The purpose of this annual report is to highlight the most recent GEAR UP related programs and activities taking place at Waite High School during the 2009-10 academic year. Measures and indicators of success as a result of these programs/activities are also documented.

Bowling Green State University’s GEAR UP is a program of the School of Teaching & Learning in the College of Education & Human Development.

This report was supported by a grant from the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), United States Department of Education.
GEAR UP efforts have been at work in East Toledo (East Broadway Middle School and/or Waite High School) for the last 10 years—from 1999 to the present. Goals of the GEAR UP grant are to restructure the schools; improve teacher professional development; increase student and family post-secondary education knowledge and support; and establish indicators for success. The complete Bowling Green State University GEAR UP Measures and Indicators report describes in depth the GEAR UP-related programs and activities implemented at Waite High School during the 2009-10 school year. Indicators of success are also discussed. The 2009-10 GEAR UP programs/activities and indicators of success are summarized below.

Student Programs

Teacher researched and data-driven programs to increase student academic and non-academic outcomes have been implemented. Currently the following student programs/activities are in place and supported by GEAR UP:

- **Academic Coaching**—mentoring for teacher recommended “quietly failing” students. In the 2009-10 school year, 79 students are currently involved.
- **Math Tutoring**—after school peer tutoring for primarily freshmen and sophomores in Algebra I and Geometry. Approximately 40 regular attendees for tutoring sessions twice a week for an hour each session.
- **College Visits**—weekend and day trips to BGSU, University of Toledo, Owens Community College, Kent State, and other Northern Ohio post-secondary institutions.
- **Benchmark Presentations**—post-secondary mentoring for all WHS students with a BGSU GEAR UP graduate student during lunches.
Methods and Student Teachers—
Professional Development—two
SIGHT Groups—School Improvement
the needs of their students:
the WHS teachers to help them meet
service or program was requested by
10 school year are listed below. Each
provided to WHS teachers in the 2009-
Professional development and services
Teacher Services
Traditional academic and non-academic
indicators of student success are
compared— from prior to GEAR UP’s
involvement to the present—and show
positive growth on many measures:

Teacher Services
Professional development and services
provided to WHS teachers in the 2009-
10 school year are listed below. Each
service or program was requested by
the WHS teachers to help them meet
the needs of their students:

SIGHT Groups—School Improvement
Goal Heightened Teams (SIGHT)
were developed by the WHS
teachers and administrators:
Performance Index, Recruit/
Retention, Attendance, Discipline,
Parent Involvement, and Math. At
every monthly staff meeting time
is devoted to SIGHT work where
each WHS faculty member works
in their SIGHT group to discuss
and facilitate the attainment
of their designated goals. New
student achievement programs,
a parent relations program, and
revised unexcused absence policies
are among the 2009-10 SIGHT
outcomes.

Professional Development—two
BGSU graduate level courses have
been provided for WHS teachers
and counselors in the Summer and
Fall of 2009. The Advisory Period
course allowed WHS faculty to
research and develop guidelines
and curricula for an Advisory Period
in their school. The Technology
for Teachers course introduced
teachers to multiple technological
sources to aid in daily instruction.

Methods and Student Teachers—
between 5 and 10 BGSU methods
and student teachers are placed at
WHS each semester. This greatly
exceeds what is typical for a Toledo
Public School as a result of GEAR
UP’s involvement. Teachers earn
between 10 and 20 contact hours for
license renewal by taking on the role
as a cooperating teacher for one of
these pre-service teachers.

Technology Tuesdays—a BGSU
professor works with WHS faculty
and students on Tuesdays to assist in
the integration of digital technologies
into teaching and learning practices.

Clustering—teams of four teachers
from the academic core classes
(English, math, social studies, and
science) are responsible for 100-120
students. Teams share a common
planning time where they focus on
creating interdisciplinary curriculum
units, developing incentive plans
to increase student success, and
building a collegial atmosphere to
support each other. All of this is done
with the ultimate goal of having more
students graduate from high school.

Parental Involvement
To increase parental involvement in their
high school student’s education, GEAR
UP supports various parent programs
and activities at WHS. Parent programs
implemented at WHS in the 2009-10
school year are as follows:

College / Career Fair—nearly 30
colleges, universities, and trade
schools sent representatives to WHS
to meet with prospective students
in November 2009. This year had
the highest number of parents and
students attend in the history of
GEAR UP’s involvement with almost
300 WHS family participants.

Financial Aid Night—school and local
college counselors work with
parents of college bound students to
walk them through the process
of completing a Free Application for
Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form.
Financial Aid Night will be held in
February 2010 to enable students to
meet the March 1 national priority
deadline.

Indicators of Success
Traditional academic and non-academic
indicators of student success are
Introduction to GEAR UP

GEAR UP culls the best practices from previous work in school reform programs

The Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant serves as a vehicle for BGSU to engage sustainably with the communities it serves. While BGSU’s GEAR UP programatic efforts have been centered in the East Toledo neighborhoods, the work is part of a broader effort centered at Western Michigan University (The Midwest Educational Reform Consortium [MERC]).

MERC is an integrated and collaborative GEAR UP partnership that culls the best practices from previous work in school reform programs to create GEAR UP Learning Centers. The partnership addresses the systemic gaps that cause severe differences in educational attainment and, in particular, the performance needs of high poverty students.

MERC mobilizes partnership resources to restructure schools; improve professional development opportunities for teachers, administrators, and staff; and provide parents and students with the knowledge, financial support, and academic enrichment needed for post-secondary education.

These MERC GEAR UP Learning Centers exist in Western Michigan (in Bangor, Battle Creek, and Kalamazoo), and in Northwest Ohio in East Toledo. Funding for the BGSU portion of the GEAR UP grant totals approximately $10 million for GEAR UP grants 1 and 2 combined. This report concerns the current work in East Toledo at Waite High School, and is specific to Bowling Green State University GEAR UP.

BGSU GEAR UP seeks to increase students’ achievement scores, on-time graduation rates, and the percentage of students attending and completing post secondary education. Sustainable improvements in the educational delivery system, as well as
family and community involvement in the educational system are also primary focuses. Programs and activities directly linked to these objectives are implemented throughout the school year for the students and Waite High School community. This is accomplished through partnerships that have been established between BGSU and the Toledo Public Schools, the Toledo Federation of Teachers, the Toledo Association of Administrative Personnel, the East Toledo Family Center, and the University of Toledo’s Foundations of Educational Research and Measurement department.

GEAR UP Goals

All of the GEAR UP goals focus on increasing the percentage of students prepared to attend and complete post-secondary educational opportunities.

Goal 1: Restructure schools to provide systemic structural reform that is sustainable and replicable. The restructuring is designed to provide extensive professional development opportunities for teachers and improve student achievement.

Goal 2: Improve professional development opportunities for teachers in order to transform the educational delivery system and improve academic achievement.

Goal 3: Improve and increase student/family support.

Goal 4: Determine the indicators for successful access and completion of post-secondary education. Develop a “profile of success” (a Benchmark Program), and increase the number of students who participate in this program.

This report will focus on efforts to reach Goals 1 through 4.

Building a Better School

Emphasizing systemic change to create sustainable reform.

The first and second BGSU GEAR UP goals focus on systemic change, a particular emphasis of the GEAR UP grants. The emphasis on system-wide change is important, because the GEAR UP grants are intended to benefit all students. This is a unique focus because, with some major educational grant initiatives, the emphasis has been narrower, where only students identified as having particular promise are served. Targeted interventions are necessary when the problem being addressed is so complex; however, substantial change for all students in a larger and very challenging environment requires an overarching fundamental change in how students are taught and served.

The other reason for emphasis on systemic change is the federal grant’s charge to create sustainable reform. Without achieving change in the mindsets of the people running the institution, the effects of interventions and programs have been shown to dissipate as the grant funds dwindle.
Most GEAR UP interventions at Waite High School focus on increasing student achievement. Interventions are not created by the BGSU faculty. Instead, they are teacher-generated, researched, and implemented with BGSU faculty guidance and support to facilitate a bottom-up approach to school reform. This section details the specific student interventions that are currently being implemented at Waite High School throughout the 2009-10 school year.

Academic Coaching
The Quietly Failing Get an Invitation to Succeed.

One of the biggest and most persistent challenges in our educational system is the number of urban students who fail to graduate from high school. Many of these students are “quietly failing.” Many of them have neither serious behavior nor intellectual limitations. Instead, they fail to graduate because of their low academic expectations or extenuating circumstances in their lives outside of school. In general terms, these students are not motivated—they lack the organizational and study habit skills needed for successful learning. They also lack the life skills or experiences to understand the consequences of this life changing failure; in essence, they lack the skills required to become active, successful citizens.

Through contact with an academic coach whose sole job description is advocacy, students at risk build rapport with at least one consistent adult in their academic life. Students are challenged to set and meet academic goals; they are made aware of their potential, responsibilities and the opportunities that high school graduation offers,
including post secondary options. The “quietly failing” student becomes his/her own advocate with raised expectations for success and life goals.

The Academic Coaching program at Waite High School began in 2008, with 16 teachers and their students, and is currently in its second year. The teachers are working in clusters of four, and the coaches begin the program each year by asking each cluster for a list of 10 students they would label as quietly failing. The coaches meet with the students 8 or more times per academic year, presenting them with interim reports and quarter and semester grade cards. Coaches also stay in close contact with the cluster teachers and, together, the coaches and teachers collaborate when decisions are made to move students in or out of the program as the year progresses. In addition, goals are set collaboratively by coaches and students, and rewards are provided for student achievement through an incentive program that culminates in a pizza luncheon at the end of the year.

This past year, the program served 47 9th grade students, 60% of whom received enough credits to be promoted to the 10th grade, and 18% of whom were missing only one, two, or three credits from this goal. The program is continuing this year with service to 45 true freshmen, 4 freshmen who are repeating classes, and 15 sophomores. There are also 15 juniors who have been receiving this service since their middle school years and appear to be working their way toward high school graduation at a higher rate than anticipated.

Math Tutoring

Passing math is one of the major challenges for students at Waite High School and an obstacle to graduation. This is particularly true for freshmen and sophomores. The math tutoring program at Waite began during the 2006-07 academic year as a strategy to increase the passage rate for students who take Algebra 1 and Geometry during the 9th and 10th grades. GEAR UP provides financial and material support for the math tutoring program, which serves as a vehicle for students to catch up if they fall behind and to receive assistance with both classroom content and homework.

The tutoring program meets in the cafeteria between 3:30-4:30 on Monday and Wednesday afternoons throughout the school year and is attended by approximately 40 regular students. In fact, demand for tutoring is so heavy that the program regularly relies on a corps of student tutors who supplement the resources provided by the math faculty.

An analysis of attendance and math class grade data for the 2008-09 school year showed that the tutoring program had a positive impact for students in the 9th grade and those who took Algebra 1. The outcomes for sophomores and students who took Geometry were less conclusive. A more thorough assessment of the benefits of the math tutoring program is being undertaken during the 2009-10 academic year. This assessment will measure student perceptions about math and the tutoring program as well as indicators of proficiency in both Algebra 1 and Geometry, pre- and post-tutoring.

Waite Training

The Waite Training Program reaches out to the freshmen class to orient them to the importance of their efforts in high school. As a result of this program, the Waite Training Incentive Program was developed in the fall of 2009 to coincide with the program’s efforts.

Each quarter, counselors and administrative staff go into the classrooms twice and present information relevant to graduation and the importance of their freshmen year. A big focus of the program is educating students on how they obtain credits, and how many credits they need to become a sophomore.

The Incentive Program began as a way to motivate students in the Waite Training program to apply what they’ve learned and to succeed in their classes. Every freshman who passes all seven classes in
any given quarter is eligible to win prizes voted upon by the students themselves. The students earn raffle tickets for each passing grade (4 for an A, 3 for a B, etc.) and they put the tickets towards whichever prize they want to win.

All students who pass their classes are then called down to the cafeteria and the prizes are raffled off. In the 1st quarter of the 2009-10 school year, 135 freshmen were eligible for the drawing. In the 2nd quarter, 125 freshmen were eligible. Each quarter there are around 30 prizes, including iPods, movie tickets, and gift cards that can be won by students.

College Access

College visits.

Juniors and seniors are given an opportunity to make college visits to Bowling Green State University and the University of Toledo throughout the year during the school day. Most recently, approximately 40 students attended a trip to Bowling Green State University in November 2009. Saturday college trips are also being offered for parents and students to visit more distant universities, such as University of Akron and Kent State University (based on student and parent interest). Future trips will be available for all students to visit BGSU on President’s Day, the University of Toledo, and Owens Community College on multiple Saturdays in early 2010. While most college visits are geared toward juniors and seniors, there are also opportunities for freshmen and sophomores to visit different universities through GEAR UP incentive programs for having good behavior and attendance.

Benchmark presentations.

Students at Waite High School are given the opportunity to partake in a benchmark lunch with their class during their freshmen, sophomore, and junior year at Waite High School. Each grade has a Graduate Student from Bowling Green State University assigned to a class that works with the students all year. The graduate assistants are able to build relationships with the students so that they can assist the students on college preparations and access, navigate with them through the GEAR UP Benchmark Binder, and help them understand how benchmarks work.

The GEAR UP Binder contains a list of benchmark categories, each with a specific number of points to be achieved, that the students earn during their four years at Waite High School. The Benchmarks include: Portfolio Maintenance, Attendance and Discipline, Academic Achievement, Parent/Guardian/Interested Adult Involvement, Extracurricular Involvement, and Benchmark Plus (miscellaneous category). These research-based benchmarks identify those activities that students might become engaged in as a support toward high school graduation. With the help of the Benchmark Lunches, the freshmen, sophomores, and juniors are able to successfully complete the benchmarks.

During their senior year, students who complete the program are given the chance to apply for Financial Assistance from federal GEAR UP funds managed through the Toledo Community Foundation. As a senior the students will work with a Graduate Assistant from Bowling Green State University on college access and applications. This Graduate Assistant works with the counselors at the school to help point the seniors in the correct direction with the college application and ACT/SAT preparation.

Financial Assistance through the Toledo Community Foundation

Each year since its inception, BGSU GEAR UP’s budget has included funds for financial assistance to Waite High School graduates who matriculate into some form of college or post-secondary education.

There have been two GEAR UP grants. The first cohort of the first grant graduated from Waite High School in 2006. Based on information provided by the Toledo Community Foundation, in the first year (2006) twenty 12th grade students at Waite High School completed the application process, and each was awarded a GEAR UP scholarship in the amount of $895 for the 2006-2007 academic year. Thus, first year awards totaled $17,400. With the exception of one student, all of the scholarship recipients finished their first year of college and spent the money allotted.

In 2007, 34 students were each awarded scholarships in the amount of $974, with a total award of $33,116, for the 2007-2008 academic year. This included 19 new
and 15 renewal students. Five students who were eligible for renewal did not submit renewal applications.

For the 2008-2009 academic year, 42 students were awarded scholarships in the amount of $2,178. This included 19 new and 23 renewal students. In 2008, three students from the class of 2006 did not renew and 8 students from the class of 2007 did not renew. A total of $91,476 was awarded to the 42 students.

Finally in 2009, this past summer, a total of 64 students were awarded scholarships in the amount of $2,201 for the 2009-2010 academic year. This included 30 new and 34 renewal students. The total award for the year was $140,864.

Since the initiation of the financial assistance effort with the Toledo Community Foundation, a total of $282,856 has been awarded to 160 students. Over the course of the four years only 24 students (15%) have left the program along the way for various reasons.

This year our first Toledo Community Foundation students will graduate from college. The work with the Toledo Community Foundation will continue until the class of 2013 graduates from college in 2017.

Student Drop-out Prevention Program

A student forum, organized and supported by GEAR UP, was held on Wednesday, November 4, 2009. This forum was a precursor to the Dropout Prevention Summit held on November 19, 2009, sponsored by the United Way of Greater Toledo and America’s Promise Alliance. A group of 113 students from across all four grade levels were introduced to the topic of dropout prevention while viewing parts of the BGSU/GEAR UP documentary “Turning Point” which featured Morrison R. Waite High School students and their respective stories of striving to graduate from high school.

Afterwards, each of the students was engaged in a small group discussion about the issues facing students and ways to combat the high school dropout rate. Students offered suggestions of increasing tutoring programs, improving communication between home and school, creating a safer environment, and offering incentives as a means to improving the graduation rate.

Twenty-five facilitators from the East Side community assisted with this program. These facilitators included current and former Waite support staff, alumni, community partners, and Bowling Green State University personnel.

BGSU Book Scholarship

Through generous endowments from Sunoco and Owens-Illinois, GEAR UP has launched the Morrison R. Waite Alumni/BGSU Textbook Scholarship. The family of funds, now totaling over $160,000 may be utilized by Waite High School alumni if they are current Bowling Green State University undergraduate and graduate students who have completed at least one semester at BGSU and are in good academic standing.

Students are required to apply each semester; those who are eligible are selected by a committee consisting of representatives from both Waite High School and BGSU. This committee has established guidelines for the selection process and awards the scholarship to as many students as the funds will permit.

The Morrison R. Waite Alumni/BGSU Textbook Scholarship allows BGSU students who are graduates of Waite High School to purchase textbooks and other necessary school supplies to enhance their post-secondary educational experience. The first scholarships will be awarded this school year in the Spring of 2010.
While the main focus of GEAR UP is to impact student academic and non-academic success through various interventions listed previously in this report, teachers play a critical role in the creation and facilitation of these student programs. Since the teachers at Waite High School know their students and the community best, they must act as leaders in their school’s reform efforts. To do this, they need to be well-versed in using both research and data to assist in their decision making about their students and school. This is where BGSU’s faculty come into the equation, by providing teacher requested professional development classes, necessary support and direction with research and data analysis, and financial assistance for programs and incentives. Teacher professional development, services, and assistance provided by the GEAR UP program for the 2009-10 school year are discussed in the section that follows.

SIGHT Groups

Beginning in the Fall of 2008, the Morrison R. Waite teaching and administrative staff were introduced to School Improvement Goal Heightened Teams (SIGHT) whereby each staff member self-selected one of the six School Improvement Goals to focus on with a team of their peers. The six goals included Performance Index (a federal calculation that is part of the Annual Yearly Progress data), Recruit/Retention, Attendance, Discipline, Parent Involvement, and Math.

During each of the monthly staff meetings, time is devoted to SIGHT work. Teaching and administrative staff work collaboratively on goals set forth by their respective
SIGHT. Three times during the school year, updates on the SIGHT goals are presented to the entire staff.

As a result of these focus groups, new ideas for increasing student achievement (Math Family Night, OGT Night, and OGT Incentive for Sophomores) were initiated. In addition, new programs to improve parent relations were created (Indian Feather Cards and Parent of the Month). Revisions were developed by the Attendance group to address unexcused absences. The Freshman Waite Training program, an initiative to create more sophomores, was enhanced. Building off of the work of last school year, SIGHT continues to be an integral part of the School Improvement process at Waite High School this year.

Teacher Professional Development Graduate Courses

Advisory period.

GEAR UP has been providing professional development support for a group of faculty and guidance counselors at Waite who have been working to develop an “advisory period” for the school. The proposed advisory period is a 20-minute block each afternoon when all full-time staff at the school (teachers, guidance counselors and administrators) would meet with a group of approximately 16 students to discuss a range of topics and provide academic assistance, when needed.

The goals of the advisory period are to give the students the opportunity to develop a better relationship with an educator role model, allow the students to feel more connected with the school and its activities, and enhance student retention and graduation rates. Members of the group received 3 graduate hours of credit for their work, and it is hoped that the full faculty will be given the opportunity to vote on an advisory period proposal in time for the

SIGHT Group Outcomes:

- Created new student achievement programs: Math Family Night, OGT Night, OGT Incentive for Sophomores
- Initiated new parent relations programs: Indian Feather Cards and Parent of the Month
- Revised unexcused absence policies
- Enhanced Freshman Waite Training to create more Sophomores
activity to be integrated into the daily schedule at the beginning of the 2010-11 academic year.

Technology for Teachers.

In August, 2009, thirteen Waite teachers took a week-long course on integrating technologies into their classrooms. Teachers worked 8 hours each day (Monday-Friday) exploring Open Source software applications, wikis, Google docs, and digital media.

With these newly found resources, Waite teachers developed lessons/activities for their students during the fall semester. These activities were documented via digital video and posted to YouTube or TeacherTube for viewing and commenting.

Methods & Student Teachers

As a result of GEAR UP’s involvement, many more methods students and student teachers are placed at Waite High School than is typical, per district policy. The goal for the program is to place methods students and student teachers in the four core content areas.

Each semester between 5 and 10 methods students and student teachers are placed at WHS. WHS is considered a good learning environment in which college students can begin their teaching experience. To help the students become acquainted with the school and successfully make it through their methods or student teaching experience, weekly meetings are held. This is an opportunity for students to talk with one another about their classroom experiences and for the coordinator to provide them with information and reminders about the expectations of student teaching.

In addition, GEAR UP helps facilitate the methods students and student teachers experience for cooperating teachers. Cooperating teachers may apply for contact hours (10 for methods students and 20 for student teachers) that are used for license renewal through the district’s Local Professional Development Committee.

Services

For the past year at Waite High School, Dr. Savilla Banister, Associate Professor in Classroom Technology, has been working with teachers and students to integrate digital technologies into teaching and learning. Savilla spends each Tuesday at Waite, and these “Tech
Tuesdays’ provide opportunities for co-teaching and after-school workshops. Because of the challenges of technology access in urban schools, Dr. Banister serves as an advocate and an empathetic ear for Waite educators. Inventorying digital resources, initiating repairs, exploring digital solutions, and sharing creative ideas culminate in more attainable practices of narrowing the Digital Divide at Waite High School.

Clustering: Smaller Learning Communities for Teachers and Students

Clustering at Waite began in the fall of 2004 as an outgrowth of a pilot program called the Freshmen Academy that was implemented the year before. The concept for clustering emerged from a group of teachers studying the possibilities for improving student motivation and learning by creating smaller learning communities. The pilot study found increased student feelings of affiliation and belonging, greater presence of safety and order, higher attendance, increased parent involvement and satisfaction, increased teacher involvement and satisfaction, more strongly integrated and aligned curriculum, and higher achievement levels (Patterson, Beltyukova, Berman, & Francis, 2007).

The following year, the schedule was adapted so that seven clusters of teachers and students were created, four for freshmen and three for sophomores. The clusters were composed of teams of four teachers from the core areas of English, math, science, and social studies. Each cluster was responsible for 100-120 students. Cluster teachers shared common planning hours so that they could work together to plan across the curriculum and support students. A cluster leader was chosen by each team, whose job it was to represent the cluster’s needs at the Task Force meetings and conduct weekly team meetings.

These clusters are especially focused on creating interdisciplinary curriculum units, developing incentive plans to increase student success, and developing a collegial atmosphere where teachers support each other and devise structures that increase the number of students moving on to their Sophomore year and then passing the Ohio Graduation Test and progressing toward high school graduation.
Increasing Parental Involvement

GEAR UP increases parental involvement in Waite students’ secondary and post-secondary education.

Student’s educational success depends on far more than their intellect and the teachers in their school. Parental involvement in a child’s education has been shown to be a key indicator of a student’s academic success or lack thereof. Further, parental involvement in a student’s education has been found to decrease as students get older (junior high and high school years), and has also been found to be lower in urban communities. With this said, these two factors combined (high school students in an urban setting) add to the challenge of getting parents involved in their students’ education at Waite High School. Therefore, GEAR UP has established informative programs designed specifically to increase parental engagement in Waite High School student’s secondary and post-secondary education. In the section that follows the 2009-10 parent programs are listed and explained.

College / Career Fair

Held each November, College / Career Fair is one of the most widely attended parent programs at Waite High School. Students and parents in all grade levels are welcomed to come as nearly 30 colleges, universities, and trade schools travel to Waite to meet with prospective students. Typically, the event is attended by primarily seniors and juniors.

Each year, dinner and raffle prizes are offered to help draw in more parents. College / Career Fair 2009 saw the highest number of parents and students in the history of GEAR UP’s involvement with this program, with almost 300 students and parents attending the event in November 2009.
Financial Aid Night

Many college-bound Waite High School students will be first-generation college attendees. Thus, students and parents alike have many questions when it comes to financial aid for attending post-secondary education. Financial Aid Night was designed to help assist a large group of parents and students in completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). It is held early in February, giving students and parents time to gather their previous year’s financial documentation, and to meet the March 1 national priority deadline.

The school counselors are joined with financial aid counselors from area colleges, and together they walk parents and students through each step of completing the FAFSA. They are on hand also for answering any specific questions about financial aid, especially as they relate to specific colleges.

Eighth Grade Indian / High School & Beyond Night

All local 8th grade students and their parents are invited to visit the Morrison R. Waite High School during this annual evening event. During this time general information is provided to these visitors about Waite High School. Current WHS students and staff showcase various academic, co-curricular, and athletic programs.

In the 2008-09 school year 67 parents and 103 students from the 8th grade participated. This year we will be welcoming the freshmen who will become our 100th graduating class at Waite High School and anticipate a successful turnout.

Benchmark Conferences

One portion of the GEAR UP Benchmark Binder requires documentation of active parent/interested adult/guardian participation with their student’s education program. Parents acquire points toward this portion of the GEAR UP Benchmark Binder by attending school activities such as Registration Day, Open House, College/Career Fair, Financial Aid Night, and the annual American Red Cross Blood Drive to site a few examples.

One additional means of communicating with the school includes Benchmark Binder review conferences. During this meeting, the GEAR UP Coordinator along with the parent and the student review the student’s GEAR UP Benchmark Binder to determine the student’s progress toward acquiring the necessary points for applying for the GEAR UP financial aid.

These meetings occur before and after school or during the student’s lunch period. After-school hours are extended one night each week to accommodate working parents’ schedules.

GEAR UP Financial Aid Recognition Program

Students who are offered the GEAR UP Financial Aid scholarships are recognized each summer during an award ceremony held at the Morrison R. Waite High School.

All past and current scholarship recipients are invited, along with their parents, to an informal ceremony in which they are introduced to one another. A guest speaker, often times a former graduate or parent of a recipient shares information as to how the GEAR UP financial aid has created new opportunities for them or their student.
Indicators of Success

Over the past 8 years, GEAR UP has been intimately involved in Waite High School--through vast changes in student demographics and student success.

Many student, teacher, and parent programs supported by GEAR UP have been identified and described in previous sections of this booklet. While the programs are believed to impact student success, how do we know these programs are right for Waite High School? Are there specific indications that GEAR UP has helped to improve student academic and non-academic outcomes? The following section compares traditional academic and non-academic indicators of student success prior to GEAR UP’s involvement in East Toledo to the present.\(^1\) Results in this section clearly illustrate the vast changes that have occurred in student demographics and outcomes over the past eight years.

Student Enrollment Data

Student overall enrollment at Waite High School has decreased by nearly 18% over the last 8 years. Although this is a considerable loss for the school, the overall district enrollment has suffered a larger percentage decrease by almost 30%. While the school and district overall enrollment has decreased, the proportion of economically disadvantaged students, minority students, and special education students has increased over this time. With urban schools already at an educational disadvantage, factors such as increasing numbers of economically disadvantaged, minority, and special education students often lead to challenges so great that achieving student success is nearly impossible.

\(^1\) All data collected for this portion of the report were obtained from the Ohio Department of Education’s public database (www.ode.state.oh.us).
Even though the same trends of decreasing overall student body and increasing traditionally educationally disadvantaged students exists at WHS and within the district, this movement appears stronger at Waite High School when comparing economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority students from WHS to the district and similarly small for special education students (see Table 1).

Table 1
WHS and District Student Enrollment Data over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Prior to GU (2000-01) WHS District</th>
<th>Present (2008-09) WHS District</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease WHS District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Enrollment</td>
<td>100% (n=1,244) 100% (n=36,758)</td>
<td>100% (n=1,022) 100% (n=25,791)</td>
<td>-17.8% -29.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>20.1% (n=250) 50.3% (n=18,486)</td>
<td>63.7% (n=651) 66.1% (n=17,081)</td>
<td>+43.6% +15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Minority</td>
<td>25.9% (n=323) 54.9% (n=20,140)</td>
<td>42.6% (n=435) 58.9% (n=15,211)</td>
<td>+16.7% +4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>16.2% (n=202) 14.7% (n=5,391)</td>
<td>19.5% (n=199) 18.4% (n=4,756)</td>
<td>+3.3% +3.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Waite High School Academic & Non-Academic Student Outcomes over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic</th>
<th>Prior to GU (2000-01) WHS District</th>
<th>Present (2008-09) WHS District</th>
<th>Increase/Decrease WHS District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance Rate</td>
<td>83.4% 87.1%</td>
<td>93% 91.5%</td>
<td>+9.6% +4.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Incidents/100 Students* 1</td>
<td>176.2 135.9</td>
<td>124.2 187.9</td>
<td>-52 +52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate* 3</td>
<td>59.1% 76.4%</td>
<td>80.4% 90.5%</td>
<td>+21.3% +14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Performance</td>
<td>Academic Emergency (F)</td>
<td>Effective (B)  Continuous Improvement (C)</td>
<td>+3 Categories +2 Categories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Behavior Incidents/100 Students and Graduation Rate of District is Average for Traditional High Schools (Bowsher, Rogers, Start, & Woodward)

Even though the same trends of decreasing overall student body and increasing traditionally educationally disadvantaged students exists at WHS and within the district, this movement appears stronger at Waite High School when comparing economically disadvantaged and ethnic minority students from WHS to the district and similarly small for special education students (see Table 1).

Table 2 above depicts all academic and non-academic student outcomes summarized in this section for WHS and the overall district. Although many demographic factors are presently acting against Waite High School, GEAR UP’s presence and assistance in the restructuring of the school has helped to combat what some may have expected to be detrimental. As such, from before GEAR UP’s involvement in East Toledo (2000-01) to the most recent school year data available (2008-09) student overall attendance has risen almost 10 percentage points, from below the state AYP required 93% Attendance Rate to meeting this goal in the 2008-09 school year. WHS also went from being below the district average attendance rate to slightly above the district average in this time period.

Behavior at WHS has improved over time with the total number of behavior incidents (e.g., in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions) per 100 students decreasing by 30% from 2000-01 to 2008-09. Compared to the 4 other traditional high schools in the Toledo Public School District, Waite High School currently has the second lowest

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1 2007-08 Graduation Rate data are the most current reported on the 2008-09 School Report Card.
2 2002-03 was the first year for Ohio to institute overall school performance ratings.
number of reported Behavior incidents per 100 students. Further, the average numbers of reported Behavior incidents per 100 students among the 4 other traditional high schools in the TPS district has increased by an average of 38%.

Student academic success at WHS has also shown a dramatic increase from before GEAR UP was in East Toledo to the present as graduation rate has risen by 21 percentage points. Although this is a large improvement for Waite High School, the school itself still lags by 10 percentage points behind the overall district graduation rate of 90.5%.

In addition to these academic and non-academic indications of increased student successes in a time of heightened educationally disadvantaged student enrollment, Waite High School’s state rating has risen from Academic Emergency in 2002-03 (earliest reported on the ODE website) to Effective in 2008-09.

In practical terms, Waite High School has gone from receiving an “F” on its overall school performance to earning a “B” in the span of 5 years. While the district’s overall performance has also improved over this time period, Waite High School’s overall school performance has surpassed that of the district as a whole.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Senior Applicants *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>49% (n=119)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>61% (n=148)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>76% (n=163)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Total number of applications reflects individuals who applied to more than one university.

### WHS Seniors Applying to College

As of the 2006-07 school year guidance counselors at Waite High School have been keeping careful record of the number of WHS seniors that apply for college. Since the underlying principal of all GEAR UP grants is to provide educationally disadvantaged students with the supports and knowledge necessary to apply for undergraduate programs, these data are of great interest to our GEAR UP program.

Table 3 details the steady increase in percentage of seniors applying to college over the last 3 years.
Various methods of communicating about GEAR UP’s successful involvement at Waite High School have occurred over the last year. Action has been taken to communicate with the local community as well as the research community. This final section documents our most recent efforts in the 2008-09 school year to share GEAR UP’s impact on the students, teachers, and parents of East Toledo.

**Documentary**

*Turning Point Documentary Collaboration between Department of Theatre and Film, CITE & GEAR UP*

The “Turning Point” documentary video was a compilation of media recordings taken at Waite High School, and video clips of the faculty and staff of Center for Innovative and Transformative Education (CITE), Partnerships for Community Action (PCA) and GEAR UP giving their take on the issues, successes and obstacles that were encountered at Waite High School. In this documentary, GEAR UP work is chronicled in the national context of the mandates of the No Child Left Behind act as it affects teachers and GEAR UP staff members during the 2006-2007 school year.

“Turning Point” illustrates the hardships and achievements of the students, teachers and GEAR UP staff by sharing individual stories of personal tests, objectives, expectations, and accomplishments encountered in their trek through the year. The video shows first hand experiences of what the students have to endure, whether preparing for Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), dealing with a career ending sports injury during your senior year, or being a teen parent.

GEAR UP has been intimately involved in the Scholarship of Engagement — disseminating findings to a variety of audiences.
These stories provide a direct insight to the meaning of the school reform and its effects on the students, teachers, parents, and community. The film shows the impact of school reform on the education of underprivileged students, and how school reform can help school systems achieve higher standards in their education practices.

On September 10, 2009, at 8 pm, “Turning Point” made its public debut on local public television--WGTE in Toledo. Since then, the entire film or segments of it have been aired numerous times on WGTE and various other venues--at Western Michigan State University’s annual Midwest Education Reform Consortium meeting, at Waite High School for teachers, and at the national GEAR UP summer conference. A mini version was created to show at Waite High School’s Dropout Prevention Program in November 2009.

In Spring 2010 we will be partnering with BGSU’s Partners in Context & Community Learning Center’s (PCC) urban education residential learning community to show the documentary as part of its on-going teacher prep programming for pre-service urban teachers.

“Our democracy can’t survive well with the inequities that exist as they do in our public education system.”

--Nancy Patterson
Since GEAR UP started at Waite, graduation rates have increased from about 50% to more than 80% last year, Ms. Schardt said.
GEAR UP program cited

Percentage of college-bound graduates doubles at Waite

College used to be out of reach for many Waite graduates. That’s not the case anymore thanks to a federally funded program for high-poverty schools.

The program, GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is administered by Bowling Green State University. It is designed to increase the rate of college attendance from students living in high-poverty school districts by preparing them for college and defraying its high cost.

Sixty-four students were recently awarded scholarships totaling $140,064, or $2,201 each. Thirty of the students are 2009 Waite graduates and 34 are current college students who continue to qualify for the renewable scholarship, according to Becky Schadt, GEAR UP coordinator. Those who graduated from Waite in 2008 and are starting their senior year in college have received $1,248 in total. Students coming into the program this year could receive even more.

The scholarships are available to any Waite student regardless of income, providing they fulfill program guidelines. Scholarships were given to students who reapplied and is enrolled full-time in a post-secondary program and is not on probation.

Dave Yenrick, Waite principal, credits the program with increasing the percentage of Waite graduates who enroll in college from 30 percent in 2004 to nearly 60 percent this year. More are expected to enroll in the coming years if the University of Toledo and Owens Community College continue their free-tuition programs for those who meet financial assistance guidelines. The program went into effect with this year’s graduating class.

Schadt, who has taught 33 years including 10 at Waite, agrees. “There’s definitely increased awareness that there are no longer the factory jobs out there and that they’re not going to find something substantive to do. Students have an increased awareness of the significance of going to some type of post-secondary program,” she said.

Scholarships are only one aspect of the GEAR UP program. Preparation for college starts as early as junior high. When students arrive at Waite, they are placed in smaller groups which stay with the same core teachers for English, math, science and social studies. This small school within a big school concept allows teachers to follow a student’s progress and introduce stability in the lives of those students who come from single-parent homes. Students earn points for C grades and better, for good attendance, for bringing their

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By John Szoxda

Joel Newton is one of the first to go through the program. Neither parent attended college and Joel is the first of his siblings to go. He credits Schadt with helping him stay organized and earning enough points to quality. He is a senior at Bowling Green State University majoring in construction management.

Tom Durie, a 2009 Waite grad, attends BGSU and is majoring in integrated social studies. He wants to teach. He says the GEAR UP program pushed him to get good grades, participate in sports and volunteer in the community. This involvement helped him secure a full-tuition scholarship for academics. The GEAR UP money allows him to live on campus and gives him a better chance to graduate without any college debt.

Schadt says there is funding for the current freshman class. Informational sessions for this year’s freshman class are being held Wednesday and Thursday. Call her at 419-691-4807, ext. 7409.

There is no better time to be a student at Waite. Between the GEAR UP program and the offer of free tuition from Owens Community College and the University of Toledo those who want to attend college have an opportunity their parents didn’t have.

Comment at 303@presspublications.com

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"Dave Yenrick, Waite principal, credits GEAR UP with increasing the percentage of graduates who enroll in college from 30% in 2004 to nearly 60% in 2009."
Writings


Sondergeld, T. (2009). *Analysis of the academic and non-academic outcomes from a bottom-up comprehensive school reform in the absence of student level data through simulation methods: A mixed methods case study* (Doctoral dissertation). Available at University of Toledo library or upon request.

Presentations


Patterson, N. (2009, June). Differentiation as Democratization: Lifelines for Failing High School Students in a U.S Urban High School Reform Effort. International Association for Intercultural Education, Athens, Greece,


Graduate students at RGSU provide many GEAR UP programs associated with student, teacher, and parent success while developing their own teaching, research, and service skills.