	32.7%	23.5%	32.1%	33.3%	60.0%	23.8%	29.1%
	Mostly Effective	40.4%	44.1%	25.0%	29.2%	20.0%	46.0%	38.8%
	Very Effective	23.1%	29.4%	32.1%	25.0%	20.0%	32.1%	24.8%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.83	3.00	2.79	2.67	2.60	2.78	2.81
Tutoring, Science	*n*	53	30	27	26	8	59	203
	Not Effective	7.5%	3.3%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	3.4%	3.9%
	Slightly Effective	26.4%	33.3%	40.7%	50.0%	25.0%	25.4%	32.0%
	Mostly Effective	43.4%	40.0%	37.0%	26.9%	62.5%	52.5%	43.3%
	Very Effective	22.6%	23.3%	22.2%	19.2%	12.5%	18.6%	29.7%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.81	2.83	2.81	2.62	2.88	2.86	2.81
Tutoring, Social Studies	*n*	61	67	27	26	1	63	245
	Not Effective	1.6%	1.5%	11.1%	3.8%	--	6.3%	4.1%

GEAR UP Activity	*n* and Rating of Effectiveness	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M	Overall
	Slightly Effective	24.6%	14.9%	25.9%	30.8%	--	23.8%	22.4%
	Mostly Effective	34.4%	49.3%	37.0%	38.5%	--	46.0%	42.4%
	Very Effective	39.3%	34.3%	25.9%	26.9%	--	23.8%	31.0%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.11	3.16	2.78	2.88	--	2.87	3.00
Mentoring	*n*	34	35	36	20	4	52	181
	Not Effective	2.9%	2.9%	5.6%	0.0%	--	3.8%	3.3%
	Slightly Effective	17.6%	34.3%	27.8%	35.0%	--	26.9%	27.6%
	Mostly Effective	35.3%	37.1%	36.1%	15.0%	--	44.2%	36.5%
	Very Effective	44.1%	25.7%	30.6%	50.0%	--	25.0%	32.6%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.21	2.86	2.92	3.15	--	2.90	2.98
College Preparation Advisor[1]	*n*	98	114	41	40	17	136	446
	Strongly Dissatisfied	2.0%	0.9%	7.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%	2.0%
	Dissatisfied	6.1%	4.4%	7.3%	5.0%	5.9%	7.4%	6.1%
	Satisfied	54.1%	53.5%	41.5%	67.5%	47.1%	56.6%	54.5%
	Strongly Satisfied	37.8%	41.2%	43.9%	27.5%	47.1%	33.8%	37.4%
	Mean Satisfaction	1.72	1.65	1.78	1.78	1.59	1.78	1.73
GEAR UP Summer Program	*n*	52	52	22	27	5	61	219
	Not Effective	3.8%	1.9%	4.5%	3.7%	0.0%	1.6%	2.7%
	Slightly Effective	19.2%	11.5%	27.3%	33.3%	20.0%	21.3%	20.5%
	Mostly Effective	36.5%	42.3%	45.5%	40.7%	20.0%	34.4%	38.4%
	Very Effective	40.4%	44.2%	22.7%	22.2%	60.0%	42.6%	38.4%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.13	3.29	2.86	2.81	3.40	3.18	3.12
Academic or Career Counseling/Advising	*n*	62	65	43	39	3	83	295
	Not Effective	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	2.6%	--	2.4%	1.4%
	Slightly Effective	11.3%	26.2%	30.2%	38.5%	--	21.7%	24.1%
	Mostly Effective	51.6%	35.4%	41.9%	46.2%	--	47.0%	44.1%
	Very Effective	37.1%	36.9%	27.9%	12.8%	--	28.9%	30.5%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.26	3.08	2.98	2.69	--	3.02	3.04
Job Site Visiting/Shadowing	*n*	56	35	27	35	4	108	265
	Not Effective	0.0%	2.9%	7.4%	5.7%	--	1.9%	2.6%
	Slightly Effective	16.1%	14.3%	33.3%	34.3%	--	26.9%	24.2%

GEAR UP Activity	*n* and Rating of Effectiveness	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M	Overall
	Mostly Effective	44.6%	48.6%	37.0%	40.0%	--	37.0%	41.5%
	Very Effective	39.3%	43.3%	22.2%	20.0%	--	34.3%	31.7%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.23	3.14	2.74	2.74	--	3.04	3.02
College Visits/College Student Shadowing*	*n*	100	93	45	80	18	133	469
	Not Effective	2.0%	3.2%	4.4%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
	Slightly Effective	20.0%	18.3%	15.6%	42.5%	44.4%	23.3%	24.9%
	Mostly Effective	34.0%	41.9%	31.1%	33.8%	38.9%	38.3%	36.7%
	Very Effective	44.0%	36.6%	48.9%	18.8%	16.7%	38.3%	36.0%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.20	3.12	3.24	2.66	2.72	3.15	3.06
Educational Field Trips	*n*	108	99	52	79	19	130	487
	Not Effective	1.9%	3.0%	3.8%	6.3%	10.5%	2.3%	3.5%
	Slightly Effective	22.2%	23.2%	13.5%	32.9%	31.6%	23.1%	23.8%
	Mostly Effective	39.8%	38.4%	40.4%	35.4%	31.6%	42.3%	39.2%
	Very Effective	36.1%	35.4%	42.3%	25.3%	26.3%	32.3%	33.5%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.10	3.06	3.21	2.30	2.74	3.05	3.03
Financial Aid Counseling/Advising	*n*	47	48	28	18	4	52	197
	Not Effective	2.1%	2.1%	0.0%	5.6%	--	5.8%	3.0%
	Slightly Effective	25.5%	31.3%	32.1%	22.2%	--	28.8%	28.9%
	Mostly Effective	38.3%	39.6%	42.9%	33.3%	--	46.2%	40.6%
	Very Effective	34.0%	27.1%	25.0%	38.9%	--	19.2%	27.4%
	Mean Effectiveness	3.04	2.92	2.93	3.06	--	2.79	2.92
Family Cultural Events (Students' participation)	*n*	45	36	24	43	6	58	212
	Not Effective	4.4%	5.6%	8.3%	4.7%	0.0%	1.7%	4.2%
	Slightly Effective	31.1%	38.9%	20.8%	34.9%	16.7%	39.7%	34.0%
	Mostly Effective	33.3%	25.0%	29.2%	39.5%	33.3%	39.7%	34.4%
	Very Effective	31.1%	30.6%	41.7%	20.9%	50.0%	19.0%	27.4%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.91	2.81	3.04	2.77	3.33	2.76	2.85
Family Cultural Events (Parents' participation)	*n*	37	34	28	37	7	51	194
	Not Effective	5.4%	11.8%	7.1%	8.1%	0.0%	5.9%	7.2%
	Slightly Effective	35.1%	29.4%	21.4%	32.4%	0.0%	35.3%	30.4%
	Mostly Effective	32.4%	29.4%	25.0%	27.0%	71.4%	33.3%	31.4%
	Very Effective	27.0%	29.4%	46.4%	32.4%	28.6%	25.5%	30.9%

GEAR UP Activity	*n* and Rating of Effectiveness	High School H	High School I	High School J	High School K	High School L	High School M	Overall
	Mean Effectiveness	2.81	2.76	3.11	2.84	3.29	2.78	2.86
Other School Workshops about Benefits/Options of College	*n*	53	41	28	36	8	69	235
	Not Effective	1.9%	2.4%	3.6%	2.8%	12.5%	2.9%	3.0%
	Slightly Effective	39.6%	36.6%	17.9%	27.8%	25.0%	20.3%	28.5%
	Mostly Effective	32.1%	31.7%	42.9%	41.7%	37.5%	50.7%	40.4%
	Very Effective	26.4%	29.3%	35.7%	27.8%	25.0%	26.1%	28.1%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.83	2.88	3.12	2.94	2.75	3.00	2.94
Taking a Pre-AP or AP Mathematics Course	*n*	97	91	47	66	12	88	401
	Not Effective	6.2%	5.5%	2.1%	4.5%	--	11.4%	6.2%
	Slightly Effective	24.7%	26.4%	14.9%	40.9%	33.3%	12.5%	24.2%
	Mostly Effective	48.5%	53.8%	46.8%	39.4%	33.3%	45.5%	46.9%
	Very Effective	20.6%	14.3%	36.2%	15.2%	33.3%	30.7%	22.7%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.84	2.77	3.17	2.65	3.00	2.95	2.86
Taking an AP English/Language Arts Course	*n*	96	92	43	72	24	76	387
	Not Effective	9.4%	4.3%	4.7%	1.4%	--	10.5%	6.2%
	Slightly Effective	21.9%	25.0%	20.9%	25.0%	37.5%	27.6%	24.5%
	Mostly Effective	42.7%	48.9%	30.2%	40.3%	25.0%	40.8%	41.6%
	Very Effective	26.0%	21.7%	44.2%	33.3%	37.5%	21.1%	27.6%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.85	2.88	3.14	3.06	3.00	2.72	2.91
Taking a Pre-AP or AP Science Course	*n*	94	77	41	65	26	80	558
	Not Effective	8.5%	20.8%	2.4%	1.5%	--	11.3%	9.6%
	Slightly Effective	37.2%	28.6%	14.6%	38.5%	33.3%	27.5%	30.9%
	Mostly Effective	36.2%	41.6%	46.3%	41.5%	16.7%	38.8%	39.7%
	Very Effective	18.1%	9.1%	36.3%	18.5%	50.0%	22.5%	19.8%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.64	2.39	3.17	2.77	3.17	2.73	2.70
Taking an AP Social Studies Course	*n*	91	93	36	60	7	74	361
	Not Effective	3.3%	2.2%	11.1%	8.3%	--	5.4%	5.0%
	Slightly Effective	20.9%	15.1%	16.7%	35.0%	14.3%	16.2%	20.2%
	Mostly Effective	49.5%	50.5%	47.2%	30.0%	28.6%	48.6%	45.7%
	Very Effective	26.4%	32.3%	25.0%	26.7%	57.1%	29.7%	29.1%
	Mean Effectiveness	2.99	3.13	2.86	2.75	3.43	3.03	2.99

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: Percentages and means are not reported when there were less than 5 respondents to protect respondents' privacy.

Rather than effectiveness, students were asked about satisfaction with the relationship between them and their GEAR UP College Preparation Advisor. Response options were reversed compared to effectiveness, so lower numbers denote higher levels of satisfaction.
*Ratings of effectiveness were significantly different across schools for the following activities: Tutoring, any subject: $\chi^2(80) = 106$, $p < .05$; College Visits/College Student Shadowing: $\chi^2(15) = 38.3$, $p < 0.001$.

G.7 Texas GEAR UP SG Summer Program

Table G.34 Student Participation in Summer 2016 Programs

Where was/were the summer program(s) you attended offered? (Select ALL that apply)	*n*	%
My local high school district (school I was attending in Grade 10 or 11)	150	52.4%
A community college or university in Texas	145	50.7%
In a state other than Texas	30	10.5%
Another school district in Texas	13	4.5%
A business or community organization in Texas	12	4.2%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Spring 2017).
Note: This question was asked in the Year 5 (Grade 11; Fall 2016) student survey. Total *n*=286; students were able to select more than one option.

Table G.35. Reasons for Attending One or More Summer 2016 Program by Students Who Attended: Year 3 (Grade 9)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

	Year 5		Year 4		Year 3	
Select the reasons that you attended one or more summer program(s). (Select ALL that apply)	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
I wanted to participate in a summer program(s).	240	83.9%	295	73.4%	238	47.9%
Someone from GEAR UP strongly encouraged me to attend the summer program(s).	171	59.8%	176	43.8%	--	--
The academic content focus of a summer program(s) was of interest to me.	151	52.8%	158	39.3%	174	35.0%
The summer program(s) provided an opportunity for me to spend time with friends.	143	50.0%	185	46.0%	189	38.0%
The school strongly encouraged me to attend the summer program(s).	118	41.3%	144	35.8%	174	35.0%
The summer program(s) was scheduled on days that I could attend.	117	40.9%	141	35.1%	129	26.0%
I thought it would help me to do well in my Grade 11/10/9 classes.	113	39.5%	172	42.8%	261	52.5%
My parents wanted me to participate in a summer program(s).	112	39.2%	153	38.1%	195	39.2%
I thought it would help me to do well in my AP, pre-AP, or college credit classes.	95	33.2%	--	--	--	--
The summer program(s) was scheduled at a time of day that I could attend.	87	30.4%	123	30.6%	131	26.4%
Other*	13	4.6%	34	8.5%	--	--

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Fall 2016).
Note: Total *n*s are as follows: Fall 2016: *n*=286; Fall 2015: *n*=402; Fall 2014: *n*=289. Total percentages will not sum to exactly 100% due to students being able to select all response options that applied. *I thought it would help me to do well in my AP,* pre-AP*, or college credit classes* was only a response option on the Fall 2016 survey. *Someone from GEAR UP strongly encouraged me to attend the summer program(s)* was only a response option on the Fall 2016 and Fall 2015 surveys. Other responses in Fall 2016 included “It helps me condition for sports;” “I wanted to leave my house;” “It was a great opportunity to see whether or not this career choice was for me;” “It…allowed me to make friends from other schools;” “I wanted to see places I’ve never seen.”

Table G.36. Reasons for Not Attending a Summer 2016 Program by Students Who Did Not Attend: Year 3 (Grade 9)–Year 5 (Grade 11)

	Year 5		Year 4		Year 3	
Select from the following reasons that you did NOT attend a summer 2016 program. (Select ALL that apply)	n	%	n	%	n	%
I did not want to participate in a summer program.	280	35.7%	393	38.9%	280	39.1%
I had a job and could not miss work to attend.	186	23.7%	129	12.8%	50	6.3%
I had family responsibilities and could not attend (e.g., watching siblings).	157	20.0%	193	19.1%	127	16.0%
Our family was not in the area during the time that summer programs I was aware of were scheduled (e.g., on vacation).	131	16.7%	184	18.2%	143	18.0%
The summer programs I was aware of were scheduled at a time of day that did not work for me.	124	15.8%	127	12.6%	92	11.6%
The school did not inform me about any summer programs I might attend.	116	14.8%	145	14.4%	146	18.3%
The content focus of the summer programs I was aware of were not of interest to me.	75	9.6%	54	5.3%	38	4.8%
The school did not encourage me to attend any summer programs.	61	7.8%	70	6.9%	51	6.4%
The summer programs I was aware of were related to careers/jobs that I am not interested in learning more about.	54	6.9%	30	3.0%	--	--
None of my friends were attending a summer program.	52	6.6%	74	7.3%	51	6.4%
My parents did not want me to participate in a summer program.	47	6.0%	38	3.8%	30	3.8%
Other*	79	10.1%	136	13.5%	--	--

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Student Survey (Fall 2014, Fall 2015, Fall 2016)
Note: Total *n*s are as follows: Fall 2016: *n*=784; Fall 2015: *n*=1,010; Fall 2014: *n*=716. Total percentages will not sum to exactly 100% due to students being able to select all response options that applied. Note: *The summer programs I was aware of were related to careers/jobs that I am not interested in learning more about* was only a response option on the Fall 2016 and Fall 2015 surveys. Other responses in Fall 2016 included "Attending summer school"; "Had sports practice and other sports events"; and "I didn't attend the school district last year"; "I did not have any interest."

G.8 Parents' Overall Perceptions of Texas GEAR UP State Grant

Table G.37. Parents' Overall Satisfaction with Texas GEAR UP SG: Percentages by Level of Satisfaction By School, Year 5 (Grade 11)*

School	n	Does Not Apply	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
High School H	56	17.9%	0.0%	5.4%	37.5%	39.3%
High School I	59	5.1%	0.0%	6.8%	50.8%	37.3%
High School J	57	8.8%	3.5%	3.5%	26.3%	57.9%
High School K	47	27.7%	4.3%	4.3%	53.2%	10.6%
High School L	12	8.3%	16.7%	8.3%	50.0%	16.7%
High School M	106	5.7%	0.9%	3.8%	33.0%	56.6%
Overall	337	11.3%	2.1%	4.7%	39.2%	42.7%

Source: Texas GEAR UP SG Parent Survey (Spring 2017).
*Parent-reported satisfaction with GEAR UP differed significantly across schools: $\chi^2(15) = 47.6$, $p < 0.001$. The "Does not apply" option was not included in the significance testing.