



## GEAR UP: Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

Authorized by Congress in 1998, GEAR UP is a competitive federal grant program designed to increase the high school graduation and college-going rates of students from low-income households.

In October 2018, the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education was awarded a seven-year, \$24.5 million grant by the U.S. Department of Education to serve at least 10,000 middle and high school students in at least 10 school districts. This is the fourth GEAR UP state grant that has been administered through CPE.

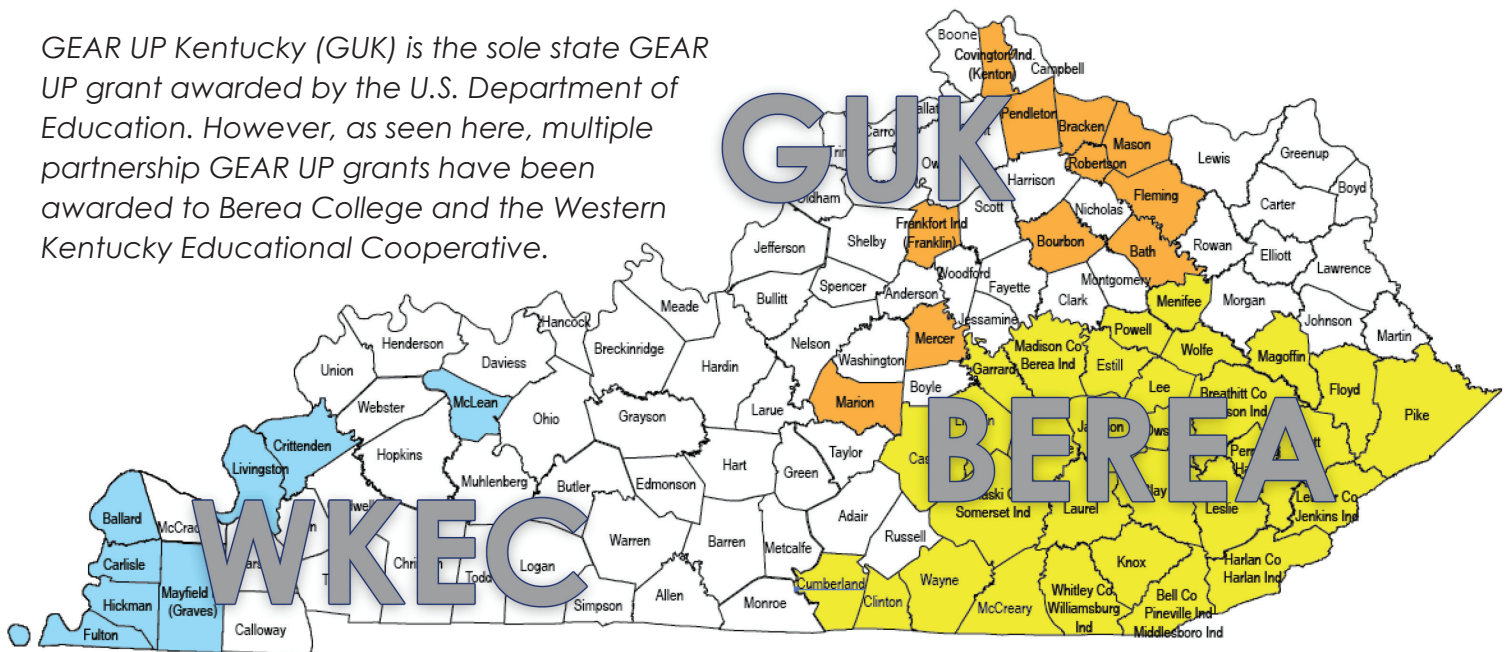
**OUR VISION:**  
**Every student prepared for postsecondary success.**

GEAR UP Kentucky (GUK) is committed to creating long-term cultural change – creating a college-going culture – in 23 schools (in 12 school districts) in 11 counties in which our staff are working.

GUK is providing services in the following school districts: Bath County, Bourbon County, Bracken County, Covington Independent, Fleming County, Frankfort Independent, Marion County, Mason County, Mercer County, Paris Independent, Pendleton County and Robertson County.

## The GEAR UP Footprint in Kentucky: State & Partnership Grants

GEAR UP Kentucky (GUK) is the sole state GEAR UP grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education. However, as seen here, multiple partnership GEAR UP grants have been awarded to Berea College and the Western Kentucky Educational Cooperative.



# GEAR UP Kentucky Goals and Objectives

## National GEAR UP Goals

- 1** Increase academic performance and preparation for post-secondary education
- 2** Increase high school graduation and post-secondary enrollment rates
- 3** Increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing

## GEAR UP Kentucky Objectives

GUK has 15 objectives related to these national goals. Objectives are listed beside associated goal number.

- 1**
  - 1: Improve individual student performance on college readiness assessments.
  - 2: Improve in overall student performance on annual college readiness assessments.
  - 3: Reduce the need for remediation in postsecondary education.
  - 4: Increase participation in individualized student advising in high school.
  - 5: Increase participation in individualized student advising in college.
- 2**
  - 6: Improve 9th grade completion rate.
  - 7: Improve mathematics completion rate.
  - 8: Improve high school graduation rate.
  - 9: Improve college enrollment rate.
- 3**
  - 10: Improve FAFSA completion rate.
  - 11: Increase college application rate.
  - 12: Increase competency in financial literacy in middle school.
  - 13: Increase competency in financial literacy in high school.
  - 14: Improve educational expectations.
  - 15: Improve knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing.

## The Four Pillars of Student Success

GEAR UP Kentucky services are strategically aligned to the *Four Pillars of Student Success*, a theoretical framework used to engage, develop and mobilize students and their key influencers in pursuit of student success.

These pillars, developed by Dr. Aaron Thompson, are inextricably interconnected. In an environment with both high expectations and support from all pillars, students are more likely to succeed. Without these supports and expectations, students are less likely to establish sufficient goals or maintain a commitment to postsecondary education.

While at-risk students often experience deficiencies in one or more of these pillars, increased supports within the other pillars can alleviate gaps.

Pillar: Self	Pillar: Family	Pillar: Institution	Pillar: Community
Curriculum	Curriculum	Technology & Assessments	Communication Campaign
Advising & Assessments	Advising & Support	Peer Learning Community	Statewide Institute
Campus Experiences	Campus Experiences	Professional Development	Partnership Development
Leadership Development	Leadership Development	Leadership Development	Leadership Development

## School Selection Criteria

### KEY FACTORS CONSIDERED:

- 51% or more students who are free/reduced-lunch eligible (based on 7th grade class at time of application)
- No overlap with schools included in other GEAR UP applications
- If previously involved in GEAR UP grant, must have successfully completed the partnership

### OTHER FACTORS:

- School performance on the ACT
- College-going rate
- High school graduation rate
- Geographic need
- Resources in the school
- Proximity to a postsecondary institution



## GEAR UP Kentucky Service Model

GEAR UP Kentucky provides services in a **hybrid** model. Through this model, services are being provided to multiple groups of students.

**Full Service Cohorts (FSCs)** will serve all GUK school students who begin 7th grade in Fall 2019 or Fall 2020. FSCs receive GUK services every year through their last year of high school.

**Priority Student Cohorts (PSCs)** are comprised of all 12th graders in the schools being served by GUK. PSCs will receive GUK services through their first year of postsecondary education.

GEAR UP Kentucky's seven-year service model addresses gaps and areas for growth within four research-based areas: **comprehensive school counseling, early campus exposure, community and family engagement, and peer leadership.**

## Pillar-Informed Services and Strategies

### SELF and FAMILY PILLARS

The evidence-based strategies for students and parents include: **Essential Skills and College Transition Curricula** (*social-emotional skills, academic discipline, career exploration and financial literacy*); **Advising and Assessments** (*college readiness assessments, academic planning, college knowledge and college match/fit*); **Campus Experiences** (*summer enrichment programs and college visits*); and **Leadership Development** (*peer mentoring, peer tutoring and peer leadership/ambassador programs*). Each strategy includes parallel family activities and resources to empower parents to fully support the aspirations and academic progress of their children.

### COMMUNITY PILLAR

GUK employs the following strategies in statewide and community services: **Statewide Communications Campaign, Partnership Development, Institute for a College-Going Commonwealth** and **Student and Parent Voice Initiatives.**

### INSTITUTION PILLAR

GUK is focused on increasing the effectiveness of school and district professionals to develop and sustain a college-going culture through **Professional Development** (*including Teacher Leader Academy*), **Leadership Development** (*NCCEP District Leadership Institute*), **Peer Learning Communities** and **Assessments and Technology Training.**

## The F.A.C.E.S. of College Readiness

When we talk about creating a college-going culture, we're talking about creating an environment in which ALL pillars are engaged and supported to create a sustaining culture that supports the F.A.C.E.S. of college readiness. These F.A.C.E.S. are:

**F**INANCIAL

**A**CADEMIC

**C**CULTURAL

**E**MOTIONAL

**S**OCCIAL

## Building Partnerships & Ensuring Successful Transition



While CPE has administered the state GEAR UP grant over the past two decades, this is the first grant in which students are being served through their first year of postsecondary education.

GEAR UP Kentucky staff reviewed data from its 12 partner school districts to determine the **postsecondary institutions most-attended by their college-going graduates.**

These institutions have been designated as GUK's preliminary postsecondary partners. Meetings with relevant postsecondary staff are ongoing to determine how GUK may best provide services to GUK students transitioning to these institutions.

GUK staff believes that "you have to see it to be it," and getting students on college campuses is crucial. In addition to the **visits to multiple college campuses** being offered to GUK students and family members, GUK will be offering **four-day junior STEM summer academies on KCTCS campuses** for middle schoolers, as well as **three-week summer academies on public university campuses** for rising juniors and seniors.

To help reduce summer melt and increase retention, postsecondary-going GUK students will receive informational and inspirational text messages throughout the summer before and during their first year of college.

# #gearupworks

Significant outcomes from GUK 3.0 | 2011-2017

**High School Graduation:** The average high school graduation rate for the Class of 2017 was 97%, significantly exceeding the statewide rate of 90%.

**College Enrollment:** The percentage of seniors who reported enrolling directly in a postsecondary education institution was 60%, as compared to Kentucky's in-state college-going rate (53%).

**Financial Aid Applications:** 2,474 GUK high school seniors completed a FAFSA in 2016-17. The average FAFSA completion rate in GUK high schools was 65%, as compared to 57% and 58% in the previous two school years. More than half of GUK schools met or exceeded the statewide FAFSA completion rate of 65%.

**College Applications:** 2,144 (61%) GUK seniors completed a total of 2,632 college applications in 2016-17.

**College Knowledge:** The percentage of students who reported knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing increased by 15 percentage points between 7th and 9th grade in cohort 1, by 26 percentage points in cohort 2 and by 31 percentage points in cohort 3.

**Campus Experiences:** GUK students visited 28 different college campuses in the 2016-17 school year alone and hundreds of 10th, 11th and 12th grade students participated in a GUK Summer Academy, a rigorous, three-week, residential, early college experience on one of six public university campuses.

**ACT Scores:** The percentage of GEAR UP students in the reportable cohort (cohort 1) of GUK 3.0 who performed at or above benchmark on the ACT increased from the average GUK 2.0 percentage in each subject (English – increased by 11 percentage points; Math – increased by 10 percentage points; Reading – increased by 8 percentage points; Science – increased by 19 percentage points).



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