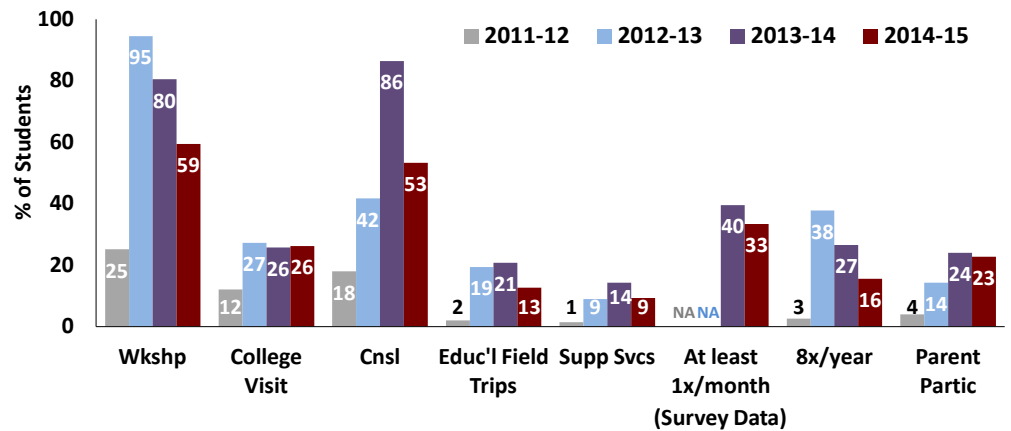


The Texas A&M International University GEAR UP IV program, *Creating a Vision*, was implemented during Fall 2011, serving more than 8000 seventh grade students at 35 middle schools during their first year. This report presents information on progress toward program objectives, based on survey responses, service participation data, and test scores available through the 2014-15 school year.

SERVICE PARTICIPATION

As Figure 1 presents, nearly all students participated in a GEAR UP workshop during 2012-13, and most attended counseling as well as a workshop during 2013-14. Rates were lower during the most recent school year, though the majority still participated in a workshop and counseling. According to survey findings, students were more likely to report that they *sometimes* or *frequently* participated in GEAR UP activities, (defined as once a month or more), than participation records indicated (comparable to eight times per school year). During the last three years, more than one fourth of the students visited a college, with smaller rates of participation in educational field trips and support services. Less than one fourth of the students had a parent or family member participate in any GEAR UP activity during a school year.

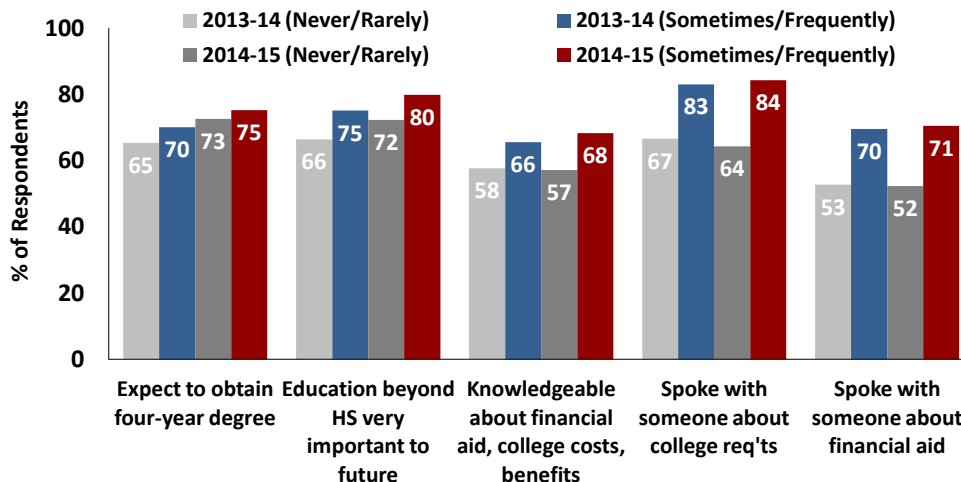
Figure 1. Program participation rates



COLLEGE KNOWLEDGE

As shown in Figure 2, students indicating that they participated in GEAR UP events *sometimes* or *frequently* were more likely indicate that they expect to earn a four-year degree, feel postsecondary education is important for their future, are knowledgeable about these topics, and have heard from school or GEAR UP staff about college entrance requirements and financial aid. Additionally, these higher positive responses among participants

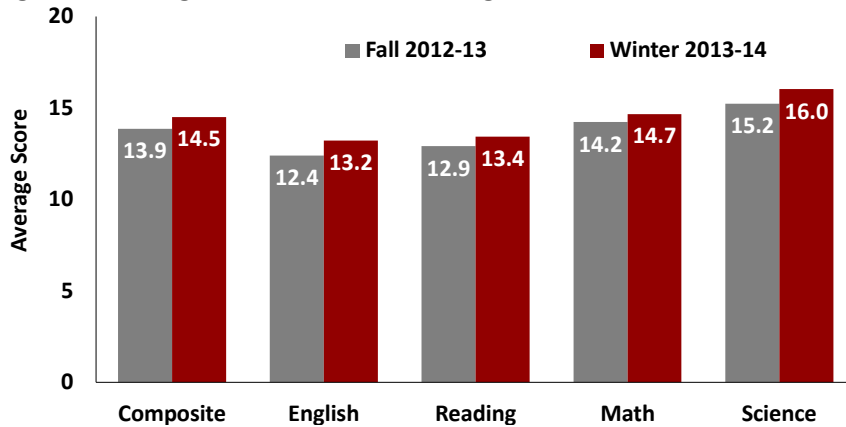
Figure 2. TAMIU GEAR UP exposure and knowledge



increased from 2013-14 to 2014-15. Notably, even among students reporting that they *never* or *rarely* participate, degree attainment expectations and indications that college is important have increased, perhaps suggesting that efforts to infuse the schools with a college-going culture are achieving the intended impact. As expected, knowledge of and exposure to college and financial aid topics has not increased among those reporting to participate *never* or *rarely*.

EXPLORE/PLAN TESTS

Figure 3. Average EXPLORE scores among students assessed twice



The EXPLORE assessments were administered twice, resulting in more than 4,400 students who participated both during early fall 2012-13 and the winter months of 2013-14. Figure 3 presents averages scores in each test subject during the two administration timeframes. In all subjects, increases are evident. However, while encouraging, some level of increase is typically expected due to maturational factors (i.e., student growth from one year to the next).

Figure 4 presents the results of a more in-depth examination of these increases based on student participation in GEAR UP services such as counseling, college visits, workshops, and field trips during the timeframe between the two EXPLORE assessments. Students were grouped according to the number of combined hours they had participated in such activities. Low participation consisted of less than four hours, while high participation reflected ten or more hours; medium participation comprised the times in between. The composite scores as well as scores in English, reading, and science all showed significant relationships with participation levels; students who participated in GEAR UP at the highest levels were more likely to improve their scores. Results are less conclusive in math, with rates of improvement more similar across participation levels than seen for other subjects. An additional analysis (not shown) examined math improvement only among students who initially scored in the bottom 20% on the EXPLORE math test compared with other GEAR UP students. Among these students, improvement occurred among 67% of those with low participation, 70% of those with moderate participation, and 72% of those with high participation. Though the relationship is not significant, the direction of the effect suggests that there may have been effective activities targeted towards these lower performers which did not apply to students already performing adequately in math.

Figure 4. Percent of students who increased EXPLORE score, by participation

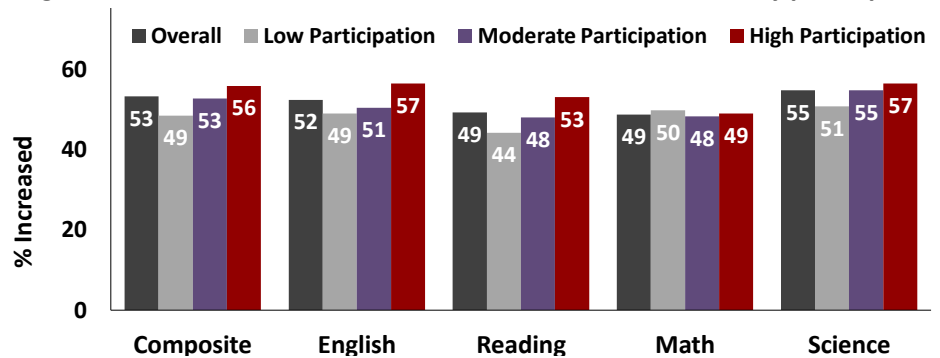
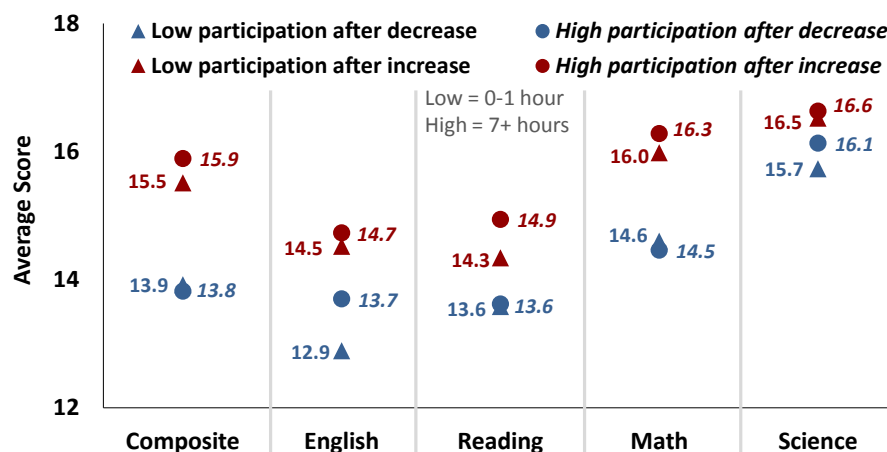


Figure 5. Average PLAN score, by EXPLORE outcome and participation



A final analysis tracked those who also took the PLAN test during winter of the 2014-15 school year (~3200 students). Results were examined based on their level of participation after the second EXPLORE test. As shown in Figure 5, higher PLAN scores were generally associated more with previous improvement on EXPLORE tests than with level of participation, although in most cases those with higher participation also scored somewhat higher on the PLAN than those with low participation in comparable groups.