The K20 Center is excited to welcome you as a new strategic partner. Through exploring this relationship, you'll see how K20 and GEAR UP work together to establish a college-going culture that leads to life-altering benefits for your students.

In 2018, the K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal competed and was awarded three separate Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP) grants sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. There were 160 applications for GEAR UP funding, 60 grants were awarded, and K20 won 3 of them.

The GEAR UP OKC, GEAR UP for MY SUCCESS, and GEAR UP for the FUTURE grants will provide seven years of services and development to 46 partner schools all across the state of Oklahoma.
What is GEAR UP?

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education to help students prepare for and pursue a college education. The K20 Center has already worked with many schools, both urban and rural, across the state in past GEAR UP efforts. The power of a GEAR UP project is that it transforms a high-poverty school community into a college-going culture.

2007-2014 SUCCESS

Over the course of a six year grant, K20’s GEAR UP for SUCCESS provided college readiness services to...

3,549

cohort students from 32 districts living in mostly rural, ethnically diverse, poverty stricken areas of Oklahoma.

Hours of teacher, student, and family participation in college preparation programs totaled 186,929.

2011-2018 PROMISE

In its fifth of seven years, K20’s GEAR UP for the PROMISE has been providing college readiness services to...

4,337

cohort students from 9 high schools living in urban, ethnically diverse, poverty stricken areas of the Oklahoma City Metro.

Hours of teacher, student, and family participation in college preparation programs so far totals 100,166.

SINCE GEAR UP FOR THE PROMISE BEGAN IN 2011, COHORT STUDENTS HAVE MADE:

- An increase in awareness about the cost and benefits of going to college
  - 29% INCREASE

- An increase in awareness of Financial Aid availability
  - 54% INCREASE

- An increase in awareness of college entrance requirements
  - 51% INCREASE

- Cohort Students that believe they can succeed in college
  - 93%
The GEAR UP Model

- Raises academic aspirations of the entire cohort
- Supports the cohort long-term (6th or 7th grade through first year of college)
- Provides sustainable resources that remain with the grade level even after the cohort moves forward
INCREASE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF enjoyment, interest, critical thinking, and future relevance.

DECREASE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF boredom, confusion, frustration, and hopelessness.

The K20 Center's mission is to cultivate a collaborative network engaged in research and outreach that creates and sustains innovation and transformation through a research-based and data-driven program.

GER UP

Public economic good
- Creativity & problem-solving skills
- Sense of accomplishment & independence
- Higher job satisfaction

Public social capital
- Better mental & physical health
- Longer life expectancy
- Healthier family life (lower divorce rates, children achieve in school)
- Higher civic engagement: (vote, run for office, volunteer)

Personal economic good
- Prepared for TECH economy

Personal social capital
- Professional mentors and lifetime network
- Higher job satisfaction
- Sense of accomplishment & independence

COLLEGE BENEFITS TO STUDENTS*
- Prepared for TECH economy
- More in lifetime earnings

SERVICES
- College & career culture development
- Teachers’ learning
- Leadership support

PROGRAM GOALS
1. Increase academic preparation
2. Increase graduation rates
3. Increase family college & career awareness

$1M

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
- Shared learning
- Authentic learning

AUTHENTIC IDEALS
- Authenticity
- Leadership
- Service
- Inquiry
- Discourse
- Equity

LEARNER-CENTERED PD & INSTRUCTION
- Evaluation Expectations (Surveys, Student achievement data, Mini-research studies)

References
The K20 Center's mission is to cultivate a collaborative network engaged in research and outreach that creates and sustains innovation and transformation through...

**References**


PROJECT DESIGN

K20 GEAR UP for the FUTURE seeks to directly impact 4729 students from 11 Oklahoma schools. FUTURE has identified three goals that clearly define a methodology to guide the implementation of an evidence-based approach to improve students’ college readiness, awareness, and fit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1:</th>
<th>Increase cohort academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education (PSE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2:</td>
<td>Increase high school graduation and PSE participation of cohort GOAL</td>
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<tr>
<td>GOAL 3:</td>
<td>Increase student educational expectations and increase students’ and families’ knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing</td>
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SERVICES

College and Career Readiness Culture

FUTURE’s project services will center around the process of developing a sustainable college and career readiness culture that supports rigorous curriculum, promotes student achievement through the attainment of college-ready academic behaviors and skills, and provides students with opportunities to explore an array of postsecondary education institutions to determine which environment best fits their academic, social, and career needs/requirements.

Leadership Institute

FUTURE will engage leaders in a learning experience that starts with a nationally recognized Leadership Institute and persists through ongoing engagement within a professional learning community. Leaders will (1) be introduced to K20’s theoretical framework, (2) explore school improvement theory, (3) investigate change theory and data-driven decision-making strategies to explore research-based practices that would provide students with academic supports or enrichment, and (4) learn professional development theory. Leaders will develop a better understanding of their school’s earning climate and explore methods for building structures to create an environment of effective and reflective shared leadership.

Learning Teams

FUTURE schools will each identify a Learning Team consisting of the leader, counselor, cohort teachers, and other stakeholders, such as students, parents, and community members. The Learning Team provides a structure for meaningful innovation. FUTURE will partner with the school Learning Teams to implement site-based action plans and support field-tested, college-readiness academic supports.

Site-Based Action Plans

GEAR UP for the FUTURE schools and project staff will work together to use K20’s logic model platform, PLANS (Project Logic-models: Adapting Novel Strategies for school), to create site-based action plans. The six-stage action plan building process includes data analysis, defining research, setting goals, determining activities and resources, indicating outputs, and defining intermediate and long-term outcomes. This process promotes schools’ innovation in creating culturally relevant, research-based academic supports that will prepare students academically and encourage students and their families to explore postsecondary education.

Academic Readiness

More than 85% of low-income high school graduates who enter college are deemed not academically prepared for college (Hoffman et al., 2008). To ensure that FUTURE students are exposed to rigorous coursework, K20 will partner with schools and stakeholders to increase student access to meaningful, student-centered learning. Through K20’s Authentic Learning process, individual students build on what they know to create deep knowledge as they engage in relevant learning tasks, problems, and challenges that are guided by focused conversations grounded in the use of essential questions.

Authentic Teaching and Learning

The correlation of significant student gains through high levels of authentic pedagogy and content has been well documented (Jeter et al., 2018; Stroukoff et al., 2018; Hetherington et al., 2014). Authenticity emphasizes learning strategies and instructional sequencing, which provide deeper conceptual understanding (Tornwall, 2017) and increase the likelihood of transfer to real-world situations (White et al., 2017).

An Instructional Support Team, consisting of master teachers with exemplary content, pedagogy, and technology backgrounds, will serve as Instructional Coaches for the FUTURE project. They will work with Learning Teams to identify and implement research-based professional development experiences that support cohort schools’ action plans.
**LEARN** LEARN is the K20 Center’s repository of high-quality, authentic lessons. The lessons promote academic rigor and student engagement. As part of the FUTURE project, the Instructional Support Team will develop additional lessons for cohort teachers to use in the classroom. After being validated in the classroom, the lessons will be published to the LEARN repository. These authentic lessons will develop critical thinking skills to prepare students for PSE success, reducing the need for remedial coursework.

**Action Research in Authenticity (ARA)**
K20 has developed an authentic teaching professional development structure, ARA, which places the teacher in the role of both learner and action researcher. The Instructional Support Team will recruit teachers for this extended professional development process. Each participating teacher has access to a year-long professional development experience, starting with a four-day summer institute that explores the theory and practical application of authenticity. As teachers implement a series of authentic LEARN lessons in their classrooms, they are mentored by FUTURE curriculum specialists and identify their strengths and opportunities for growth.

**Student Readiness**
FUTURE will implement a series of student project services for both academic and social supports to better prepare cohort students for persistence in PSE. Project, school, and partner personnel will offer activities to increase the number of cohort students and parents visiting campuses and gaining knowledge about entrance requirements, degrees and careers, cost, scholarship and student financial aid options, location, educational environment, and college fit. To communicate PSE attainability, FUTURE will issue personalized 21st Century Scholar Certificates identifying (1) available federal financial aid and (2) Oklahoma’s tuition scholarship (based on family income) to each student entering high school. PSE institutes, community stakeholders, state agencies, and school partners will provide meaningful experiences for students on college campuses. These student services are built on reaching students through college experiences, interactive learning, and mentoring and tutoring.

**College Teams**
FUTURE provides a foundation of PSE awareness by facilitating campus visits for each cohort student. Students who do not have opportunities for college visits or other PSE experiences often enter college without contextual supports. Providing an annual campus visit gives every cohort student the opportunity to explore a minimum of five PSE sites (including community, regional, and research institutes) throughout their six-year middle and high school careers. Prior to each visit, the school’s College Team (five staff, including one counselor) will use a pre-visit curriculum kit from the LEARN repository to engage students in the exploration of the upcoming visit (student life, degree path, entrance requirements, and cost). This exploration will prepare students for meaningful interactions with college faculty, staff, students and mentors as they receive information about the campus. Each visit delivers activities to highlight college match and college fit and aligns with federal and state recommended timelines and milestones for PSE preparation and enrollment.

**Dual Enrollment**
Senior cohort students will participate in Statway for Seniors, a dual enrollment, co-requisite course to earn on-level, college mathematics credits. This instructional support will help students (1) avoid the social stigma of a remedial course, (2) gain PSE credit while in high school, and (3) acclimate to the rigors of a college curriculum.

**Game-Based Learning**
Game-based learning (GBL) can aid in comprehension, reflection, evaluation, and inquiry, allowing learners to explore the cause and effect between elements. Serious games are well-suited for deep learning environments, which are the tenets of authentic, inquiry-based instruction and the foundation of K20’s GBL deliverables. The K20 Center has produced 18 GBL titles that have generated more than 56,373 hours of student-engaged learning. FUTURE students will have the opportunity to engage with the existing games as well as additional titles that will be produced that address STEM awareness and college access. One of these games, AWARE (Applied Weather Academics and Readiness Experiences), will ask students to assume the role of an emergency manager tasked with designing a weather-ready response plan for a community-based event. Another game will be part of a larger computational thinking curriculum intended to introduce students to the concepts that underlie the computer science field.

**Mentoring and Tutoring**
A national sample of 7th to 12th graders found that students who reported experiencing a mentoring relationship demonstrated increased high school completion, college attendance, employment, self-esteem, and life satisfaction (DuBois et al., 2011). FUTURE will employ a highly qualified mentoring coordinator who will work with cohort schools to identify needs and match them with a research-based School-Based Mentoring (SBM) program.

**Link Crew**
Link Crew is a peer-based SBM program that had a profound impact on the students receiving mentoring as well as those students providing mentoring in a FY2011 GEAR UP project. Link Crew’s peer year-long mentoring and tutoring program targets the middle to high school transition and links upperclassmen (mentors) with incoming freshmen. Link Crew supports academic success and character development through mentors’ classroom visits and encourages mentor and freshman connections at social events to create positive school climate. Contributing to Link Crew sustainability, cohort students change their role from mentee to mentor as they progress toward graduation.

**Career Mentoring**
A group of career-based mentoring initiatives will provide FUTURE students with a structure through which they can speak directly with community members about careers, degree path, and college planning.

FUTURE will partner with Oklahoma Works’ Career Exposure Week, which seeks to introduce students to careers in business and industry. Events during Career Expo Week allow Oklahoma employers to showcase a broad range of critical careers from across the state while allowing students to see the array of careers available to them (Oklahoma Works, 2018). Based on student feedback, schools will invite a group of professionals to participate in school-based career talks entitled Career Cafés. Each Café provides a forum in which cohort students can speak with community members about careers and college in a small-group atmosphere over the lunch period.

College2Career Forums, a series of focused, career-specific explorations, will be planned for several popular careers. Each school will be invited to identify students who are interested in a targeted career and transport them to a local partnering PSE, where they will engage in a hands-on activity that exemplifies the career. Equipped with these experiences, students then have an opportunity to visit an actual business, shadow a practicing professional, and engage in a short mentoring session with that professional.
Map of Cohort Schools

1. Ardmore Middle School
2. Rector Johnson Junior High, Broken Bow
3. Byng Middle School
4. Checotah Middle School
5. Colbert Middle School
6. Crooked Oak Middle School, Oklahoma City
7. Dibble Middle School
8. Dickson Middle School
9. Frederick Middle School
10. MacArthur Middle School, Lawton

11. Hugo Middle School
12. Idabel Middle School
13. Little Axe Junior High
14. Macomb Elementary School
15. Marietta Middle School
16. Muldrow Middle School
17. Pauls Valley Junior High
18. Pocola Middle School
19. Tommie Spear Middle School, Sallisaw
20. Stigler Middle School

21. Stratford Middle School
22. Valliant Middle School
23. Vian Middle School
24. Capps Middle School, Putnam City
25. Central Middle School, Lawton
26. Cooper Middle School, Putnam City
27. Curtis Inge Middle School, Noble
28. Eisenhower Middle School, Lawton
29. Etta Dale Junior High, El Reno
30. Guthrie Junior High

31. MacArthur Middle School, Lawton
32. Santa Fe South Middle School, Oklahoma City
33. Shawnee Middle School
34. Tomlinson Middle School, Lawton
35. Belle Isle Enterprise Middle School
36. Classen School of Advanced Studies
37. Douglass Mid-High School
38. Emerson Alternative School
39. Jefferson Middle School
40. John Marshall Mid-High School
41. Northeast Academy
42. Oklahoma Centennial Mid-High School
43. Rogers Middle School
44. Roosevelt Mid-High School
45. Taft Middle School
46. Webster Middle School

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The K20 Center for Educational and Community Renewal is a statewide education research and development center at the University of Oklahoma that promotes research-based innovative learning through school-university-community collaboration.

3100 Monitor Avenue, Suite 200 | Norman, Oklahoma 73072-7808 | (405)325-1267 | k20center@ou.edu