

GEAR UP Counselor Newsletter

Volume 2/Number 18

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Highlight on Best Practices.....

Congratulations to our School Based and Regional GEAR UP Staff who will be presenting at the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) this summer in San Francisco, CA.

Willie Addison, Mike Flynn, Nancy Hale and **Cindy Saylor** have been accepted to present the program EVERYDAY PARTNERS IN EVERYDAY PLACES. **Linda Stone** and **Rochelle Garrett** have been accepted to present COLLEGE BOUND MENTORING. **Kim Gardner** has been accepted to present TEACHER EXTERNSHIPS: BRINGING REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE INTO THE CLASSROOM. Finally, **Dreama Gentry** and **Judy Kim** have been accepted to present LESSONS FROM A SUCCESSFUL GEARUP.

These folks took the initiative to design and submit their program proposals in addition to their essential GEAR UP work. It took a great deal of time and planning to pull together the resources necessary. There were over 800 presentations submitted and it is an honor to be selected. Please join in congratulating each of them for this accomplishment.

As I end this year's series of GEAR UP newsletters, I would like to share from WHAT MAKES OUR GEAR UP GREAT including those schools we haven't yet highlighted. If your school is not included here, check previous editions of the newsletter (Numbers 16 & 17.)

Rockcastle County Middle School – Nancy Hale

I am pleased that we have had every 7th and 8th grade student at RCMS on 7 college campuses so far this year. These colleges are still responding to and in contact with the students because of their GEAR UP involvement – This grant will definitely open doors for many of our students to go to college who would not have gone. That is exciting to me!

One of our most successful components has been the Career Opportunity Field Trips we have had to Toyota Manufacturing and to Applebee's Park. Applebee's was the first trip that I have organized where parents called me here at school and at home, or wrote me a note to thank me for planning the trip because their child learned so much and started thinking about a career, going to college, etc. And,

our College Center in the Library has been phenomenal - as Mr. Coguer said last week in team meeting "Our teachers are fighting over reserving times to bring their students to the College Center."

While Rockcastle County Middle School had a set-back with a student-set-fire after the above note from Nancy, their spirit was not broken. She wrote shortly after the fire: Our new motto is "We Are More Than A Building." We'll be okay - even better - but we are going to miss being together. We are going to meet every Tuesday and Thursday after school at the high school auditorium for a faculty meeting to keep us all updated. Our wonderful lunchroom ladies said they would bring food and lots of chocolate - stressed spelled backward is desserts - so we'll just eat ourselves through the depression! The Rock will rise again!

Berea Community Middle School – Linda Taylor

It is inevitable that at some point during middle school, students will need some extra help with class work or projects. At Berea Community Middle School these needs are met through an after school HOMEWORK HELP program. Two afternoons each week, BCMS students can be found in classrooms or in the computer lab working with the GEAR UP Coordinator or college students to complete homework or projects.

Students drop in as they need assistance. On any given afternoon, from 2-15 middle schoolers receive help. This extra help can make the difference in passing rather than failing a class or even a grade level.

BCMS students who participate in homework help can also participate in a Berea College program sponsored by the Bonner Scholars, called Student Leadership Initiative Program (SLIP). SLIP provides a number of activities, from additional help with homework to community service projects and campus field trips.

Foley Middle School – Cindy Saylor

I would like to share two programs that have been implemented at Foley Middle School I feel are distinctive and successful:

1) **Career Exploration Walking Field Trips:** The Career Development Teacher and I collaborate to provide our 7th and 8th grade students with the opportunity to visit various businesses and agencies in Berea. The sites we visit are in close proximity and have all been within walking distance of the school. We have had the opportunity to take our students to a daycare, fire department, pharmacy, and post office. We are schedule to visit the hospital in February to hear about various careers in the medical field.

The Career Exploration Walking Field Trips provide our students with the opportunity to see first-hand the work environment and to hear about the various career opportunities associated with a particular site. One example would be the visit to the daycare, students heard from the Director, Food Services Manager, Teachers, and Bookkeeper. This visit provided the opportunity to hear about multiple careers associated within this business. This program has also been an asset in helping our school develop relationships in the community. Many of our students have had the opportunity to job shadow at the sites we have visited.

2) College Awareness Program: To adequately help our students and parents plan for post secondary education, we are offering a College Awareness Program on January 23, 2007. Guest speakers will provide information on admissions, financial aid and individual learning plans. The main goal for this event is to help parents and students establish a time line for college preparation. Information will be provided on topics, such as when to begin scouting for a college/university, understanding enrollment requirements, financial aid availability and how to access the various funds. Several representatives from colleges, universities and technical schools will be present to share information and distribute colligate materials. We feel this program will an asset in assisting our students with their post secondary educational goals.

Lee County Middle School – Willie Addison

During our school day, students work on 4 Goals that our principal, Leadership Team and the GEAR UP Counselor set in place very early on to get students attention. Students must work on grades, attendance, behavior, and AR reading to be rewarded. Our entire cohort of students are treated equally. Only the student can knock him or herself out of a reward. While teachers and students complete a rigorous curriculum, the rewards are being planned. Our message "Work hard...Rewards will come your way!" is Thanks to GEAR UP. This hook is keeping kids in school, providing them with goals and rewarding them for their hard work. School is cool! I can be a success in high school and life!

The Lee County High School and the Lee County Middle School are linked. Because we share a common hallway our students pass each other all day coming and going to class. We have been able to create interest and awareness in post-secondary education by creating a college hallway of shadow boxes, sign, and board. Each shadow box offers insights in different colleges and tech, schools in Kentucky.

Students are passing through this hallway everyday and are talking about college. We have high educational aspirations for all our students.

We are building our after school programs that offer help in reading and math. We have wonderful teachers who stay and work with students. They help make school fun and provide a safe environment for students to learn. We team with other programs (like ESS) so that our kids are provided meals and bus rides home. We also reach out to parents with special open houses and parent event as well as our parent centers thought out our county thanks GEAR UP.

Clark-Moores Middle School – Zac Wray

Clark-Moores Middle School's GEAR UP program hosted the stone carving duo, Al and Penny Nelson to help our students with a unique and creative project. On September 26, 27, and 28th almost 1/3 of the student body participated in carving a limestone sun dial/time capsule that will be permanently displayed outside of the school. The students also made jewelry out of the pieces that they had carved themselves. The time capsule, which was placed inside the carved monument, was signed by all the students who worked on the project and many faculty and staff. On Thursday the 28th at 6:00 p.m. we invited students, parents and faculty to a dedication where we showed a power point of the student's hard work. We also put significant items in the time capsule such as newspapers, student work, and personal/school memorabilia. Mr. Nelson then sealed the capsule which will be opened on September 28th 2021. *See you then!*

Estill County Middle School – Mike Flynn

What makes the Estill County Middle School GEAR UP Program successful? This question can be answered in one simple word, "collaboration" or perhaps "buy-in." Take your pick either one would be a good descriptor of why our program is being successful in our eyes. The "collaboration/buy-in" is coming from all areas. Parents are starting to see and appreciate the educational opportunities that the program is bringing to not only their students, but to themselves as well. We can see this in the gradual increase of parents attending our evening parent workshops. This is further evident by the number of parents calling to make sure that their children are getting their forms and things in to the school for the various GEAR UP programs and events.

This "collaboration/buy-in" is evident in our staff as well. Teachers are excited about the many educational and professional development opportunities being brought in by the GEAR UP program. The Technology Teacher has put in countless extra hours this year learning all he can about software provided to him by the GEAR Program to teach a media class, which is currently producing a newscast, newspaper, and year book. There is evidence of community "buy-in" as local businesses such as our local printing press and newspapers are volunteering to come and spend time in the class to teach students lay-out designs and writing skills.

The Mad Science after School Program has had a wonderful response with an average of 15 students staying after school once a week to participate in hands on science learning. The buy-in is there in the faculty as well with both 7th grade science teachers volunteering their time to stay after and assist with the program.

Our Entrepreneurship class is still another example of great collaboration going on, with arrangements being made between our school and the Berea College Entrepreneurship for the Public Good program to have college students from the business department mentor middle school students trying to develop a business plan and power point presentations.

The schools fall festival was a wonderful opportunity to provide college information to parents and students in a non-threatening and fun way. 9 colleges and 3 college access programs sent representatives to the event to help provide this vital information. We were equally pleased with our State Representative Ted Edmons who showed his support for the program by spending the evening with us and talking with parents about the importance of helping their children set a college oriented goal for their future.

The Estill County Middle School has set the objective to teach strictly by the Core Content, therefore, everything done in the classroom has to show some connection to the current core content. GEAR UP programs at ECMS strive to ensure that this objective is maintained with the additional services provided during the school day. This is monitored by the GEAR UP Coordinator regularly meeting with the 7th and 8th grade teams to discuss what GEAR UP initiatives are available to them and then they decide when and how they will be integrated into the curriculum to make sure that students are not only receiving quality and rigor enhancing programs, but also ensuring that they are being introduced at the appropriate time.

Remember.....

***Year 3 Spending Plans due to the Regional Office May 31st**

*The next School Based Staff Meeting is Thursday, August 2nd, 2007 in Berea (exact location TBD—hopefully our new space.)

*A copy of Parent Surveys and Student Surveys have been sent to the SBS via Michelle and also as an attachment to the SBS Meeting Minutes May 7th. Please ensure that Parent Surveys are included in the Parent Paperwork from your school (both middle and high) for fall enrollment and that you have a plan to survey all students in the fall. Completed surveys should be turned into our office by November 1st.

Information for All

Due to changes in Hasan Davis' schedule, he is available for programming this summer. If you would like to add him as a facilitator to summer camps, you may email him at hasandavis@hotmail.com He would be an awesome addition to transition programs. Some SBS have expressed interest in his Character-Performances which can also be scheduled for performance at Berea College (Mom & Dad Go to College) or at your school site.

Good Reads:

SCHOOLS BANNING IPODS TO BEAT CHEATERS

Banning baseball caps during tests was obvious -- students were writing the answers under the brim. Then, schools started banning cell phones, realizing students could text message the answers to each other. Now, schools across the country are targeting digital media players as a potential cheating device. Devices including iPods and Zunes can be hidden under clothing, with just an earbud and a wire snaking behind an ear and into a shirt collar to give them away, school officials say. Some students use iPod-compatible voice recorders to record test answers in advance and then play them back, reports Rebecca Boone for the Associated Press. Others download crib notes onto the music players and hide them in the "lyrics" text files. Even an audio clip of the old "Schoolhouse Rock" take on how a bill makes it through Congress can come in handy during some American government exams. "Trying to fight the technology without a dialogue on values and expectations is a losing battle,"

Tim Dodd said. "I think there's kind of a backdoor benefit here. As teachers are thinking about how technology has corrupted, they're also thinking about ways it can be used productively."

http://www.boston.com/news/education/k_12/articles/2007/04/27/schools_banning_ipods_to_beat_cheaters/

HOW MANY STUDENTS REALLY GRADUATE FROM AMERICA'S HIGH SCHOOLS? "Understanding High School Graduation Rates", a new publication from the Alliance for Excellent Education, illustrates the discrepancies in graduation rates reported by government and independent sources, examines why this is important, and explains how

certain federal policies have contributed to the graduation rate confusion. “Misleading graduation rate calculations, inadequate systems to track students throughout their education, and lack of accountability by the school are undermining efforts to understand and increase the nation’s graduation rate,” says Bob Wise, president of the Alliance for Excellent Education and former governor of West Virginia. The new report compares graduation rates reported by the states and the U.S. Department of Education to those reported by independent researchers. While the average difference between state and independent sources is about 13 percent, the gap ranges from a low of 4 percent to a high of 32 percent. Additionally, the report considers the costs of the dropout crisis and identifies three core areas that are fundamental to calculating, reporting, and improving accurate graduation rates: (1) The need for all states to use the same accurate graduation rate calculations; (2) The need for a state data system that tracks individual student data from the time students enter the educational system until they leave it; and (3) The need for federal policy that meaningfully holds high schools accountable for improving student achievement on test scores and increasing graduation rates so that low-performing students are not unnecessarily held back or encouraged to leave school without a diploma.

<http://www.all4ed.org/publications/wcwc/index.html>

You Gotta Read:

Research indicates that the transition from middle school to high school can cause anxiety for many students. And students are more likely to drop out during their first two years of high school. Use this checklist to see if GEAR UP is helping your incoming ninth grade students.

- ✓ Provide information for parents of ninth-grade students even before the first back-to school night.
- ✓ Have a way for students to get homework help via email, a homework hotline or peer tutors.
- ✓ Establish a buddy system to pair ninth-grade students with upper-class peer mentors.
- ✓ Share time management and study skills tips with students during the first week of school.
- ✓ Help students adjust socially during the first weeks of school and steer them toward appropriate school activities.
- ✓ Monitor attendance closely and notify parents immediately when a student has an unexcused absence.

Source: “What Works in Dropout Intervention: Ninth Grade Dropout Prevention,” National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, www.ncset.org.

The Last Thing:

If You Miss The Summer, It Won't Happen Again Until Next Year. Take Time To Enjoy It.

