



Utah's Statewide GEAR UP Education Program: Summary of Progress

This summary report presents information about Utah's Statewide GEAR UP (GU) Education Program at the midpoint of the program. Progress toward the three overarching objectives of the program is presented using data from student and parent surveys, academic course and test outcomes, and service participation records.

INTRODUCTION

Since its beginning in September 2005, Utah's Statewide GEAR UP Education Program has provided services to cohort and priority students in 13 school districts and up to 47 schools in urban and rural areas throughout the state of Utah. Core services include test preparation, tutoring, workshops and summer programs about college admissions and financial aid, and college visits. Table 1 presents the number of cohort and priority students served during the first three years of the program.

OBJECTIVE 1: COMPETENCY

To increase basic skills competency and preparation for college.

Table 1. Number of students served

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Cohort	7th	8th	9th
#	531	688	641
Priority	#	#	#
7 th	50	0	0
8 th	153	134	0
9 th	52	388	201
10 th	95	419	532
11 th	40	323	466
12 th	16	199	331
Total	937	2151	2171

Table 2. Student test outcomes: percent passing and proficient

Passed UBSCT	Math	Writing	Reading	All
Utah's GEAR UP Program 2006-07				
10 th	39	48	36	31
11 th	67	79	68	58
12 th	80	87	80	72
Utah's GEAR UP Program 2007-08				
10 th	64	68	87	44
11 th	79	82	91	68
12 th	77	81	88	70
Statewide Economically Disadvantaged 2007-08				
10 th	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
11 th	66	73	82	59
12 th	68	74	82	62
Proficient on CRT	English	Math	Science	
Utah's GEAR UP Program 2007-08				
9 th	65	42	44	
10 th	78	66	38	
11 th	75	70	37	
State Economically Disadvantaged 2007-08				
9 th	63	53	51	
10 th	64	37	44	
11 th	61	23	33	

As Table 2 presents, the percentage of 10th and 11th grade GU students passing the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test (UBSCT) Math, Writing, and Reading tests in 2007-08 increased notably from the 2006-07 rates. Although 12th grade students showed lower pass rates for 2007-08 UBSCT Math and Writing, they achieved higher rates in Reading. In addition, the UBSCT pass rates for GU students far exceeded those of statewide economically disadvantaged students.

Table 2 also shows GU student proficiency rates for the Utah Criterion Referenced Test (CRT). Given the nature of the cohort/priority model structure, the number of students in each grade level of the program varies greatly each year. As a result, year-to-year comparisons of similar groupings of GU students are not feasible. Therefore, an external comparison group (i.e., statewide economically disadvantaged students) within the same time frame was used. As Table 2 illustrates, GU students achieved higher English CRT proficiency rates than did the comparison group. Regarding Math CRT proficiency, rates for 9th grade GU students are lower than those of the comparison group, however, rates for both 10th and 11th grade GU students are substantially higher than those in comparison groups.

Figure 1. GEAR UP student course success rates, by gender

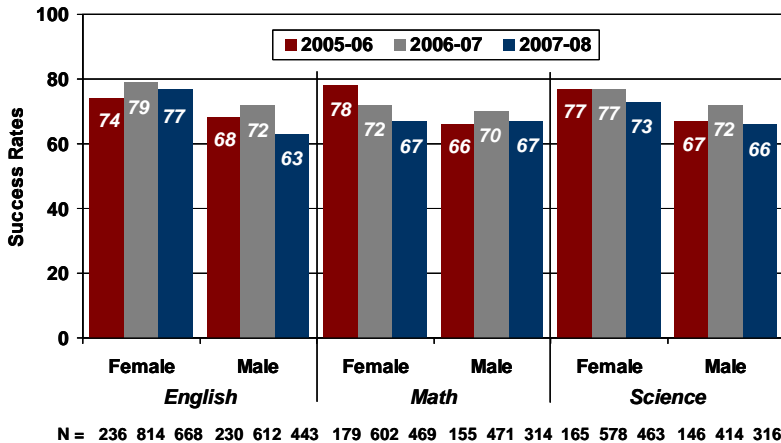


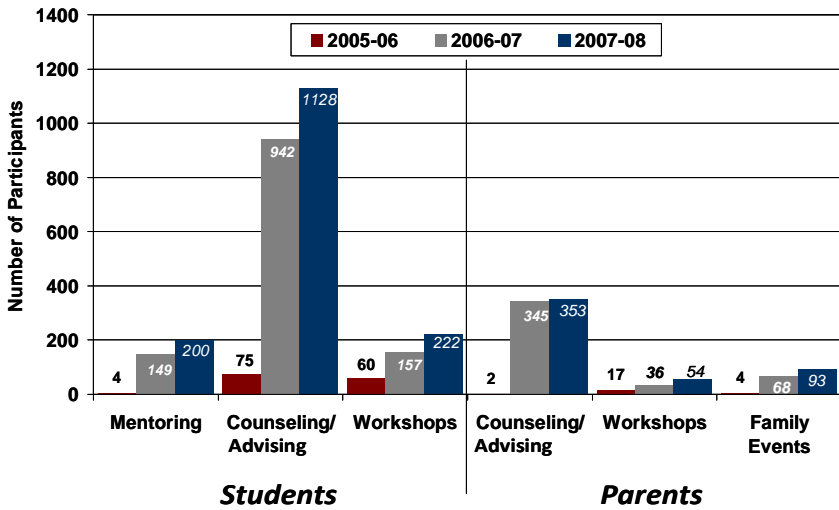
Figure 1 illustrates average success rates of GU students in English, Math, and Science courses, by gender. There appears to be a general increase in success rates from 2005-06 to 2006-07, followed by a decrease in 2007-08. This decline is likely due to student maturational factors. Namely, in 2006-07, the majority of GU students were in 8th and 9th grade. In general, declining course performance is typical for 8th and 9th grade students. Likewise, the consistent decline in math course success for females from 7th to 9th grade is also common. These results indicate a need for possible increases or modifications to program resources and services aimed to increase academic course performance.

OBJECTIVE 2: PREPAREDNESS

To increase high school graduation rates and college enrollment.

Table 3 displays the percentages of 2008-09 GU students reporting that particular activities or services were helpful in preparing for, or deciding to attend college. Figure 2 presents parent and student GU participation data, showing annual increases in the number of GU students participating in mentoring, counseling/advising, and workshops. Parents of GU students also showed increased participation in counseling/advising, workshops, and family events over the three years examined. Figure 3 presents student aspirations and expectations for obtaining a four-year college degree. While both of these indicators show consistent increases across the three years, a notable gap between student aspirations and expectations remains.

Figure 2. Table or graph - participation



OBJECTIVE 3: SCHOLARSHIPS

To increase priority and GEAR UP student access to postsecondary education options and financing.

In 2007-08, 283 of the 331 seniors in Utah's GEAR UP Program (86%) provided information on their postsecondary status. Of these, 123 (44%) reported to have enrolled in some kind of postsecondary education or training program.

With regards to financing their education, in 2007-08, 97 of the 283 GU seniors applied for financial aid. In addition, 82 seniors applied for non-GU scholarships, of which 64 received awards, and 63 seniors applied for GU scholarships, of which 49 received awards.

Figure 4 presents information about student and parent knowledge of financial aid and college costs. Note that less than half of the students and parents report having enough financial aid information, although the figures are increasing. Moreover, while most students and parents report they can afford college, these figures have remained stable or decreased from 2007-08 to 2008-09. Last, the chart reveals that, during all three years, just 8% to 18% of students and parents were able to identify the correct cost range of attending a state college in Utah. This indicates a need to increase current GU efforts to inform students and parents about actual college costs.

Table 3. Percent of students reporting in 2008-09 that services/activities were helpful

Helped in deciding to attend college	%
Info about benefits of going to college	64
Tutoring or help with school work	62
Mentoring from GEAR UP Staff	57
Info about fin. aid & cost of college	53
Visiting a college campus	44
College preparation workshops	38
Helped in preparing for college	%
Visit to a high school/college	74
Acad. Assist. Activities/classes/packets	71
Interest/career exploration activities	71
Math tutoring	69
English tutoring	67
Tutoring - another subject	67
GEAR UP workshop	67
Academic counseling/advising	64
Standardized test prep	62
Presentation by coll. staff/bus. leaders	61

Figure 3. Student aspirations and expectations for a four-year college degree

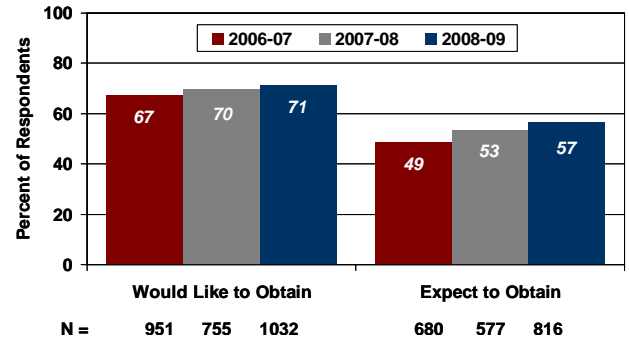


Figure 4. Financial aid and college costs

