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ABSTRACT

During 1999-2000 the first year, GEAR UP Project (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) targeted approximately 1200 seventh and eighth grade students at five middle schools within the Tulsa district: Cleveland, Clinton, Monroe, Hamilton and Madison Middle Schools In year three of the project the students entered four feeder high schools: Central, Webster, Tulsa School of Science and Technology and Rogers High School. Site facilitators and graduate assistants at the building level work closely with the Directors and partners to provide information on services to students and parents in the participating high schools. Other special GEAR Up events and activities are also coordinated with the following partners:

Langston University

YWCA Intercultural Service Center

Oklahoma State Regents of Higher Education

Resonance

Metropolitan Tulsa Urban League

Dollar Rent-A-Car

Northeastern State University

Visteon Glass Plant

Oklahoma State University

Tulsa Community College

University of Tulsa

Oklahoma Department of Human Services

These GEAR UP partners have coordinated their menu of services with each other and with other state and federal programs currently operating within Tulsa Public Schools to ensure that ample opportunities and intervention are provided to all GEAR students and their families. Their activities focus on raising academic achievement, improving test taking and study skills, increasing awareness of post secondary educational opportunities and increased parental involvement at school. In addition, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education assisted with recruitment of students for the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program (OLAP) scholarships at parent meetings.

The Tulsa GEAR Up Project is making a positive impact in the lives of the GEAR UP students and parents involved. Examples of this success includes:

1. Steady progress of students in mathematics and reading
2. More students indicating aspirations to attend a college or university
3. More students seeking help with reading, mathematics study skills and test taking skills
4. An increase in parents and students seeking information about post secondary financial aid
5. More students indicating that they like school and have positive self concepts
6. Increase in parent involvement in schools and GEAR UP partner events

This project also impacts the GEAR Up schools' faculty. Professional development is a very important component of the project and has been implemented to provide on-going learning opportunities that help student performance and motivation.

The teaching staff have been enrolled in institutes at local universities and attended workshops using aerospace, as well as motivation and teaching strategies to enhance student learning. Teachers indicated a need to find ways to engage their students in more exploratory activities in their classes. For example, teachers, students and parents participated in field trips related to the aerospace industries. Then students engaged in discussions and reflections about their experiences, including careers in aviation. Other events included essay and poetry contests as well as a drama festival and many on-campus opportunities to learn about local colleges and universities.

Overall, The University of Tulsa partnership with Tulsa Public Schools has made a significant impact with the students and their families. We appreciate the partnership working together to enable high school

students to have hope, dreams and aspiration to develop goals and action plans to stay in school and develop plans for post secondary education