

# GEAR UP

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**

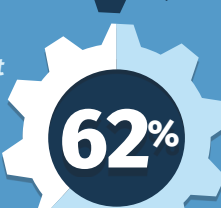
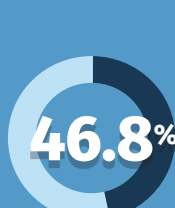
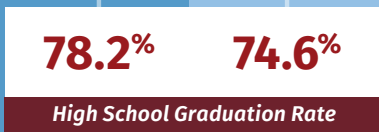
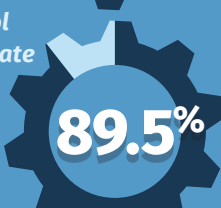
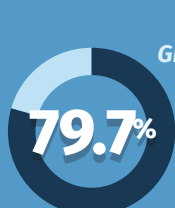
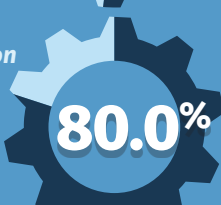
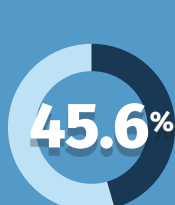
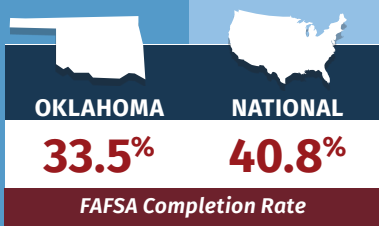
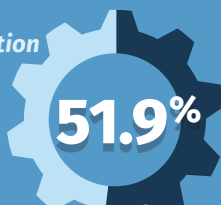
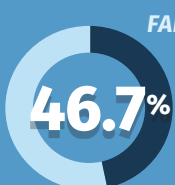
cohort students from 9 high schools living in urban, ethnically diverse, poverty stricken areas of the Oklahoma City Metro.

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



COMPARISON  
COHORT

SUCCESS  
COHORT

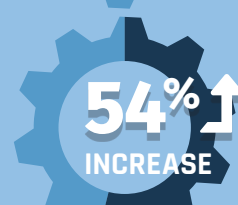


SINCE GEAR UP FOR THE PROMISE BEGAN IN 2011, COHORT STUDENTS HAVE MADE:

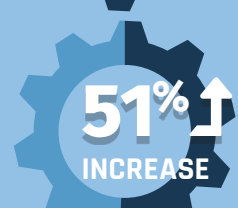
An increase in awareness about the cost and benefits of going to college



An increase in awareness of Financial Aid availability



An increase in awareness of college entrance requirements



Cohort Students that believe they can succeed in college



# NEW GEAR UP PROGRAMS 2018-2025

GEAR UP  
FOR THE FUTURE

4,729  
STUDENTS  
11  
SCHOOLS

\$3,783,200/year  
7 Year Total:  
\$26,482,400



GEAR UP  
FOR MY SUCCESS

4,154  
STUDENTS  
23  
SCHOOLS

\$3,323,200/year  
7 Year Total:  
\$23,262,400



GEAR UP  
(Opportunities+Knowledge=College)  
O+K=C

3,339  
STUDENTS  
12  
SCHOOLS

\$2,668,800/year  
7 Year Total:  
\$18,681,600



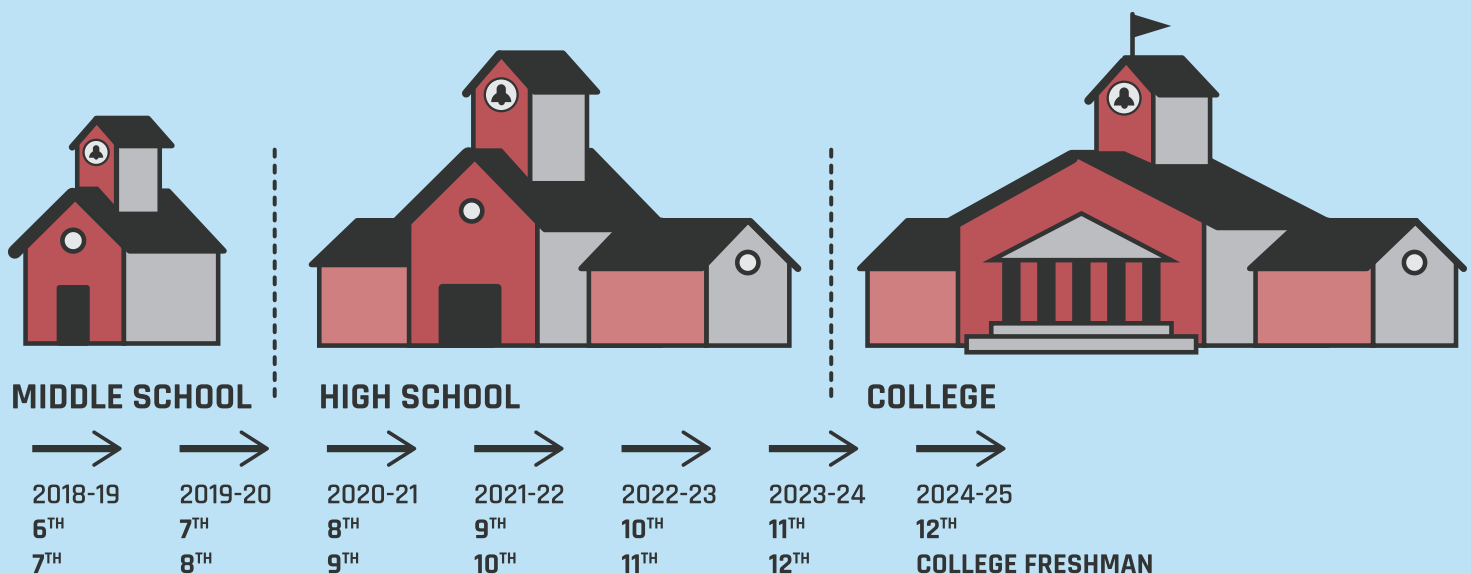
**TOTALS**

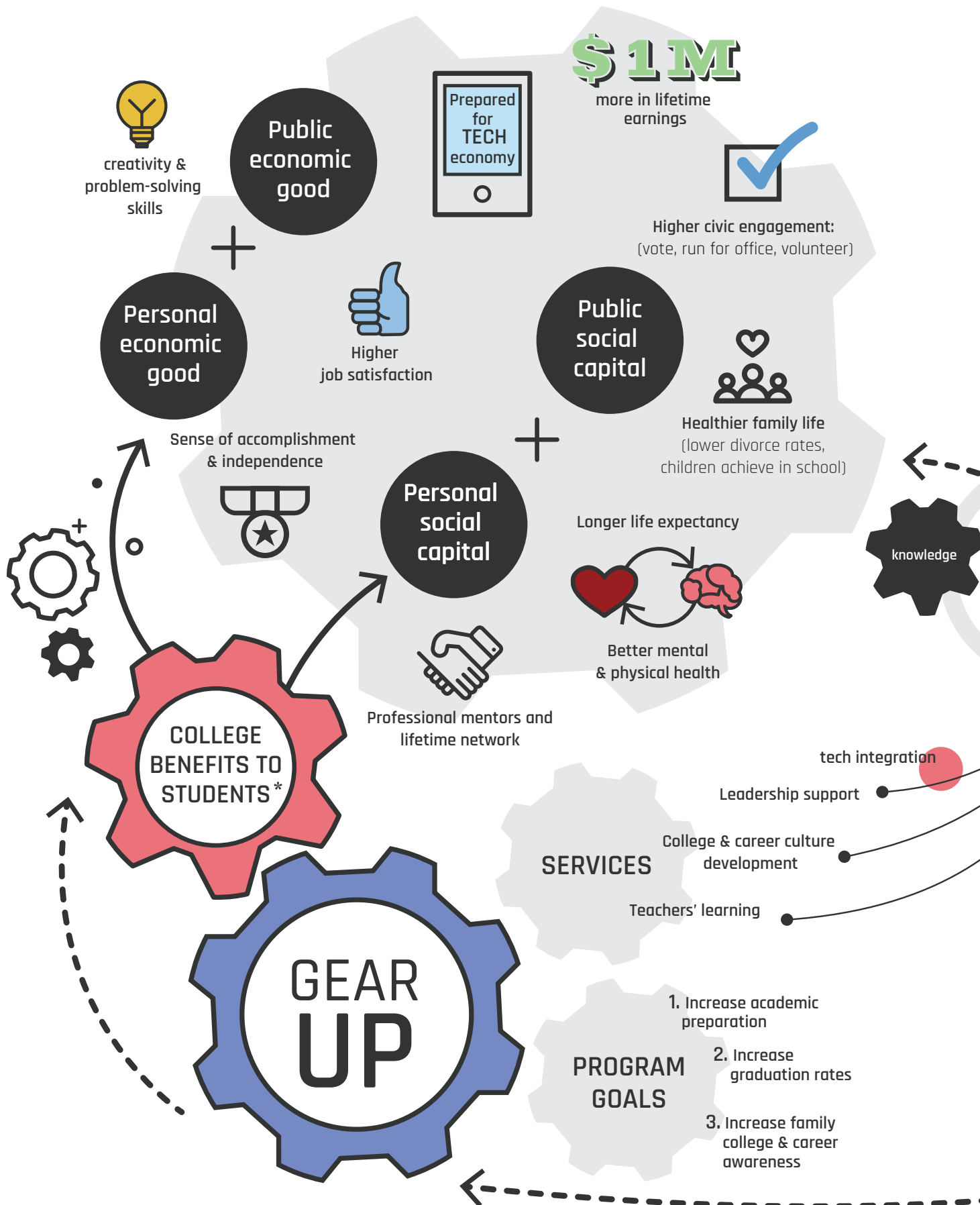
12,222  
STUDENTS  
46  
SCHOOLS

\$9,775,200/year  
7 Year Total:  
\$68,426,400

## 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

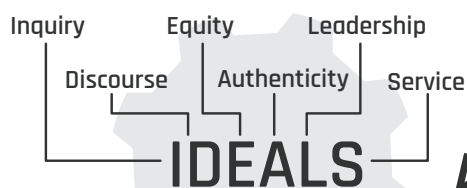
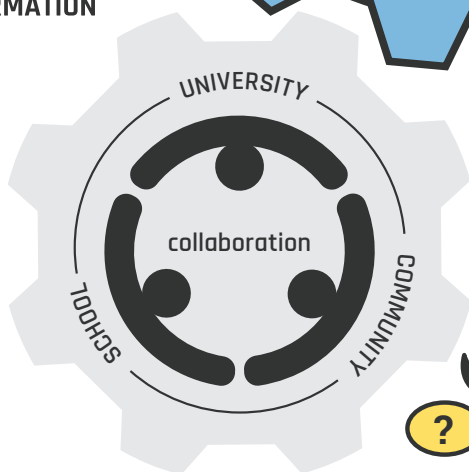
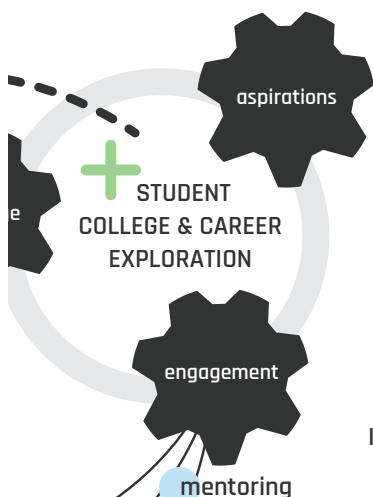




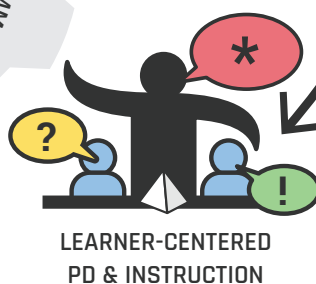
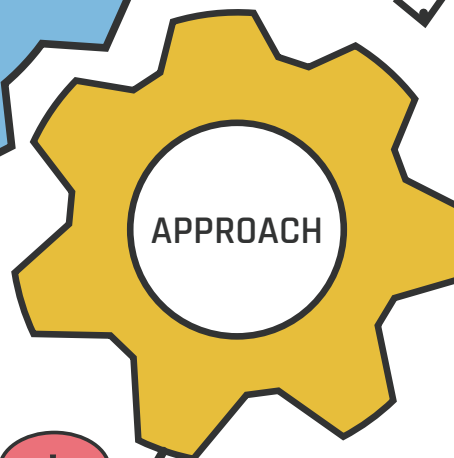
The K20 Center's **mission** is to cultivate a collaborative network engaged in research and outreach that creates and sustains innovation and transformation through...



## INNOVATION & TRANSFORMATION



model resources  
[learn.k20center.ou.edu](http://learn.k20center.ou.edu)  
 strategies, lessons, activities



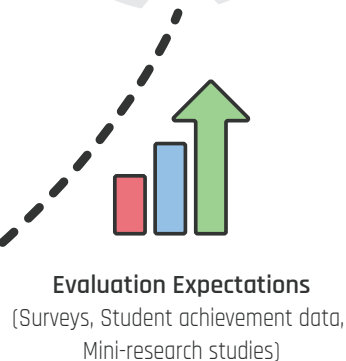
## AUTHENTIC LESSONS \*



INCREASE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF  
 enjoyment  
 interest  
 critical thinking  
 future relevance



DECREASE STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF  
 boredom  
 confusion  
 frustration  
 hopelessness



## \* References

- Hutton, H. (2017). Learn to articulate the value of college beyond dollar signs. *Recruiting & Retaining Adult Learners*, 19(7), 6-7.
- Stroukoff, A. E., Heddy, B. C., Wilson, S. N., Williams, L. A., Atkinson, L. K., & Garn, G. A. (submitted). Making 'brain food': Converting photosynthesis into a positive learning experience through authentic instruction, *Science Education*.
- Jeter, G. R., Baber, J. E., Heddy, B., Wilson, S., Williams, L., Atkinson, L., Garn, G. (2018). Students at the Center: Insights and Implications of Authentic, SE Instruction in High School English Language Arts. *Research in the Teaching of English*. Manuscript under review.



# 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.

<b>GOAL 1:</b>	Increase cohort academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education (PSE)
<b>GOAL 2:</b>	Increase high school graduation and PSE participation of cohort GOAL
<b>GOAL 3:</b>	Increase student educational expectations and increase students' and families' knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing

## 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 learning 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.

### **Professional Development and Academics**

The Learning Team will also collaborate with project professional development staff to present and support research-based instructional strategies, serve as points of contact for student-based services, co-facilitate evening college information events, and work with FUTURE staff to arrange student exploration of PSE sites. FUTURE will also work to harness local expertise to build and support the capacity of the school and community in replicating evidence-based activities that have had the greatest

impact on student readiness. Counselor and Parent academies. bring together key project stakeholders to gain practical insight from research as well as best practices.

### **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.

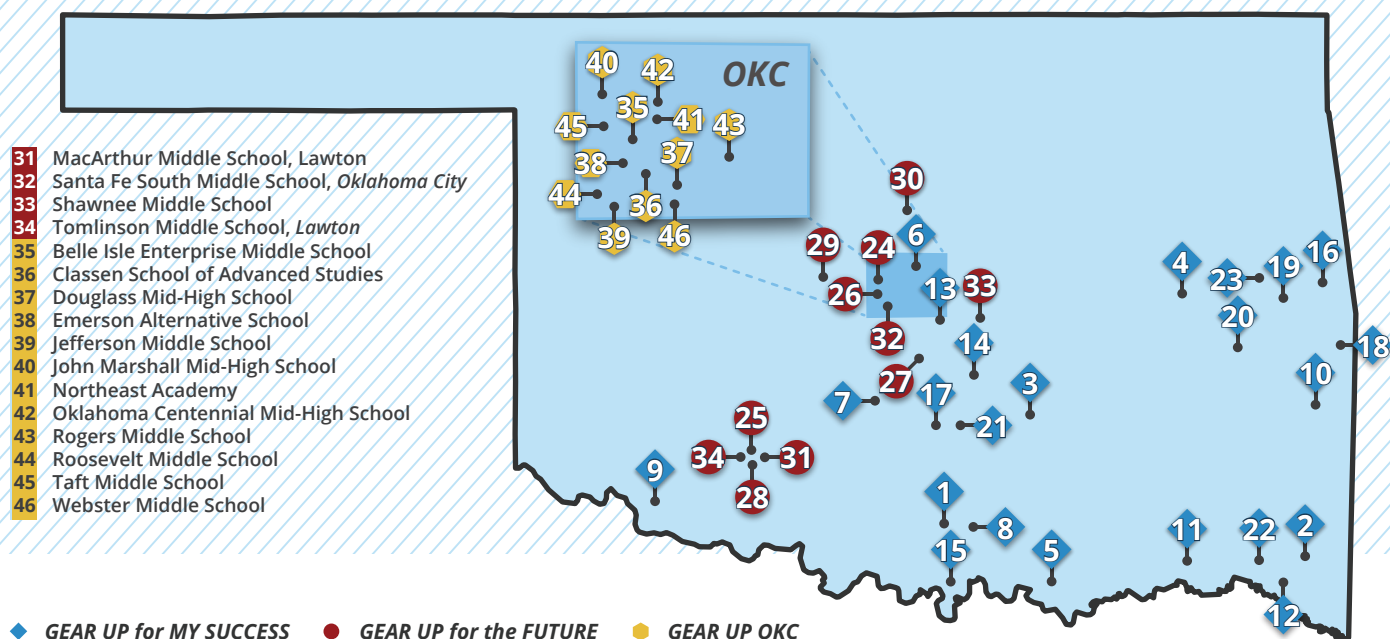
College2Career Forums, a series of focused, career-specific explorations, will be planned for several popular careers. Each school will be invited to identify students who are interested in a targeted career and transport them to a local partnering PSE, where they will engage in a hands-on activity that 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 Heavener Elementary School

- 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



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.

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