



Family Engagement Resource Guide

For Washington State GEAR UP School Staff



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The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

Why Family Engagement Is Important

According to research, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to:

- Create a home environment that encourages learning;
- Communicate high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers; and
- Become involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

Although this document is intended for Washington State GEAR UP staff, this work should ideally be part of a broader effort spearheaded by administrators and carried out as a team.

Benefits of Family Engagement

- Greater student achievement, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnic/racial background or the parents' education level.
- Higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and complete homework more consistently.
- Higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education.
- Achievement for underrepresented youth not only improves, but can also reach levels to that of peers.
- Greatest gains for the farthest behind.
- Improved performance from students from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Decrease in behaviors such as alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behavior.
- Stay on track to graduate on time.
- Better transitions, quality of their work, and realistic postsecondary plans.

Engagement vs. Disengagement

Many times, family engagement seems to taper after elementary school. Some of that is because schools tend to reach out less and some reasons are due to the families themselves. For example, certain families may not feel comfortable because they represent a minority group in the school, or they had a bad experience at school themselves. Additionally, families might also be experimenting with giving their child more independence.

There are many different ways that families can be involved with their child's learning. Some ways require time, travel, and/or attendance at an event, including volunteering or campus visits. Some strategies can be done at home, like dedicating a time and space for homework or holding high expectations for their child. Learning at home and outside of school differentiates high and low achievers in many schools. Predictors of school success include:

- Work habits of the family.
- Academic guidance and support.
- Stimulation to explore and discuss ideas and events.
- Academic aspirations and expectations.

Schools should recognize and encourage all types of family involvement by providing regular, two-way communication to families and involving families in ways that embrace their expertise. Do not assume that absence means non-caring. Instead, assess what barriers may prevent some families from attending events. Families can serve as co-decision makers, co-communicators, co-supporters, co-learners, and co-teachers.

Engaging “Uninvolved” Families

Families who do not participate in the school are often viewed as uninterested. However, there are many reasons for an unwillingness to be involved (e.g., a history of negative interactions, lack of confidence that the school has anything to offer that would make involvement worth the effort, inconvenience, cultural differences, or schedule and transportation issues). However, it is important to remain nonjudgmental and respectful of all families.

Successful school practices identify families who are not responding to current outreach activities. Educators reach out to them through positive, personal contacts. These may include:

- Information sharing (e.g., the child's school performance, the importance of family involvement). Use various forms of media. Provide tip sheets; summarize information in newsletters; and make resources available.
- Discussions regarding the family's views of involvement, the identification of barriers to participation, and ways the school may support the family in participating.
- Problem solving (e.g., identification of the students' needs, generation of intervention strategies).

Common Barriers

For Educators

- Ambiguous commitment to family involvement.
- Use of negative communication about students' school performance and productivity.
- Use of stereotypes about families, such as dwelling on family problems as an explanation for student performance.
- Doubts about the abilities of families to address schooling concerns.
- Lack of time and funding for family outreach programs.
- Fear of conflict with families.
- Narrow conception of the roles families can play.
- Lack of training for educators on how to maintain a partnership with families.

For Families

- Feelings of inadequacy.
- Adopting a passive role by leaving education to schools.
- Linguistic and cultural differences, resulting in less “how to” knowledge about how schools function and their role.

- Lack of role models, information, and knowledge about resources.
- Suspicion about treatment from educators.
- Lack of responsiveness to parental needs.
- Lack of supportive environment and resources (e.g., poverty, limited access to services).
- Economic, emotional, and time constraints.

Reflection: Reaching Uninvolved Families

Are families considered a resource? Do school personnel:

- Help families maintain a sense of power, dignity, and authority in rearing their children?
- Demonstrate mutual respect, critical reflection, and caring?
- Find opportunities for families to provide input and make decisions about their children's learning?

Are family roles and responsibilities negotiated?

Do school personnel:

- Explain the importance of family influences for children's learning?
- Expect families to be involved?
- Clarify how families can help and provide options?
- Encourage families to be assertive and share their truth?
- Allow families to decide how they will help?

Have barriers been addressed? Have school personnel:

- Made contact with families early in the school year?
- Established ongoing communication systems that include good news as well as sharing concerns with a way to dialogue and share resources to address concerns?
- Used two-way communication formats?
- Focused their conversations on the knowledge and interests of individual families (e.g., explain the importance of their involvement and ask them how they want to contribute to the school/classroom and their child's learning)?

Do families feel they are partners in meeting their children's needs? Have school personnel:

- Explored families' expectations for schools?
- Devised opportunities for involvement that families see as practical and meaningful?
- Reached out to families with warmth and sensitivity on a consistent basis?
- Developed an ongoing workshop program in which families and staff are both teachers and learners?
- Acknowledged that sharing power with families provides an opportunity to understand their interests and goals, and to learn ways to achieve them.

Have practices been implemented to involve uninvolved families? Have school personnel:

- Used welcoming strategies (e.g., personal invitations in native language, translators)?
- Planned for logistical barriers (e.g., daycare, transportation)?
- Invited family assistance and input when addressing school-based concerns?
- Kept the focus of interaction child centered and solution oriented (e.g., what can be done to foster the child's progress)?
- Offered fun events that also may meet a family need (e.g., raffles, contests, meals)?
- Used community outreach (e.g., meet in neutral sites, home visits)?
- Identified influential family and community members who will spread good messages about the school?
- Surveyed families to determine the reason for noninvolvement?
- Examined family recruitment procedures to ensure they are appropriate?

Have school communication practices been examined? Do school personnel:

- Treat communication as a two-way, reciprocal, shared responsibility?
- Provide avenues for families to initiate contact if they have an idea, question, or concern?
- Know how to create situations in which families feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas?
- Elicit, value, and use family input on a regular basis?
- Review family-school communications to determine how often, and under what circumstances, interactions occur between educators and families that foster the development of positive, working relationships or result in negative contacts?

Source: Edwards, P. A. (1992). Strategies and techniques for establishing home-school partnerships with minority parents. In A. Barona & E. Garcia (Eds.), *Children at-risk: Poverty, minority status, and other issues in educational equity* (pp. 217-236). Silver Spring, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Communication

Communication with families should be regular and meaningful. When families feel welcomed and accepted by a program, they are more likely to become actively engaged. Ask families about their preferred mode of communication, and then communicate with families in the way that works best for them.

Methods

- **Face-to-Face.** Meeting face-to-face is one of the best ways to forge a relationship. Use at orientation events, student-led conferences, workshops, or home visits.
- **Phone conversations.** Calls home can be effective, especially if you use them to share positive news.
- **Written.** Share the GEAR UP Family Newsletter. Post flyers or use bulletin boards. Send letters or invitations.
- **Online.** Many staff and families rely on email, social media, or the school website.
- **Text Messaging.** A service like Remind (<https://www.remind.com/>) can be an easy way to send out text messages to families and students.

Ways to Encourage Family Engagement

When planning an event, think about ensuring that families have both the time and the ability to spend time in informal conversations with staff and with other families. Consider providing translators, free meals, and childcare at meetings. Be sure to schedule events at times that are convenient for families.

- **Take School Information on the Road.** Find out where groups of families gather. For example, faith-based organizations (such as churches, temples, synagogues, and mosques) or community centers. Perhaps hosting a family workshop off school property and in a place where families feel comfortable might become more comfortable. Meet families where they are rather than expecting them to come to the school. For many of our families, the school environment can be a scary place and/or transportation can be an issue.
- **Share the GEAR UP Family Newsletter.** Find the monthly family newsletter templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12 on gearup.wa.gov. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school! Consider handing out the newsletter during a sporting event that families already attend regularly.
- **Collaborate with Local Businesses/Community-based Organizations.** For example, set up and maintain a bulletin board in local businesses, YMCAs, credit unions, or library. Advertise upcoming events or provide information college access related topics.
- **Find Out What Your Families Need.** Conduct a needs assessment (available in different languages) during registration. Set up a station of computers where they can fill out a quick survey asking how they would like to best be reached throughout the school year and what concerns them the most. Have these topics become the themes for get-togethers.

- **Reach Out to Families Just to Build a Relationship.** Schools often reach out to families because of discipline issues, but a little proactive positivity can go a long way in building trust and comfort between families and schools.
- **Provide Volunteer Opportunities.** Consider ways that do not require a presence at school or a major time commitment, such as making phone calls to other families, chaperoning field trips, or volunteering at career days.
- **Provide Trainings.** Schools can help ensure that families know how to access information online. For example, host a night where you introduce the school website or Skyward. Demonstrate Google Translate to model how a web page can be easily translated.
- **Create a Peer Network /Parent Leader program.** Invite families to be a part of the GEAR UP advisory committee. Use “parent” leaders to connect with other local families to demystify the college-going process.

Family Newsletters

Monthly family newsletter templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school! Available in English and Spanish at:

<http://gearup.wa.gov/resources/family-newsletters>

Share with families:

- Mail home.
- Hand out copies at workshops, school or sports events.
- Email a copy home.
- Make it available online.

Month	7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Sept.	Welcome To Middle School	Benefits of College	Why go to College	Dual Credit	Entrance Exams	Senior Year: Get Organized
Oct.	College Bound Scholarship	Create a High School and Beyond Plan	9th Grade Matters	Study Habits and Test Prep	College Admission Requirements	Senior Year: Get Organized Resources & Support Services in College
Nov.	Keeping Your Options Open	Study Skills and Homework Help	Campus Visits	College & Career Pathways	College "Fit"	Resources & Support Services in College
Dec.	Grit & Attitude	Understanding College Costs	Grades Matter	Career Exploration	High School and Beyond Plan & Resumes	Resources & Support Services in College
Jan.	The Cost of College	Mentoring	Financial Aid Basics	Paying for College	How to Apply for Financial Aid	Searching for Scholarships
Feb.	Friends Matter	Growth Mindset	Attendance Matters	College Applications : Essays & Interviews	Scholarships	Searching for Scholarships
Mar.	Preparing for High School	Right Classes for High School	What it Takes to Graduate from High School	Getting Back on Track	Test Preparation	What Happens After You

						Complete the FAFSA
Apr.	Extracurricular Activities	Staying on Track	Extracurricular Activities Matter	Visiting a College	Campus Visits	Making a Decision
May	Career Exploration	Careers & Majors	Majors 101	Self-Doubt and Confidence	Narrowing Down Options	Next Steps
Summer	Extracurricular Activities	9th Grade Transition	Summer Slide	What to Do Over Summer	Extracurricular Activities	Transition to College

Family Workshops

Washington State GEAR UP schools are required to offer a minimum of three family workshops per year. The focus of these workshops is financial literacy, college preparation, planning, and financial aid.

Family Workshop Topics					
7th Grade	8th Grade	9th Grade	10th Grade	11th Grade	12th Grade
Why college?	High school and beyond	Study skills and growth mindset	Dual credit	Pre-college assessments and fee waivers	College admissions and financial aid
The cost of college, College Bound Scholarship sign-up	Understanding college costs and financial aid	College & career exploration	Test preparation	Scholarships	Understanding award letters
College & career exploration	Transition to high school	CBS re-pledge and thewashboard.org	College & career exploration	Overview of senior year and choosing a college	Transition to college

Planning Your Event

The following question can also help you develop your vision for the event.

- What logistical support can we provide (e.g., transportation, food) and incentives?
- Have we asked families to pick topics that they care about?
- What is the target date? Avoid dates that coincide with holidays or other educational events unless you can coordinate and use to your advantage.
- What is your event's primary emphasis, the overall vision?
- What is the size of the group?
- Are there special needs?
- Do materials need to be translated? Will an interpreter be needed?
- What location will serve our needs and the needs of the attendees? Will there event be offsite? If so, what is needed?
- Where are most of our families located?
- What is your budget? Do we need to find additional funding?
- What kind of technology is needed?
- Are there survey results from past family events? What do we need to do differently?
- Is networking an important component?
- How can we make the event engaging? Should you incorporate "passports" and stations?

Pro Tip: Here are some things to consider at the beginning of the planning process.

Timing. Time events right after sports practice. Families have to come pick up their children, and they are both usually hungry. Also, consider at the end of the semester or quarter, especially if teachers offer extra credit.

Open Invitation. Welcome all family members. Translate materials and obtain interpreters as needed.

Relevancy. Ask families and students what they want to hear more about.

Incentives. Attendees like to leave with something. Ideas include extra credit, late passes, GEAR UP or College Bound Scholarship swag, or donated items from postsecondary institutions or local businesses.

Sample Planning Tool: Design the Event

Tasks	Start Date	Complete Date	Primary Person Responsible
Have planning meeting.	Summer/Fall		
Prepare a timeline.			
Determine budget.			
Define roles and responsibilities.			
Select target dates.			
Find venue.			
Decide how to promote event.			
Break down tasks assignments.			
Solicit speakers/entertainers, if needed.			
Notes:			

Suggested Tasks

- Establish a school team to assist with your school's preparations.
- Add the events to your school's master calendar.
- Reserve the facilities for your school's events.
- Contact guest speakers about interest in presenting at events.
- Contact interpreters.
- Confirm that facilities and equipment are reserved for the event and that your school's technology coordinator is ready and willing to serve should any technology issues arise.
- Confirm any guest speakers.
- Communicate the opportunity to students, families, and the community.
- Coordinate meals and childcare for event.
- Be sure that you have event materials.
- Post on school marquee.
- Make an announcement to remind students.
- Remind students, families, and school staff of the event. Send out reminder using Remind and or Skyward: 2 weeks prior, 1 week prior, 2 days prior, and 4 hours prior to event.
- Place a reminder about the event of your school's website home page/social media.
- Make final preparations for your event.

Topic

Decide on a topic or theme that with GEAR UP goals and objectives. Consider what the "takeaways" from the family event should be -- what you want your attendees to leave remembering. Discuss what might be important to the families. A simple theme can prevent miscommunication of the overall message.

Speakers

A speaker can help to reinforce your message. Determine if other speakers are needed. Some speakers may be hard to get due to their speaking schedule. More advanced notice can be helpful. Consider contacting your local library, business leaders, colleges or universities. Ask your resident experts such as reading specialists, librarians, or math teachers to offer tips such as share tips about how families can help at home. Additionally, teachers can often speak from a parent's perspective. AVID students, AP students, or GEAR UP alum can speak from a student perspective.

Selecting a Venue

There are certain things one should look for and ask for when choosing a venue. Consider factors such as available public transportation, weather and time of year that may affect participation and/or costs of the event. Determine the type of room(s)

needed; use past programs as a benchmark. Consider if holding the event in a variety of community locations (e.g., local libraries, a community center, a church) would make it more accessible and more welcoming.

Meal Planning

You can make cost-effective choices, especially if you make your own food for the event. Find pre-made frozen options. Or you might be able to partner with local restaurants to provide meals. Consider dietary needs, such as vegetarian/vegan and gluten-free restrictions.

Promotion

Promoting and building excitement around family nights can help boost attendance. Some best practices include:

- Send fliers home with students.
- Include information in the school newsletter.
- Use an automated phone call system to remind students and families.
- Send messages via social media.
- Post messages through your school's student information system (like Skyward).
- Promote on school website and during daily announcements to build interest.

Sample Invites

Adapt and use in your school's newsletters or on individual flyers. Also, you can use in school announcements.



You Are Invited to Washington State GEAR UP Family Night!

You want the best future possible for your child. Today, that typically means some education beyond high school. Every child can go on with the right planning and preparation.

Learn about financial aid opportunities, what grades your child should make, what classes your child should take, how to work with school counselors and more.

WHEN:
WHERE:
WHO:



Come join us for... The Passport to Summer Family Night

When: Tuesday, June 12th, 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Where: Blaine Middle School Cafeteria

Cost: Free!

- Summer Program Opportunities
- Summer Reading Program
- Learn About AVID
- Middle School Math Preview
- Dunk Tank
- Hot dogs and Popcorn

Sponsored by the GEAR UP Grant

Resources

Download postcards and posters to promote your GEAR UP family night events in their school and community.

- [Family Night Postcard](#)
- [Family Night Poster - English](#)
- [Family Night Poster - Spanish](#)

Sample Agenda: Blaine Middle School GEAR UP

High School 101 Student/Family Night: What you need to know about high school before you begin your high school career.

Objective: To get students excited about high school and give families tips about what to expect in high school.

Procedure: Divide students and families into two separate groups to hear about tips and advice for how to survive high school. Meet back as one group to hear an encouraging presentation from a high school teacher. Parent-to-Parent Group: Parents of students who have had students graduated through their district share tips and answer questions. Teen-to-Teen Group: Senior and Junior AVID students share tips and advice on how to do well in high school and answer questions.

4:45-5:00 PM	<p>Check in.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign in students and parents on GEAR UP rosters (middle school principal).
5:00-5:15 PM	<p>Welcome and introductions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome families and explain the role of the GEAR UP grant for the class of 2017. Remind students and parents what GEAR UP stands for and the mission of GEAR UP. • Introduce College Bound outreach regional officer or middle school counselor who will briefly explain the College Bound Scholarship and the sign up process. • Introduce high school counselor who will briefly explain their role in high school. • Provide overview of the workshop (graduation specialist).
5:20-5:50 PM	<p>Panels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior AVID student panel in cafeteria. Middle schools students will ask questions to high school seniors about high school. • Parent panel will remain in the library. Parents will discuss what it is like to be the parent of a high schooler and answer questions about high school from a parent perspective.
5:50–6:20 PM	<p>Strategies for success in high school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present to incoming freshmen about how they can be successful in high school (teachers). • Provide overview of student portfolios and how to start preparing for your senior project as a freshman (counselor and GEAR UP coordinator).
6:30 PM	<p>Introduction to high school staff and programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank parents for coming, and introduce high school principal (middle school principal). • Give overview of the high school mission and programs available at the high school (high school principal).
6:30 PM	Serve dinner
7:00 PM	Thank parents for coming (graduation specialist).

Family Workshop Spotlight: Klickitat Middle School/High School

Family Nights Format

- Four scheduled Family Nights per year.
- Published on master school calendar & newsletter.
- Phone message reminders.
- Always scheduled on Wednesday evenings.
 - **1st Open House & Advisory Meeting #1** - second week of school.
 - **2nd Fall Conferences** –second week of October.
 - **3rd FAFSA Night & Advisory Meeting #2**– third week of January.
 - **4th Spring Conferences** – first week of March.

#1 Open House

- For all K-12 families & community members.
- Dinner provided for all.
- Short GEAR UP Orientation program.
- Non-GEAR UP costs covered by the district.
- Stress the GEAR UP goals & objectives.
- “Get them early and cover it a lot” K-12 concept.
- Vendors & activities.

#2 Fall Conferences

- Student-led parent/teacher conferences.
- Arena style conferences (gym).
- For all K-12 families & community members.
- Dinner provided for all.
- Short GEAR UP Orientation program.
- Non-GEAR UP costs covered by the district.
- Stress the GEAR UP goals & objectives.
- Vendors & activities.

#3 FASFA Night

- For all 7-12 students & families.
- Dinner provided for all.
- Short GEAR-UP Orientation program.
- Stress the GEAR UP goals & objectives.
- Three different work sessions.
- 7th & 8th grades College Bound.
- 9th & 11th grades FASFA predictor.
- 12th grade FASFA/WASFA.

About Klickitat

- Washington State GEAR UP Priority School (2011-17).
- Small and rural – 80 students K-12.
- STEM focused K-12 school.
- GEAR UP/college-going culture K-12 (K-6 district supported).
- Embedded GEAR UP curriculum & mandatory classes.
- Low-income – 100% free & reduced.
- Stable and caring staff and school board.
- 100% GEAR UP “buy in” from all parties.
- The school is “the only game in town”.
- Highly collaborative “risk taking” culture.
- Safe, fun, and caring environment for all.

#4 Spring Conferences

- Student-led parent/teacher conference.
- Arena style conferences (gym).
- For all K-12 families & community members.
- Dinner provided for all.
- Short GEAR UP Orientation program.
- Non-GEAR UP costs covered by the district.
- Stress the GEAR-UP goals & objectives.
- Vendors & activities.

Vendors & Activities

- Community postsecondary education sign-up wall.
- STEM K-12 student demonstrations: entomology, robotics Vex/Legos, 3-D printing, wind turbines, drones, etc.
- Student artwork & student projects.
- Community groups – PTO, booster club, etc.
- Youth groups – Girls Scouts, Little League, etc.
- All military services.
- Various county services – sheriffs, health, PUD, & officials.
- Community colleges & universities.
- Vocational trade schools.
- Raffles & prizes – one ticket per person per station.

Findings

- Over 90% of 7th-12th grade students have participated in 20 or more GEAR UP activities every year.
- Average between 80% - 90% student and parent attendance at Family Night events.
- Survey results indicate that serving food menu makes a difference.
- Complete program support from all staff.
- Better awareness of program in the community.
- Large community turn out for events.

Family Workshop Spotlight: Vancouver Public Schools

Original Format

- Family events for each school.
- Events were held at each school building.
- Each school was promoting only to their students and families.
- Simple dinners, such as pizza were offered.
- Relying mostly on own manpower.

New and Improved Format

- Combined family events with all 3 schools.
- Events held at an outside, relevant location.
- Utilized community partners.
- Focused on more than one topic.
- Schools united in promotional efforts. Used the same flyers, wording, even posted flyers at local businesses, etc.
- Used mentoring program to promote the events in the schools and classrooms. Peer-to-peer promotion.
- Placed follow-up calls to parents of students who expressed interest in attending.
- Placed sign-up sheets in classrooms.
- Emails to parents came from building administrators rather than just GEAR UP.
- Collaborated with local restaurants/programs to provide healthier, more substantial meals.
- Invited community partners to attend and benefit from marketing the event.
- Asked for donated raffle items, e.g., college gear, swag, Amazon card, Starbucks, tub of red vines.
- Made sure what they offered is interesting, relevant and useful to families.
- Required weekly positive parent contact.

Findings

- Improved attendance.
- One successful event leads to another. People talk about how fun it was, how good the food was and want to come to the next one.
- Community partners see the benefit of the events and want to participate in the future.
- Parents feel more comfortable in the larger crowd setting. Seem more likely to ask questions at the tables.
- Able to find out exactly what they want to learn more about so we can incorporate that into future events, e.g. Running Start.
- Bonus: High match dollars from community partners.

About VPS

- Includes three Washington State GEAR UP Cohort Schools (2011-17).
- Serves three high schools.
- Approximately about 1200 10th grade students total.
- Very diverse population of students.
- 4 GEAR UP Site Directors, 5-8 GEAR UP Tutors, 1 GEAR UP District Coordinator, 1 Fiscal Clerk and school support administration and staff.

Guidelines for Washington State GEAR UP Family Orientation

About: The focus of this a family orientation is an introduction of the GEAR UP program, its staff, and what they can offer students and families. The family orientation is a means for providing general information about Washington State GEAR UP and specific details about services and activities offered.

This required activity should be held no later than October 31 of each year.

Materials Needed:

- Icebreaker materials (optional).
- Computer and projector.
- PowerPoint.
- Handouts.

Event Time Allowed: 60 Minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Start with an icebreaker. If you have a favorite icebreaker, use it. If not, you may use the one provided.
 - The Story of Your Name: This is an interesting way for people to introduce themselves and share a little bit about their personal identity. The facilitator should model this activity and share their story first — making yourself vulnerable may help others feel more comfortable doing the same. Instruct attendees to share at their own comfort level. Take turns answering the following questions:
 - What is your full name?
 - Who gave you your name? Why that name?
 - Do you have any nicknames? If so, how did you get them? Who calls you them?
 - What name do you prefer us to use?
- Review what they can expect out of the workshop. Remind them that there is no such thing as a silly question.
- Present the GEAR UP 101 PowerPoint. Key messages for event:
 - Define GEAR UP.
 - Provide an overview of Washington State GEAR UP.
 - Discuss the year's opportunities and events to get involved in school and out of school.
 - Explain what services GEAR UP provides families.

- Review ways to discover what is happening with GEAR UP at your school.
 - Introduce staff.
- Allow time for questions.
- Review handouts.
- Adjourn

After The Kickoff: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event - Orientation or Celebratory". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to katherinek@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 7.1 Why College?

About: This activity is a way to introduce families to the benefits of pursuing education beyond high school.

Materials Needed: PowerPoint, True False Cards (Print double sided and cut into cards)

Additional Resources:

- [Why Go to College? Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#). Handouts that provides reasons to attend college including unemployment rates and mean earnings for college degrees. Also Available in: [Spanish \(PDF\)](#).
- [Why Go To College? Graphic \(IMG\)](#). Graphic that shows average earnings and unemployment rates by education level. Also Available in: [PDF](#).
- Family Newsletter: [College Bound Scholarship](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Start with an icebreaker. If you have a favorite icebreaker, use it. If not, you may use the True False Card Sort.
 - Give each family a “deck” of statements. As a family, have them sort the statements into two piles: True and False.
 - Then reveal answers.
 - Explain that GEAR UP will cover these topics and more over the years to help them prepare for success after high school.
- Engage in a discussion. Ask what audience thinks when they hear the word college. Review what we mean when we say “college”. Ask why people go. Ask who they know who went and what they know about their experiences.
- Present the Why College PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition “Family Event”. Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

<p>College isn't worth the debt involved. It's better to go directly to work.</p>	<p>Over the course of a lifetime, a high school graduate can earn as much as a college graduate.</p>
<p>Only "A" students can go to college and get financial aid.</p>	<p>If I am not a legal U.S. citizen or resident, I cannot get into or afford college.</p>
<p>Applying for financial aid is very difficult and complicated.</p>	<p>Colleges give full athletic scholarships to athletes.</p>
<p>College can be expensive, but two-thirds of all undergraduate students receive financial aid to help</p>	<p>Private colleges are too expensive and you shouldn't apply if you don't have the money.</p>
<p>To make it in today's world, you must have a four-year degree.</p>	<p>Taking the easiest courses the high school offers will boost your teen's GPA and help him or her get into college.</p>

<p>FALSE. A college graduate will earn almost twice as much.</p>	<p>FALSE. Education after high school allows you to have more job/career options, more opportunities for yourself, and less debt. You are more likely to get an enjoyable job that allows you to pay back debt and have the lifestyle you want.</p>
<p>FALSE. Washington State allows undocumented students or DREAMers to pay in-state tuition if they go to a public college or university in Washington. DREAMers can also apply for state financial aid and scholarships if they meet eligibility requirements.</p>	<p>FALSE. There are many different colleges and postsecondary programs like available. Some require specific classes or high grades to be accepted, while others have no requirements beyond graduating from high school. College is an option for everyone – but the more</p>
<p>TRUE & FALSE. Odds are that most student athletes will not get large scholarships. Only two percent of high school athletes actually receive an athletic scholarship. And of those who do, very few receive enough aid to cover all their expenses.</p>	<p>TRUE & FALSE. It can be complicated but GEAR UP is here to help walk you through the process step-by-step.</p>
<p>FALSE. Students who attend these colleges find that they receive significant financial aid and graduate with little or no student debt. In fact, well-known “expensive” colleges are often less costly to attend than “second tier” or even state colleges.</p>	<p>TRUE. Washington was listed as the top state nationally for students receiving undergraduate need-based financial aid during the 15-16 year. Cost doesn't have to be a barrier to attending college. There is money available to help.</p>
<p>FALSE. College admissions officers understand the difference between an A in an easy class and a B in a more challenging class. In general, it is better to take advanced courses and work hard than take easy classes and put in little effort.</p>	<p>FALSE. There are many options such as two-year schools, certificate programs, and military options.</p>

<p>90% of high school students would like to go to college.</p>	<p>If your grades aren't very good, you can't get into college.</p>
<p>You have to attend four years of college to get a degree.</p>	<p>There are many high paying jobs that don't require any training after high school.</p>
<p>Only rich people can afford to go to college.</p>	<p>If you don't know how to apply to college, you can't go.</p>
<p>Anything that is taught in college you can learn on the job.</p>	<p>If you're tired of school there's no way that you'll like college.</p>
<p>Many people don't know what they want to study when they start college.</p>	<p>Middle school and high school don't really matter.</p>

<p>FALSE. Different colleges have different requirements for admission. Colleges also look at other qualities in addition to your grades, such as activities, involvement in the community, and hardship.</p>	<p>TRUE. Most teens say that they want to go to college. But getting to college takes hard work and careful planning, such as taking the right courses during high school. Remind students that if they think they would like to go to college – like most teenagers – they will need to work hard during middle school and high school. Remind students of the definition of “college”.</p>
<p>FALSE. There are jobs available to people who only have a high school diploma, but most of these jobs are low-paying and won't support a family. Statistics show that, on average, the more education you have, the more money you will make and the easier it will be for you to find a good job.</p>	<p>FALSE. There are many types of colleges and degrees. Some careers require one or two years of college. Others require four years. Still others require more than four years. It just depends on what you want to do.</p>
<p>FALSE. If you don't know how to apply to college, you can get help from your GEAR UP staff and your school counselor.</p>	<p>FALSE. College can be expensive, but that doesn't mean you can't afford to go. There are many ways to pay for a college education. Most students get financial aid to help pay for college, and most aid is based on need. That means that the less money you have, the more aid you can get. Tuition at community colleges is less expensive than four-year colleges, and you may be able to</p>
<p>FALSE. College is very different from high school or middle school. You'll choose a major and you'll be able to take specialized courses that interest you.</p>	<p>FALSE. Most jobs require some on-the-job training. However, for most jobs, you will also need technical or problem-solving skills before you are hired, and that almost always requires you to get some level of education and training after graduating from high school.</p>
<p>FALSE. Working hard in middle school and high school is the most important thing you can do to prepare for your next postsecondary plan – “college”... and an exciting career.</p>	<p>TRUE. Join the crowd! Lots of college students haven't decided on a major or a career. At most colleges, you can spend your first year taking different courses so that you can narrow your choices. Academic advisors and counselors will help you make the decision. It is best to have a plan based on career interests.</p>

Activity Idea: 7.2 The Cost of College & College Bound Scholarship Sign Up

About: This activity is a way to introduce families to the cost of college. This presentation covers how to pay for college and the basics of financial aid and college savings. Consider inviting your regional College Bound Office a representative from a local college's financial aid office and/or a local bank or credit union to present the information as well.

Materials Needed: Cost of College PowerPoint, Financial Aid Glossary Handout

Additional Resources:

- [ABCs of College \(PDF\)](#). This is a set of 8.5"x11" posters that can be displayed through out your school to help add to your college going culture. Each page displays one term related to college or getting ready for college.
- Family Newsletter: [The Cost of College](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.
- WCKD [College Terms for Parents \(English & Spanish\)](#).

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Discuss the perception of the cost of college.
- Present the Cost of College PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- **Reflection Log:** At the end of workshops, have students/families:
 1. Fold a sheet of paper into quarters.
 2. Label each quarter.
 3. Reflect on their learning by writing several sentences in each section of the paper.

As a result of this workshop:

I learned:	I need:
I can:	I will:

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Financial Aid 101 Glossary

College Fees: Money you pay to access school activities, fitness centers, libraries, and student centers. Every college has different fees.

Cost of Attendance (COA): The total cost of attending an institution including tuition, room and board, books, lab fees, transportation, and basic living expenses.

Estimated Financial Aid Package: An overview, provided by each institution you've applied to attend, of the amount of financial aid you likely will be eligible to receive. Your financial aid package may be very different from college to college. Cost of attendance is different at each school, and schools may offer different types of scholarships.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): To be eligible for most financial aid programs, families must complete the FAFSA/WASFA and provide their financial information. The EFC is calculated based on this information and shows the amount of money a family can be expected to contribute toward the student's education. The EFC is used to determine the student's eligibility for need-based financial aid, but is not necessarily representative of the amount a family actually will pay for college.

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The standard form students must complete to apply for federal and state need-based assistance/aid programs and, in some circumstances, campus-based assistance/aid. Learn more at fafsa.ed.gov.

Merit-based: Financial aid programs that require students to meet a certain level of achievement, usually academic.

Need-based: Financial aid programs that award funds based on the level of financial need of a particular student.

Room and board: Refers to charges applied to a student's account for living on campus or eating in the dining halls. "Room" applies to the cost of housing (living in the dorms) and "board" refers to the cost of meal or dining plans. Also refers to standard costs for students living off campus for the same components.

Satisfactory Academic Progress: A set of minimum expectations established by your institution's financial aid office and by the Federal Government that indicates a student is making sufficient progress towards earning a degree in a timely manner. Students who do not meet this minimum level of progress, they may lose eligibility to receive financial aid.

Scholarship: Money awarded to students based on academic or other achievements to help pay for education expenses. Scholarships generally do not have to be repaid.

Student Aid Report (SAR): A report that summarizes information reported on the FAFSA. The SAR outlines the student's EFC and is sent to students by the Federal Government after they have submitted the FAFSA.

Tuition: The price colleges or universities charge for credits/ classes, this pays for things like the instructor and classroom space. Every college has different tuition costs.

Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA): The Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA) is for people who don't file a federal FAFSA application. People who complete a WASFA are applying for state aid.

Activity Idea: 7.3 College & Career Exploration

About: This activity is designed to get students and families thinking about how these interests can connect to careers.

Materials Needed: College & Career Exploration PowerPoint, My Interests and Skills Handout

Additional Resources:

- [Career Guidance Washington: 7-15 Future Possibilities \(Microsoft Word\)](#). Lesson plan and handouts designed to analyze the 'fit' of sample student interests and skills with their chosen future careers and the 'fit' of personal interests with sample careers.
- Family Newsletter: [Career Exploration](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Present the College and Career Exploration PowerPoint.
- Have students complete the handout and discuss with families.
- Allow time for questions.

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

My Interests and Skills

Part 1—Directions: Look at the table below. On the left, list the classes you like the best and tell why. On the right, list the activities you enjoy most, and explain why.

Classes	Activities

Part 2—Directions: Look at the list below. Check off the skills you think that represent something you can do. After identifying things you can do, circle the ten words that represent the skills you do best.

Skills Checklist

Academic Skills _____	Fixing/Repairing Things _____	People Skills _____
Acting/Performing _____	Foreign Language Skills _____	Physical Coordination _____
Athletic Quickness/Speed _____	Fund-Raising Skills _____	Physical Strength _____
Building/Constructing _____	Helping/Caring for Others _____	Precision/Detail Skills _____
Coaching/Teaching _____	Improvising/Adapting _____	Problem-Solving Skills _____
Communication Skills _____	Influencing/Selling Others _____	Product Assembly _____
Computer/Tech Skills _____	Interviewing/Questioning _____	Project Planning _____
Conflict Resolution _____	Investigating/Analyzing _____	Reading Skills _____
Cooking/Tasting _____	Leadership Skills _____	Record-Keeping _____
Creativity/Ideas _____	Learning Quickly _____	Research Skills _____
Customer Service Skills _____	Listening to Others _____	Resilience/Toughness _____
Dance/Rhythmic Skills _____	Managing Others _____	Rules Management _____
Data Analysis _____	Mathematical Thinking _____	Self-Management _____
Decision-Making _____	Measuring/Calculating _____	Speaking/Debating _____
Decorating Skills _____	Mechanical Reasoning _____	Spelling/Editing _____
Designing Skills _____	Meeting Management _____	Strategic Planning _____
Directional/Map Skills _____	Money Management _____	Stress Management _____
Drawing/Cartooning _____	Motivating Others/Self _____	Study Skills _____
Entertaining/Amusing _____	Multi-Tasking Skills _____	Teamwork Skills _____
Estimating Skills _____	Musical Skills _____	Test-Taking Skills _____
Evaluating/Assessing _____	Negotiating/Reasoning _____	Time Management _____
Expressing Feelings _____	Organizing/Coordinating _____	Trouble-Shooting Skills _____
Fashion Sense/Sewing _____	Operating Equipment _____	Writing Skills _____

Part 3—Discuss the following questions with your family.

1. How are the classes you like and the activities you like the same or different?
2. Which classes and activities do you think you will want to continue in high school?
3. What new kinds of classes and activities do you look forward to adding in high school?
4. What top five skills do you possess? Can you provide an example where those skills were used successfully in school, home, or the community?
5. What jobs can you think of that could grow out of any of the classes or activities that you like?

Still Stumped? Ask yourself:

- Do your favorite movies, books and television show your interests?
- What is something you have done that makes you proud?
- What hobbies do you enjoy?
- If money and skill were not factors, what would be your dream job?
- If you won the lottery, but still needed to work, how would you spend your time?
- What do you find yourself daydreaming about?
- What do you want to change about the world?
- What kinds of problems do you like solving?
- When you picture yourself on the job in the future, are you working with data, people, things or ideas?
- Do you prefer to spend on a computer, with other people or outdoors?

Adapted from Step By Step: College Awareness and Planning: Middle School by National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and Career Guidance Washington.

Activity Idea: 8.1 High School and Beyond

About: This activity is designed to get students and families thinking about how to develop a plan for high school courses.

Materials Needed: Planning for High School and Beyond PowerPoint

Additional Resources:

- Family Newsletter: [Create a High School and Beyond Plan](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.
- Career Guidance Washington 8.8 [High School and Beyond Planning](#) and 8.9 [High School Course Requirements](#) Handouts.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Present the Planning for High School and Beyond PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional Activity: Have students complete the handout and discuss with families.

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

High School Course Requirements

What Courses Do You Need In High School? What courses will your child need to take in high school to succeed in college or in a career? Here's what's required to graduate with a Career and College Ready Diploma. Students also need to meet standard on the Smarter Balanced State assessment and have a High School & Beyond Plan with a Personalized Pathway (PPR).

LANGUAGE ARTS | 4 credits

Being able to read well, write fluently, and communicate clearly is absolutely essential for college or for any job. Language arts (English) classes will help you do that and develop an appreciation for literature.

MATHEMATICS | 3 credits

A good understanding of math is needed in our high-tech, 21st century world. You should aim to take math every year. Math courses will include Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2/Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, Calculus as well as other rigorous levels of mathematics.

SCIENCE | 3 credits, 2 Lab Credits

Science is important for any career path, as the study of science teaches you to observe carefully and use logical reasoning to answer questions. Courses include Biology, Chemistry, Physics and other courses.

SOCIAL STUDIES | 3 credits

Social studies courses help you learn more about the world around us. These courses could include Washington State History, Civics (Required), World History, World Cultures, US History, Political Science, Economics, Geography, Psychology, as well as other coursework. Washington State History is a requirement that can be met in middle school.

HEALTH AND FITNESS | 2 credits

One semester of health and 1.5 semesters of fitness are required for graduation. School districts can develop an Excused Policy for the fitness requirement.

WORLD LANGUAGE or PPR* | 2 credits (Both can be PPR)

Most colleges require at least two years of study of a world language. (PPR is the Personalized Pathway Requirement that is based on student's High School & Beyond Plan.)

ARTS | 2 credits (1 can be PPR)

Studying the arts helps you learn to express yourself creatively and find new ways to interpret your surroundings. Arts courses include Art, Music, Photography, Drama, and Dance.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) | 1 credit

GENERAL ELECTIVES | 4 credits

TOTAL REQUIRED CREDITS = 24

Adapted from Career Guidance Washington

What It Takes To Graduate from High School

Getting into college starts with graduating from high school. However, depending on the type of school your child wants to attend, it's important to know what types of classes to take, the grades necessary, and any other additional requirements beyond what's required for high school graduation. Here is what it takes:

Subject	WA State HS Graduation Requirements (2016-2018)	WA State HS Graduation Requirements (2019 and Beyond)*	Min. Requirements For WA Public Colleges	Recommended For Highly Selective Colleges
English	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits	4 credits
Math	3 credits	3 credits	3 credits (Including math senior year)	3-4 credits
Science (1 Lab)	2 credits (1 lab)	3 credits (2 labs)	2 credits (2 labs)	3-4 credits
Social Studies	3 credits	3 credits	3 credits	3-4 credits
WORLD LANGUAGE or Personalized Pathway Requirement (PPR)		2 credits (both can be PPR)	2 credits	3-4 credits
Arts	1 credit	2 credits	1 credit	2-3 credits
Health/Fitness	2 credits (.5 Health and 1.5 Fitness)	2 credits (.5 Health and 1.5 Fitness)	Students must have at least a 2.0 GPA to be admitted to a public college or university in WA State. For more info: www.k12.wa.us/graduationrequirements or http://readysetgrad.org/search/node/minimum%20college%20admissions	
Career & Technical Education	1 credit	1 credit		
General Electives	4 credits	4 credits		

Activity Idea: 8.2 Understanding College Costs and Financial Aid

About: This activity covers how to pay for college and the basics of financial aid and college savings. Consider inviting your regional College Bound Officer or a representative from a local college's financial aid office and/or a local bank or credit union to present the information as well.

Materials Needed: Understanding College Costs and Financial Aid PowerPoint, Financial Aid Race Cards

Additional Resource: Family Newsletter: [Understanding College Costs](#) (Word).
Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Present the Cost of College PowerPoint. Key messages: Colleges costs vary. It is an investment. Families can use comparison tools and net price calculators to help make decisions about the future. There is money available to help students pursue higher education. They just need to apply.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional activity: The Financial Aid Race (Adapted from Oregon GEAR UP). Each student-family member combination becomes a team (or with a large group, combine several students and family members into one team). Have every team line up on one side of the room. Pass out one card to each team; each team takes turns reading their card and following the directions about whether to move forward, backwards or stay in the same place. Explain the significance of the card and answer questions as necessary. The winning team is the first one to get to the other side of the room (signifying they have received maximum financial aid). Give small prizes to the winners (optional).

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Financial Aid Race Cards

<p>Volunteer to help a youth soccer team – it's fun and it shows leadership skills.</p> <p>TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD</p>	<p>Join the public library summer reading program in order to improve your grades.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>	<p>Lie on a scholarship application about the amount of school activities you have.</p> <p>TAKE 5 STEPS BACK</p>
<p>Buy a new pair of shoes instead of putting money in your college savings account.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS BACK</p>	<p>Only apply to one scholarship because if you win it your entire education will be paid for.</p> <p>STAY WHERE YOU ARE</p>	<p>Start filling out the FAFSA or WASFA but give up when there is a question that you don't know the answer to.</p> <p>TAKE 4 STEPS BACK</p>
<p>Get a job babysitting and put half of what you earn into a college savings account.</p> <p>MOVE FORWARD 4 STEPS</p>	<p>Miss the deadline for a scholarship you really wanted to apply for.</p> <p>STAY WHERE YOU ARE</p>	<p>Decide to use a credit card or bank loan to pay for college instead of filling out the FAFSA or WASFA</p> <p>MOVE BACK 6 STEPS</p>
<p>Watch videos about the financial aid process on YouTube.</p> <p>TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD</p>	<p>Set up a college savings account that you and your parents can contribute to.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>	<p>Assume you can't afford to pay for college, so don't apply to college or for financial aid.</p> <p>TAKE 4 STEPS BACK</p>
<p>Update your activity log in your High School and Beyond Plan every year so you remember all of the activities you participated in.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>	<p>Complete the FAFSA or WASFA as close to October 1st as possible because financial aid dollars are limited and often are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis.</p> <p>TAKE 3 STEPS FORWARD</p>	<p>Get help with your FAFSA or WASFA by going to a College Goal Washington event near you.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>

<p>Fill out the Financial Aid Calculator parents/guardians before your senior year to see how much money you might get for financial aid.</p> <p>TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD</p>	<p>Play sports and or be involved in a club and activities.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>	<p>Be lazy and decide to go fishing instead of finishing the College Bound Scholarship application.</p> <p>TAKE 5 STEPS BACK</p>
<p>Borrow more money than you need for college so you can go on vacation, too.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS BACK</p>	<p>Wait to apply for the FAFSA or WASFA until the summer.</p> <p>STAY WHERE YOU ARE</p>	<p>Don't compare financial aid packages closely and end up going to a school that gives you mostly loans instead of grants.</p> <p>TAKE 4 STEPS BACK</p>
<p>Apply for work-study jobs before you get to campus and get the one you wanted at the library.</p> <p>MOVE FORWARD 4 STEPS</p>	<p>Learn more about the difference between the types of financial aid.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>	<p>Decide to use a credit card or bank loan to pay for college instead of filling out the FAFSA or the WASFA.</p> <p>MOVE BACK 6 STEPS</p>
<p>Watch videos about the financial aid process on YouTube.</p> <p>TAKE 1 STEP FORWARD</p>	<p>Set up a college savings account that you and your family can contribute to.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>	<p>Fill out the FAFSA or WASFA your first year of college but forget to do it the next year when you're in college.</p> <p>TAKE 4 STEPS BACK</p>
<p>Lose your scholarship in college because you're failing a class.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS BACK</p>	<p>Only apply to community college because public and private universities are so much more expensive.</p> <p>TAKE 3 STEPS BACK</p>	<p>Participate in a summer program at school that helps you with college and scholarship applications and essays.</p> <p>TAKE 2 STEPS FORWARD</p>

Activity Idea: 8.3 Transition to High School

About: This activity covers how families can best help their child succeed in high school. Have a panel of parents/guardians of current students share their experiences and respond to questions of attendees. Have a panel of older students meet with the incoming students to share tips on how to be a successful student.

Materials Needed: 9th Grade Transition PowerPoint (Must be customized)

Additional Resource: Family Newsletter: [9th Grade Transition](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members. Introduce high school counselor who will briefly explain their role in high school.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Divide students and families into two separate groups to hear about tips and advice for how to survive high school. Meet back as one group to hear an encouraging presentation from a high school teacher. Parent-to-Parent Group: Parents/guardians of older students or recent graduates share tips and answer questions. Student-to-Student Group: High school junior and senior students share tips and advice on how to do well in high school and answer questions.
- Serve dinner or refreshments.
- Thank families for coming.

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 9.1 Study Skills and Growth Mindset

About: This activity covers how families can best help their child succeed in high school. Have a panel of parents/guardians of current students share their experiences and respond to questions of attendees. Have a panel of older students meet with the incoming students to share tips on how to be a successful student.

Materials Needed: Growth Mindset and Study Skills PowerPoint, Practicing Process Praise Handout

Additional Resource: [Growth Mindset for 9th Graders](#). A free, evidence-based program consisting of two online 30-minute modules to increase students' engagement, motivation, and success by promoting a growth mindset.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Present the PowerPoint. Introduce and define growth and fixed mindsets.
- Activity 1: Make a list of the things you feel you are good at and some of the things you aren't; for each item, explain why. Share your list and reasons with a partner. Pick two items on your "not good" list and discuss what it would take you to become better at each.
- Activity 2: Assist students and families identify growth mindset language. Have family members complete Practicing Praise Handout and debrief.
- Allow time for questions.
- Thank families for coming.

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity: Practicing Process Praise

Below are some statements you might use when speaking to your child. Choose 'yes' for the ones that convey a growth mindset.

Quiz	Yes	No
1. "It looks like that was too easy. Let's give you something a bit more challenging."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. "That isn't the right answer. You don't understand it yet."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. "You are so smart."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. "I know it was hard, but look how your effort paid off."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. "You're really talented in math- you should definitely focus on it next year."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. "She'll get it. She's working on it and making progress."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. "You did so well! Keep working hard and you will do great again next year."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Answer Key	Yes	No
1. "It looks like that was too easy. Let's give you something a bit more challenging." <i>This indicates that learning and being challenged is more important than getting the right answer quickly.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. "That isn't the right answer. You don't understand it yet." <i>"Yet" indicates your child will succeed if they keep working.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. "You are so smart." <i>This sends the message that innate "smartness" is what leads to success, rather than effort and growth.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. "I know it was hard, but look how your effort paid off." <i>This specifies that your child's efforts led to success.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. "You're really talented in math- you should definitely focus on it next year." <i>This emphasizes the importance of talent rather than learning and growth.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6. "She'll get it. She's working on it and making progress." <i>This acknowledges that the child is able to succeed, and just needs more time to do so.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. "You did so well! Keep working hard and you will do great again next year." <i>This says that continued effort will lead to continued success.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Activity Idea: 9.2 College and Career Exploration

About: This activity is designed to get students and families to understand the importance of exploring their interests and starting their search for college early.

Materials Needed: 9.2 College & Career Exploration PowerPoint, (Optional) [Career Guidance Washington 9.16 Career Focus](#)

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Discuss the different types or categories of colleges.
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Optional Activity: Discuss the difference between jobs and careers. Model how to complete the [Career Guidance Washington 9.16 Career Focus](#) Career Quiz. Help students identify their career field of interest. Encourage students and families to explore types of jobs that are in that field.
- Allow time for questions.
- Thank families for coming.

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 9.3 College Bound Scholarship Re-Pledge and theWashboard.org

About: This activity is designed to remind students and families of the College Bound Scholarship Pledge. Use the Repledge activity to engage students around future planning and various education pathways. Get students signed-up for the College Bound Listserv. Celebrate the opportunity of the College Bound Scholarship by having students sign the repledge certificate.

Materials Needed: 9.3 CBS Re-pledge PowerPoint, [College Bound Repledge Toolkit](#), and [College Bound Repledge Certificate](#), the Washboard Handout

Additional Resources:

WCAN booklet

[Sample Letter to Administrators](#)

[Sample Letter Home to Families](#)

[Sample Letter Home to Students](#)

["I Pledge" Fill In the Blank Poster \(8.5x11\)](#)

["I Want To" Fill In the Blank Poster \(8.5x11\)](#)

["I Am College Bound" Fill In the Blank Poster \(8.5x14\) - Legal Size Paper](#)

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Assemble 9th grade College Bound students and formally review the College Bound Scholarship pledge requirements.
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Call each student forward and have them pledge to fulfill pledge requirements and sign their re-pledge certificate.
- Provide overview of theWashboard.org.
- Allow time for questions.
- Thank families for coming.

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.



TheWashBoard.org is a free, web-based, nonprofit scholarship clearinghouse that matches Washington scholarship seekers with Washington scholarship providers.

Benefits for Students

The Washboard is for Washington students attending college in and outside of Washington. It helps students quickly identify scholarships for which they are eligible by showing only those scholarship opportunities that match their profile data. Students' private information is kept confidential. Scholarships listed on theWashBoard.org are diverse and support a wide variety of student interests and accomplishments. One-third of listed scholarships require a GPA of 3.0 or higher. More than half of scholarships are not based on financial need.

When should I create an account?

It is never too early to create an account on TheWashBoard.org! Pay attention to deadlines and note that some may be early in your senior year.

How to use theWashBoard.org

- Register for a user account.
- Fill in the profile as completely as possible.
- Get scholarship MATCHES to consider.
- Apply and submit applications by the due date.
- Students returning to theWashBoard.org need to update their profile regularly. Update GPA & grade level, personal info page, and colleges being considered.

Scholarship Tips for Students

- Start early & keep looking. One day isn't enough.
- Follow the directions and meet deadlines.
- Apply each and every year.
- Scholarships aren't just for jocks or smarty-pants.
- DON'T PAY ANYONE to help you find free money!

Email: info@theWashBoard.org

Call: 1-888-535-0747 x8

Follow:   

Activity Idea: 10.1 Dual Credit

About: This activity is designed to introduce dual credit and its benefits, present options for dual credit equivalency, and identify or list opportunities for dual credit equivalency within their own school system.

Materials Needed: Dual Credit PowerPoint, Dual Credit Handout

Additional Resources:

- [Career Guidance Washington: 10-10 Course Registration](#). Lesson plan and handouts designed to review academic progress toward graduation and postsecondary admission, plan for coursework and activities for next year, and register for next year's courses.
- Family Newsletter: [Dual Credit](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Present the Dual Credit PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional Activity: Adapt [Career Guidance Washington 10.10 Course Registration](#) lesson. Have students and families explore options and make a plan.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 10.2 Test Preparation

About: This activity is designed to help students and families identify the exams they must complete for college applications.

Materials Needed: Test Preparation PowerPoint

Additional Resource:

- Family Newsletter: [Study Habits and Test Prep](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop and review what we mean when we say “college”.
- Activity based on Career Guidance Washington: 11-1 Where am I going in the 11th Grade: Designate five different areas of the room (the four corners and the center of the room), one for each of the paths (four-year college, two-year college, CTE (technical college), military, and the workforce). Have students to stand up and go to the section of the room that represents their path. When all the students have moved, discuss why they have chosen the path they did and take note of how many chose each path. If you wish, ask students to move around again to a “Plan B” for their second choice of path. Discuss how the composition of the room changed.
- Present Test Preparation PowerPoint. Explain the various admission exams: PSAT, SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, ACCUPLACER, or ASVAB. Tell students that no matter what path they choose, they will probably need to take at least one entrance exam. Those exams begin in the junior year. The SAT and ACT are the main entrance exams for four-year college. The PSAT is the SAT's practice test. Even if students took the PSAT during 10th grade, they must take it again in the fall of junior year for their results to count for the National Merit Scholarship competition.
- Give overview of registration process and fee waiver options that they will need in the future.
- Provide overview of test preparation resources and GEAR UP services and activities.
- Allow time for questions.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Which Admission Tests Do I Need to Take?

Your child's path after high school could include a four-year college, a two-year college, a CTE (technical college), military, or entering the workforce. Different paths require different entrance exams.

Talk to the school counselor or GEAR UP staff to learn more about which test your child should take, when, and how to get a fee waiver if necessary. Students should also take AP tests for any AP classes you have taken. Free test preparation is available on each of the tests' website.

4-year	PSAT or ACT Aspire 10th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps students prepare for college admission tests. Sophomores can also use their score reports to figure out which academic areas they need to work on.
	PSAT/NMSQT 10th and 11th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If students are planning to attend a four-year college, take the PSAT in fall of junior year. Taking the PSAT/NMSQT again in 11th grade gives students a fresh skills assessment and a measure of their progress, as well as the chance to compete for scholarships. Research shows that students who take the PSAT/NMSQT in both 10th and 11th grades score higher on the SAT than students who do not. The PSAT/NMSQT, which will help students prepare for the SAT. It could also qualify students for the National Merit Scholarship Competition.
4-year	SAT or ACT 11th and/or 12th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most four-year colleges require that students submit SAT or ACT scores. Some colleges require or recommend that you take SAT Subject Tests. Take the SAT and/or ACT in spring of junior year. Students may test or retest in 12th grade.
2-year	ACCUPLACER, ASSET, or other community college assessment 11th or 12th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two-year colleges often require this assessment. Check with the college to determine what assessments are required. Take fall of senior year.
Military	ASVAB 11th or 12th grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ASVAB is designed to predict success in the military, while the ACT and SAT are designed to predict success in college. Take the ASVAB in spring of junior year for practice. Take fall of senior year. Scores are good for up to two years.

Activity Idea: 10.3 College and Career Exploration

About: This activity is designed to get students and families to understand different ways students can explore their interests and search for college.

Materials Needed: 10.3 College and Career Exploration PowerPoint

Additional Resource:

- Family Newsletter: [College & Career Pathways](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.
- Optional: College Fair Checklist Handout

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop and review what we mean when we say “college”.
- Introduce the importance of exploring colleges and careers and options that your school will offer, e.g., job shadowing, career fairs, campus visits, and college fairs (online or in-person).
- Present 10.3 College and Career Exploration PowerPoint.
- Share tips on how to successfully prepare for and navigate these options.
- Allow time for questions.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition “Family Event”. Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

College Fair Checklist

Get the Information You Want

A college fair is a gathering of college representatives who are looking for the right students for their institutions. They're there to spread the word about their college to high school students — and they want to talk to you.

College fairs may be held at your school, a conference center or a local community center, and the colleges may be local or from around the country. The representatives usually sit at booths or tables and hand out brochures and cards. They can tell you about everything from academics to campus life at their college, and they can also answer more-general questions about college.

Ask your counselor or a teacher how to find college fairs in your area. If you can, try to go to more than one to get a good sampling of what's out there. The checklist below will help you get the most out of each fair.

Before You Go

- Find out which colleges will be at the fair (a list may be posted on the fair's website) and write down the names of the ones you want to learn about.
- Make a list of any questions you have.
- Bring your list, a pen, paper and a bag to hold college brochures.
- Make sure the email address that you give out won't embarrass you — remember, college admission officers will see it.

While You're There

- Get a map of the fair and plan a route that will take you to the booths of all the colleges on your list. If there is no map available, do a quick survey of the room to locate your colleges.
- Visit booths and ask college representatives questions. For example, you can ask, "What kind of student are you looking for?" or "What makes your campus special?"
- Take a minute to jot down any information you think is important before moving on to the next booth.
- Check out some of the other booths when you're done with the colleges on your list. You may stumble onto a great college you hadn't considered.
- Attend an information session, if any are offered. Typical topics include applications and financial aid. These sessions are good opportunities to get expert advice.

When You Get Home

- Ask yourself which colleges stood out and why.
- Organize the college material you collected and review it that week while it's fresh in your mind.
- Go over any notes you took during the fair.
- Throw out the pamphlets of colleges you've ruled out so you can focus on the colleges you're interested in.
- Do more research on the colleges you're thinking about. Explore websites, contact the admission office or plan a campus visit. If you liked what you saw at the fair, it may be time to see the college in person.

Source: [Big Future](#)

Activity Idea: 11.1 Pre-College Assessments and Fee Waivers

About: This activity is designed to introduce the process for registering for entrance exams.

Materials Needed: 11.1 Entrance Exams and Fee Waivers PowerPoint

Additional Resources:

- [Career Guidance Washington: 11-1 Where Am I Going in 11th Grade?](#) Lesson plan and handouts designed to review academic progress toward graduation and postsecondary admission, plan for coursework and activities for next year, and register for next year's courses.
- Family Newsletter: [Entrance Exams](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional Activity: Test Registration
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 11.2 Scholarships

About: This activity is designed to provide an overview of the basic components of scholarships, best practices for applying, and identify resources to find scholarships.

Materials Needed: 11.2 Scholarships PowerPoint

Additional Resources:

- [Career Guidance Washington: 11-7 Financial Aid Fundamentals](#). Lesson plan and handouts designed to define and describe financial aid terms and procedures and identify resources to secure scholarships.
- Family Newsletter: [Scholarships](#). (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional Activity: [Zombie Apocalypse! A Scholarship Activity](#). A simple mistake could cost you a scholarship. It is important to pay attention to every detail. Applicants need to know what is being asked and need to comply with these requirements. Common mistakes are preventable. Show students how scholarships are often scored. Have them read and score the submissions. Debrief and help students learn how to avoid common pitfalls.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 11.3 Overview of the Senior Year and Choosing a College

About: This activity provides an overview of the senior year timeline and reviews available resources.

Materials Needed: 11.3 Overview of Senior Year and Choosing a College PowerPoint

Additional Resources:

- College Comparison Scorecard and Worksheets
- [Career Guidance Washington: 11-3 Junior-Senior Calendar](#). Lesson plan and handouts designed to review academic progress toward graduation and postsecondary admission, plan for coursework and activities for next year, and register for next year's courses.
- Family Newsletter: [What to do Over Summer](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional: College Fit/Exploration Homework. See [Cappex College Fit Kit](#) or [BigFuture](#). Encourage students to complete the College Comparison Scorecard and Worksheet over the summer and begin to narrow down their choices.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

College Comparison Scorecard

Compare colleges based on the characteristics that are most important to you. This scorecard helps you evaluate colleges side-by-side.

Step 1: Take the “What is my ideal college?” survey in the left column.

Step 2: Rank the colleges that you visit in person or on a virtual tour on a scale of 1 to 3 (3 is best!) based on how well they fit your criteria.

Step 3: Total the scores up to see what college might be the best fit for you.

Ranking System (1-3):

3= It's a perfect match

2= It kind of meets this criteria

1=Nope, it doesn't have what I want.

What's my ideal college? <i>Circle the answer or answers that apply to you.</i>	College #1	College #2	College #3
I want a college that is located: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Close to home b. As far away as possible c. Somewhere in between so I can back for weekends and holidays. 			
I prefer a campus size that is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Small (under 5,000 students) b. Medium (5,000-15,000 students) c. Large (15,000+ students) 			
I want my college to be in the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. City b. Suburbs c. Country 			
I want to be able to live: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. On campus, in a dorm or apartment b. Off campus in an apartment or house c. At home 			
I prefer a college that is : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Private (not a public or state school) b. Single-sex (only male or female) c. Religiously affiliated d. Known for serving ethnic minority populations (i.e., tribal colleges historically black colleges and universities, etc) e. None of these are important to me 			

What's my ideal college? <i>Circle the answer or answers that apply to you.</i>	College #1	College #2	College #3
I want to complete my degree in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 2 years or less (AA) b. 4 years (BA, BS) c. More than 4 years (Masters, Doctorate, and Professional) 			
My ideal college offers degrees in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Art and Design b. Sciences and Engineering c. Health fields d. Teaching and Counseling e. Business or Law f. Other: 			
I want to be able to participate in the following activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sports (either, Division I, Division II, Division III) b. Student government c. Community service d. Greek life e. Other clubs and/or activities: 			
I want to be able to take advantage of the following student services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tutoring/academic support b. Counseling and health services c. Study abroad d. Recreational sports and/or a gym e. Disability access f. Other: 			
I want a college that offers financial aid including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Scholarships b. Grants c. Loans d. Work-study programs e. This is not important to me 			
I want a college where students receive an average of _____% of their financial need through financial aid. (Use the College Board search if you are unsure). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. 75-100% b. 50-74% c. 25-49% d. Less than 25% 			
Total			

College Comparison Worksheet

Investigate various aspects of postsecondary institutions that interest you. Evaluate each school in the areas listed below and then compare your evaluations. Feel free to add your own categories or eliminate those that do not apply.

Campus Environment	College #1	College #2	College #3
Campus facilities, equipment and services			
Computers and internet access			
Food service (cafeterias)			
Health care (physical and mental health counseling)			
Housing (Do you need year-round housing? LGBTQ-safe/gender neutral housing?)			
Library			
Recreational			
Transportation (parking, buses, etc.)			
Campus safety			
Campus setting (urban, suburban, small town, rural)			
Geographic location (distance from home)			
Religious affiliation/ Faith-based organizations on			
Childcare/Family housing			
Accessibility for physical disabilities			
Student Body	College #1	College #2	College #3
Number of undergraduates enrolled			
% of full-time students			
% of men and women			
% of students 25 or older			
% of minority students			
% of students from out-of-state			
% of international students			
% of student who live on campus			
% of students who return the following year			
% of students who graduate			
% of graduates employed within one year			
Cost	College #1	College #2	College #3
Application fee			
Fee waiver available?			
Amount of deposit (after acceptance)			
Total annual cost of attendance			
Tuition and fees			
Room and board			

Other required expenses (books, supplies)			
Financial Aid	College #1	College #2	College #3
Financial aid availability			
Grants (participates in federal and/or state grant			
Scholarships			
Work study			
Loans			
Financial aid deadline			
Financial aid forms (FAFSA, PROFILE, school)			
% of undergraduates receiving financial aid			
Average amount awarded to undergraduates			
Student Activities/Enrichment	College #1	College #2	College #3
Athletic offerings (sports: collegiate and intramural)			
Fraternities, sororities, social and academic clubs			
Extracurricular organizations and events			
Music, fine arts, performing arts			
Internships, community service, study abroad			
Student Support Services	College #1	College #2	College #3
Counseling, mentoring, or tutoring services? TRiO SSS? First Year Experience?			
Support for physical challenges & learning disabilities			
Peer affinity groups like POSSE, 1 st Gen support groups, student groups for women, students of color, LGBTQ students, foster care alumni, etc.			
Career, internship, employment assistance, job			
On-campus or nearby food banks? Clothing banks?			
Do they offer an orientation? A summer transition			
Other Considerations	College #1	College #2	College #3
Financial condition			
School accreditation			

Activity Idea: 12.1 College Admissions and Financial Aid

About: This activity is designed to review the key steps students need to complete their senior year and highlight available resources and support.

Materials Needed: 12.1 College Admissions and Financial Aid PowerPoint

Additional Resources:

- [Career Guidance Washington: 12-1 Where Am I Going in 12th Grade?](#) 12-4 [FAFSA Process – It's Not Just the Application](#). 12-6 [Completing a College Application](#). Lesson plans and handouts designed to review academic progress toward graduation and postsecondary admission, plan for coursework and activities for next year, and register for next year's courses.
- Family Newsletter: [Senior Year: Get Organized](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.
- [Senior Year Binder System: Advisor's Guide to a Student Organizational Plan for College Admissions & Financial Aid](#). This binder system can be used with high school seniors to help them stay organized during the college and financial aid application process.
- [A Parent's Guide to Apprenticeships](#)
- [12th Year Campaign Student Workbook](#)
- [College Scorecard](#)

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional Activity: Hand out 12th Year Campaign Student Workbook. Review your school's 12th Year Campaign schedule of events and explain how GEAR UP can help.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 12.2 Understanding Award Letters and Making a Decision

About: This activity will review award letter basics and explain how to compare aid offers.

Materials Needed: Computers and award letters.

Additional Resources:

- [Career Guidance Washington: 11-1 Where Am I Going in 11th Grade?](#) Lesson plan and handouts designed to review academic progress toward graduation and postsecondary admission, plan for coursework and activities for next year, and register for next year's courses.
- Family Newsletter: [Making a Decision](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional Activity: If students have award letters, help families compare awards with [BigFuture's online tool](#). Review what types of aid are preferable.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.

Activity Idea: 12.3 Transition to College

About: This activity is designed to help prepare students and families for the first year after high school, including what to expect and how to navigate common challenges.

Materials Needed: 12.3 Transition to College PowerPoint

Additional Resources:

- [Career Guidance Washington: 11-1 Where Am I Going in 11th Grade?](#) Lesson plan and handouts designed to review academic progress toward graduation and postsecondary admission, plan for coursework and activities for next year, and register for next year's courses.
- Family Newsletter: [Transition to College](#) (Word). Templates with college readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Just add your school logo, events and contact information to customize for your school.
- [A Family Guide: Supporting Your Child After High School](#). The purpose of this document is to provide support to families as their child transitions to college.
- [Activity Guide: Preparing Students for the Transition to College](#). The transition from high school to a postsecondary institution is an important milestone. This period can be marked with enthusiasm as well as self-doubt, stress, and uncertainty. College access professionals can use this activity guide to help prepare students and families for the first year after high school, including what to expect and how to navigate common challenges.

Event Time Allowed: 60 minutes.

Directions:

- Welcome everyone.
- Introductions. Introduce yourself and other presenters/team members.
- Provide overview of workshop.
- Review what we mean when we say "college".
- Present the PowerPoint.
- Allow time for questions.
- Optional Activity: Student Alumni Panel.
- Adjourn

After The Event: GEAR UP staff should record this activity in the portal using the service definition "Family Event". Be sure to maintain a sign-in sheet. Send thank you email or text messages to attendees who provided contact information. Send any photos/videos to bethk@wsac.wa.gov to be posted on the Washington State GEAR UP social media pages.