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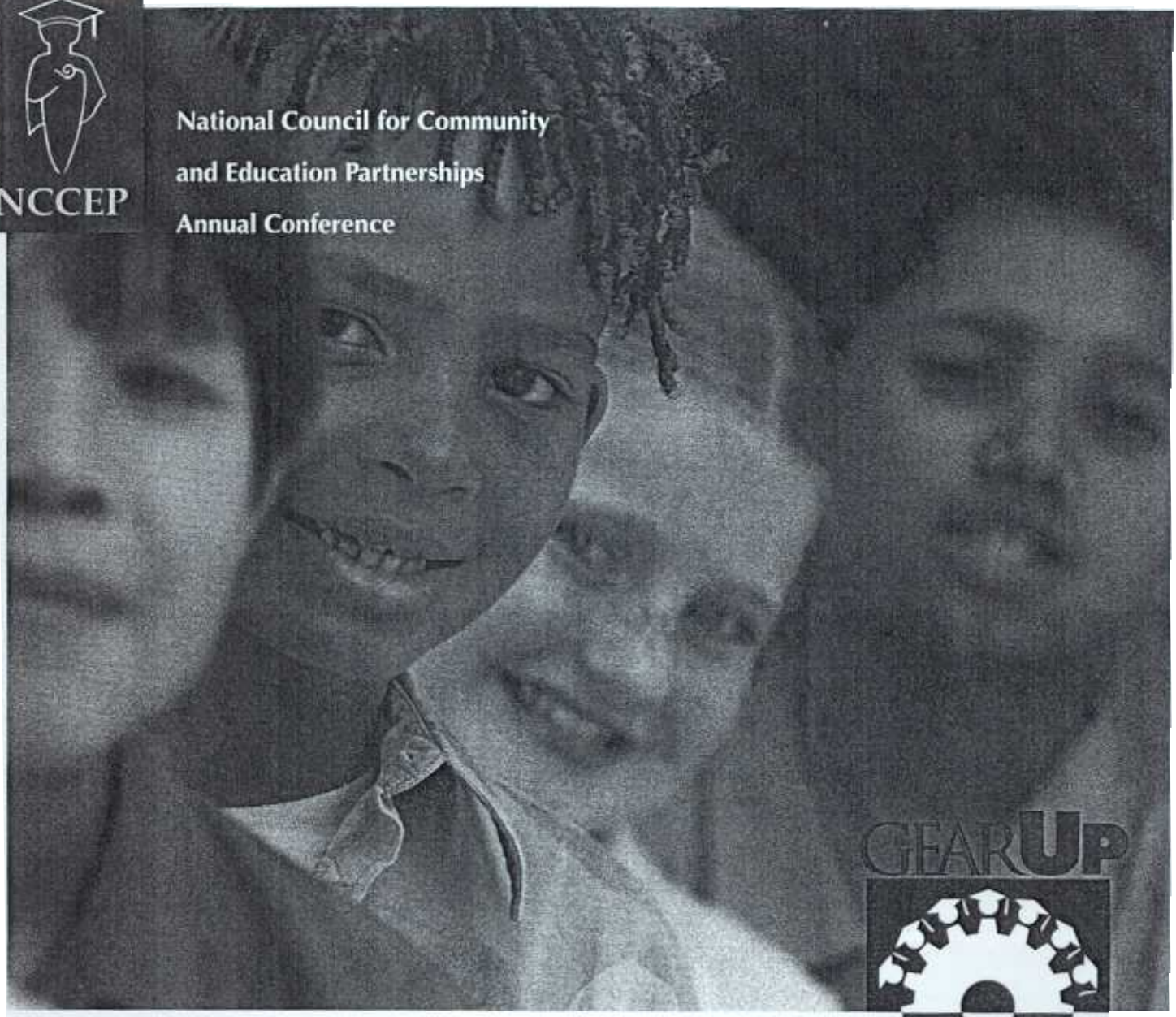
NCCEP

National Council for Community
and Education Partnerships
Annual Conference



GEARUP

RIGHT CHOICES FOR YOUTH

Making GEAR UP an A+ Program by Focusing on Effective Strategie ha Promote Academ c Ach evemen and S:udent Succe

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NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2003

This national convening of GEAR UP project directors, business and community partners is coordinated by the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) and planned in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Education. The purpose of this conference is to highlight the importance of K–16 education/community partnerships and the accomplishments of the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP). The conference also serves to facilitate the forging of new alliances among K–16 faculty, to learn about other federal and foundation-sponsored college awareness efforts, to learn about other academic and student support programs, and to find new ways to engage local communities, businesses and professional associations in the work of GEAR UP partnerships. The conference is especially relevant to education practitioners, business leaders and policymakers who wish to learn more about creating and sustaining K–16 education collaboratives that can help improve public education and promote student's academic achievement.

The national meeting will be organized around six conference tracks and will use several teaching and learning formats including: concurrent sessions, conference workshops, and strategy sessions (see "Session Formats and Learning Strategies" for descriptions, page 4). Individual sessions will focus on a wide variety of topics related to the work of promoting student achievement and increased access to higher education for low-income students. For example, some sessions will focus on institutional, state, and federal policies related to improving K–16 education and school reform. Others will taker a closer look at research based models and theoretical frameworks that help practitioners improve student achievement and student success in postsecondary education. Particular emphasis will be placed on research-based models that examine the benefits of K–16 partnerships for creating system(s) change and school reform. Drawing upon proven practices that work with low-income students and their families, there will also be sessions featuring models and strategies that effectively engage business and industry leaders in K–16/community partnerships. In other words, this conference will highlight "what works" and effective strategies to create effective education/community partnerships. Given that the education/community partnerships model GEAR UP is the most promising method for improving student achievement and creating educational reforms, congressional staffers and other federal decision makers will be invited to come view and learn how GEAR UP and other K–16 partnerships work.

In addition to providing a variety of venues for presenting research and effective practices, the conference strives to provide opportunities for GEAR UP directors and their partners to learn from and network with each other. Each project director is encouraged to design and set up a project demonstration table at the conference to highlight his or her achievements and best practices. Designated in the program as the Gallery Walk, time will be scheduled into the conference for viewing GEAR UP project exhibits. Conference participants consistently evaluate the Gallery Walk as one of their most significant and memorable conference experiences. This year, with more than 323 GEAR UP partnerships funded across the nation, the GEAR UP Gallery Walk is an event that cannot be missed.

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

- To convene GEAR UP project directors and business/community partnerships for the purpose of sharing lessons learned, developing more effective programs and policy strategies, and providing professional and team development.
- To identify and highlight innovative strategies and programs that improves access to postsecondary education and increase the academic achievement of low-income students.
- To explore strategies that promotes systemic change within schools, colleges, universities, and communities.
- To help business leaders and foundation staff to identify roles, trends, programs and effective methods for linking education with business priorities.
- To encourage greater collaboration among higher education, the K–12 sector, community-based organizations, business, and other sectors for the purpose of improving public education.
- To help colleges and universities identify and better articulate the benefits of building K–16/community partnerships that promote access to higher education for low-income and minority students.
- To create a forum for establishing shared responsibility and accountability among and between K–16 institutions.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

Our goal is to accept proposals that address the most current and pressing education-related issues, highlight effective educational practices in K–16 education; promote effective college access programs and explore what business wants from education and K–16/community partnerships. This national meeting has been designed as a working conference and we will encourage highly interactive sessions. Also, we will highlight only those "locally effective" models and programs that have the widest applicability and have been proven effective through rigorous evaluations or documented as effective practice in the research literature.

CRITERIA CONSIDERED IN PROPOSAL REVIEWS

- Reflects current issues of importance to GEAR UP directors, business partnerships, and other college access professionals.
- Demonstrates relevance to improving public education and student academic outcomes.
- Clearly explains content and learning objectives.
- Relates to student learning, education reform, business/community engagement, and/or creating and sustaining effective education/business partnerships.
- Features a creative approach to serving low-income students and their families.
- Provides practical applications that will help sustain GEAR UP as an A+ program.
- Provides the perspectives of multiple stakeholders/partners.

ALL PROPOSALS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Proposal Cover Sheet: Provide and submit the contact information requested on the enclosed RFP submission form.

Presentation Summary: Submit via e-mail a brief (three-page maximum) descriptive summary of the presentation. Describe its purpose, content, method(s) for delivery, campus/school application(s), and, where appropriate, policy implications. Indicate the target audience (i.e., GEAR UP/Program directors, K–12 educators, business partners, evaluation specialists, policymakers) and the learning outcomes of the session. Also, describe how your presentation will involve participants in active learning and how the proposed session relates to the conference theme.

We are particularly interested in sessions focused on the following:

- Research findings on student achievement and their implications for improving institutional programs, policies, and practices;
- Curricular and pedagogical innovations that promote student achievement and access to higher education;
- Models of good practice and "locally effective" programs, including descriptions of their development, obstacles and setbacks, lessons learned, outcomes, and usefulness for other GEAR UP sites;
- Resource tools and strategies for engaging business and community-based organizations to help create the public and political will to better educate low income students;
- Descriptions and analyses of institutional, state, and federal education policy that impact low-income students and their families.

Preference will be given to sessions that are interactive, focus on the conference theme, and geared toward creative problem solving.

Curriculum Vitae: For each of the proposed **presenters**, include a 50-word biographical sketch deemed appropriate for introducing panelists to a professional audience.

Persons interested in submitting a conference presentation proposal should review the thematic parameters outlined in this call for presentation announcement and submit the required documents via e-mail not later than **March 14, 2003. Incomplete proposals will not be accepted.**

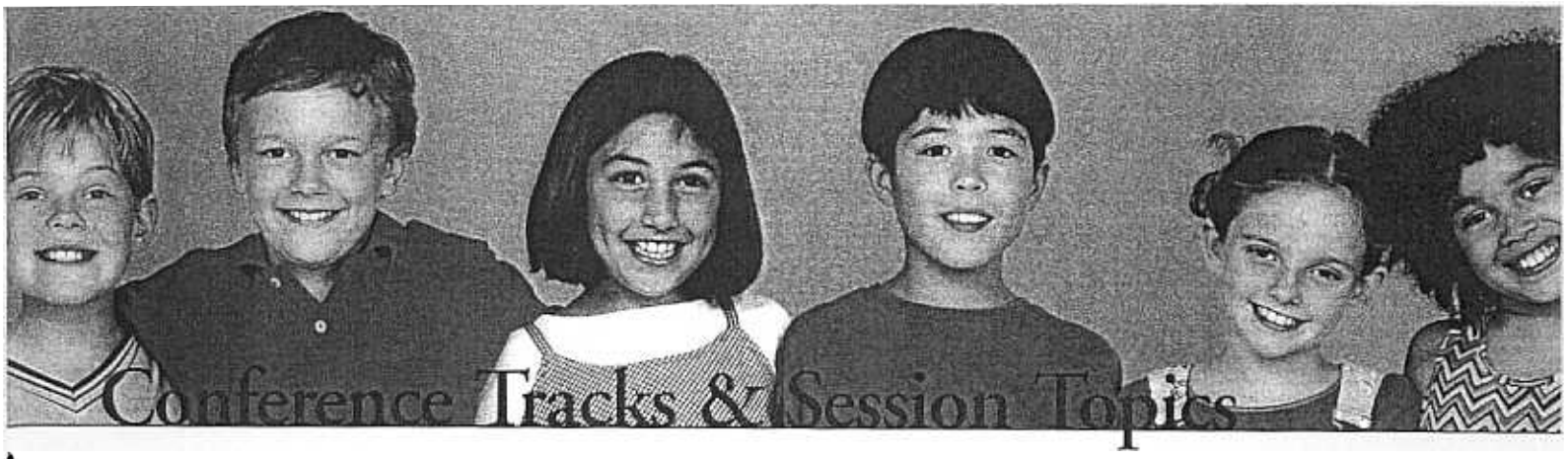
REMUNERATION

Given the large number of presenters being called upon to provide service and share expertise, the conference planners are regrettably unable to provide any monetary compensation for individuals accepted to serve as conference presenters. This includes compensation for travel-related expenses and fee waivers for conference registration. GEAR UP directors are encouraged to use the NCCEP conference to share their "lessons-learned" and "most effective practices" with other colleagues as a way to help make GEAR UP an A+ program. Federal GEAR UP grant recipients are strongly encouraged by the U.S. Department of Education to attend and support NCCEP-sponsored GEAR UP conference activities. Business leaders are also encouraged to share their educational programs and community/school engagement strategies as a way to demonstrate their private sector involvement in education.

SESSION FORMATS AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Following each of the designated conference tracks, sample conference session titles are listed as examples of topics that can be proposed. Respondent are encouraged to adopt these session titles or propose their own.

Respondent should carefully read the section describing the purpose and format of the various types of conference sessions included as part of this conference. We welcome the submission of other topics that fall within these thematic parameters but that provide a different viewpoint.



Conference Tracks & Session Topics

Concurrent sessions should strive to address those topics and issues that are critical to GEAR UP participants and other education/community partnerships. Topics that address programs and strategies—including assessment strategies—that can help close the education achievement gap between low-income and more affluent communities are especially relevant. Topics may include but not limited to:

1. Agreeing on What Matters Most: Using Research Driven Programs and Locally Effective Strategies to Improve Student Achievement

- Math, Science, Technology and Reading: Academic Competencies that Improve Student Achievement
- K–16 Curriculum Alignment Strategies: How to Get it Done
- It's What Partnerships Do To Promote Student Achievement that Matters Most
- Motivating Faculty to Connect with GEAR UP Students
- Effective Models for Higher Education's Involvement in GEAR UP
- Honoring Others: Parent and Student Recognition Programs That Work
- Ethno-specific Success Stories (targeting Hispanics, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans)
- The Effectiveness of Summer and After-school Academic Enrichment Programs
- Insuring that Education Policies Remain Relevant: Federal, State, and Local Responses to the Leave No Child Behind Act
- College Access Program Models: What Works and Which Don't
- Overcoming Challenges to Student Transitions Between 8th and 9th Grades

2. Effective Strategies to Insure the Sustainability of Education/Community Partnerships

- Why Business Partners Are Engaged in GEAR UP
- It Takes Money to Sustain Effective Partnerships
- Creating the Public Will to Support K–16 partnerships
- Principles for Effectively Managing Education/Community Collaboratives
- Maximizing Impact of Education/Community Partnerships through Media Relations

3. Aligning Partnership Roles to Maximize Program Impact on Student Achievement

- Community Asset Mapping: Leveraging Community Assets
- Strategies for Sustaining Effective Education/Business Partnerships
- Building Partnerships in Smaller and Rural Communities
- Partnership and Team Development Strategies
- Professional Development (for High School Counselors and Faculty)
- Working with Faith-based Initiatives: Overcoming Controversies
- Defining Parent and Student Participation in GEAR UP Programs
- Involving Local Government Agencies in Education/Community College Access Programs

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

The mission of the National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP) is to develop and strengthen broad-based partnerships throughout the education continuum, from early childhood through postsecondary education. By creating education/community partnerships, linking schools and communities, developing new initiatives, supporting proven programs, and using research findings to create successful frameworks for action, NCCEP aims to invigorate the principle of equal educational opportunity for all, and in the process, to help improve K–16 education in the United States.

Specifically, NCCEP seeks to expand access and opportunity in higher education for low-income students and their families and to ensure that anyone who wants to be the first in his or her family to attend college can have an equal chance at fulfilling that dream. To accomplish this goal, NCCEP brings together colleges and universities with local K–12 schools, parent groups, business leaders, government agencies, foundations, corporations, and community-based organizations in collaborative efforts to improve education at all levels, to expand opportunities, and to assist students in becoming college eligible and academically successful in higher education.

4. **Aligning Academic Programs and Student Services to Promote Student Success and Academic Achievement**
   - Service-learning Programs that Help Develop Leadership Skills and Improve Academic Achievement
   - Making Career Exploration Programs for Youth Meaningful
   - Keeping Our Eyes on the Prize: Students and their Academic Achievement
   - After-school Programs and Co-curricular Activities
   - Effective High School Student Mentoring Programs
   - Utilizing Interactive Electronic Outreach Methods to Enhance Student Success
   - The Impact of Media: TV, Film On Youth
   - Using Scholarships as Incentives for Becoming College-ready
   - Immigration Status and its Impact on Access to Postsecondary Education
   - Creating Learning Centers in Public Housing: How To Do It?
   - Academic Counseling in High Schools: Is It Happening?

5. **Effective Evaluation Strategies and Accountability Measures**
   - Accountability: Who Cares and Why?
   - Documenting Student Achievement and Success
   - Using Technology in GEAR UP Classrooms and for Evaluation Purposes
   - A Review of the Ever-expanding Research Base of College Access Programs
   - How to Keep Evaluators Engaged and Evaluating the Right Things
   - Overcoming the Tendency to De-emphasize Evaluation Practices
   - Causal Relationships and Program Impact: How Does GEAR UP Measure Up?
   - If It's About Student Achievement, Why Are We Documenting Non-academic Outcomes?

6. **Business/Education Linkages: Forming Mutually Beneficial Business-Education Partnerships**
   - Practical Strategies for Community and Business Engagement
   - What Does Business Know About Failing Schools?
   - Business Core Competencies About Partnership Activities
   - Linking Academic Achievement, Skills Development and Employability
   - The Role of Business in Shaping Education Initiatives and Public Policy

CONCURRENT SESSIONS

The conference program will include sessions geared toward impacting middle-to-high school students and their families, K–16 faculty and administrators, student services and college access professionals, program evaluators, parent involvement coordinators, business and community partners, and education policy makers. Concurrent sessions may include panels of experts, researchers and practitioners, "how-to" presentations, research presentations, or descriptions of best practices. These sessions may represent models that work, works in progress, research-driven practices or approaches to solve problems or issues pertaining to educating low-income students.

SPECIAL TOPIC WORKSHOPS

These workshops are designed to provide in-depth opportunities for learning, to facilitate team development, and to foster greater program impact and more collaboration among conferees. The specialized sessions will focus on specific problem-areas, capacity-building needs, specialized training that may provide helpful suggestions to college access program practitioners. Participants will work through a series of partnership building exercises, develop business plans and programs models, and/or pilot-test new products and services aimed at improving student achievement.

STRATEGY SESSIONS

Strategy sessions are informal dialogues and are intended to promote lively conversation on specific relevant topics. They are designed to identify problematic issues, collectively share what we know about these problems, and discover solutions to ameliorate or eradicate the problems. A facilitator leads each strategy session and proceedings are documented. As a result of participating in strategy sessions, participants should better understand and be prepared to address problem areas affecting education/community collaboratives, and GEAR UP partnerships.

PLENARY SESSIONS

Plenary speakers are invited by NCCEP and the U.S. Department of Education. Nevertheless, GEAR UP and other constituent groups are encouraged to nominate keynote speakers and to submit topic suggestions for plenary sessions. This can be done using the e-mail address noted below.

Submit Proposals via e-mail by March 14, 2003 to: Susan_Shimko@edpartnerships.org

Address all communications regarding proposal submissions to:
Susan Shimko, Corporate and Community Relations Division
National Council for Community and Education Partnerships
1400 20th Street, NW, Suite G1 • Washington, DC 20036
tel: (202) 530-1135 • fax: (202)530-0809
Susan_Shimko@edpartnerships.org

Keeping Our Eyes on What Matters Most: Academic Achievement and Student Success

Phoenix, Arizona
February 10–12, 2003

Sponsored By:
U.S. Department of Education

In Collaboration With:
National Council for Community
and Education Partnerships (NCCEP)

It Takes a GEAR UP Partnership to Improve Public Education and Increase Access to College for Low-Income Students

GEAR UP Partnerships...

1. provide equal access to education and educational excellence for all students participating in GEAR UP schools through coordinated partnership efforts on behalf of low-income students.
2. help ensure that all students have access to rigorous academic courses that prepare them for college.
3. develop a solid academic foundation (for students) in the schools by aligning curricula with relevant academic enrichment student support services
4. ensure that well-prepared teachers use modern teaching tools and that the teaching and learning functions remain interesting and relevant to facilitate college enrollment.
5. provide information early to students and parents about college options, required courses, and financial aid, including providing students with recognition and incentives to keep their college aspirations high.
6. provide intensive, individualized, and coordinated support that helps students achieve academically and increase their chances to succeed in postsecondary education. Such support may include mentoring, standardized test preparation, after-school tutorials, counseling, and career advising.
7. establish strong partnerships that involve a long-term commitment and a meaningful role for each partner in improving students' preparation for college.
8. promote, as needed, reforms and improvements in the school curriculum as well as in teaching and learning methods.
9. promote strategies and activities for increased parent involvement in preparing students for college.
10. provide ongoing staff training and professional development opportunities to help teachers raise their expectations of all students.

    encourage local and state investments to sustain GEAR UP activities and services beyond the federal grant period.

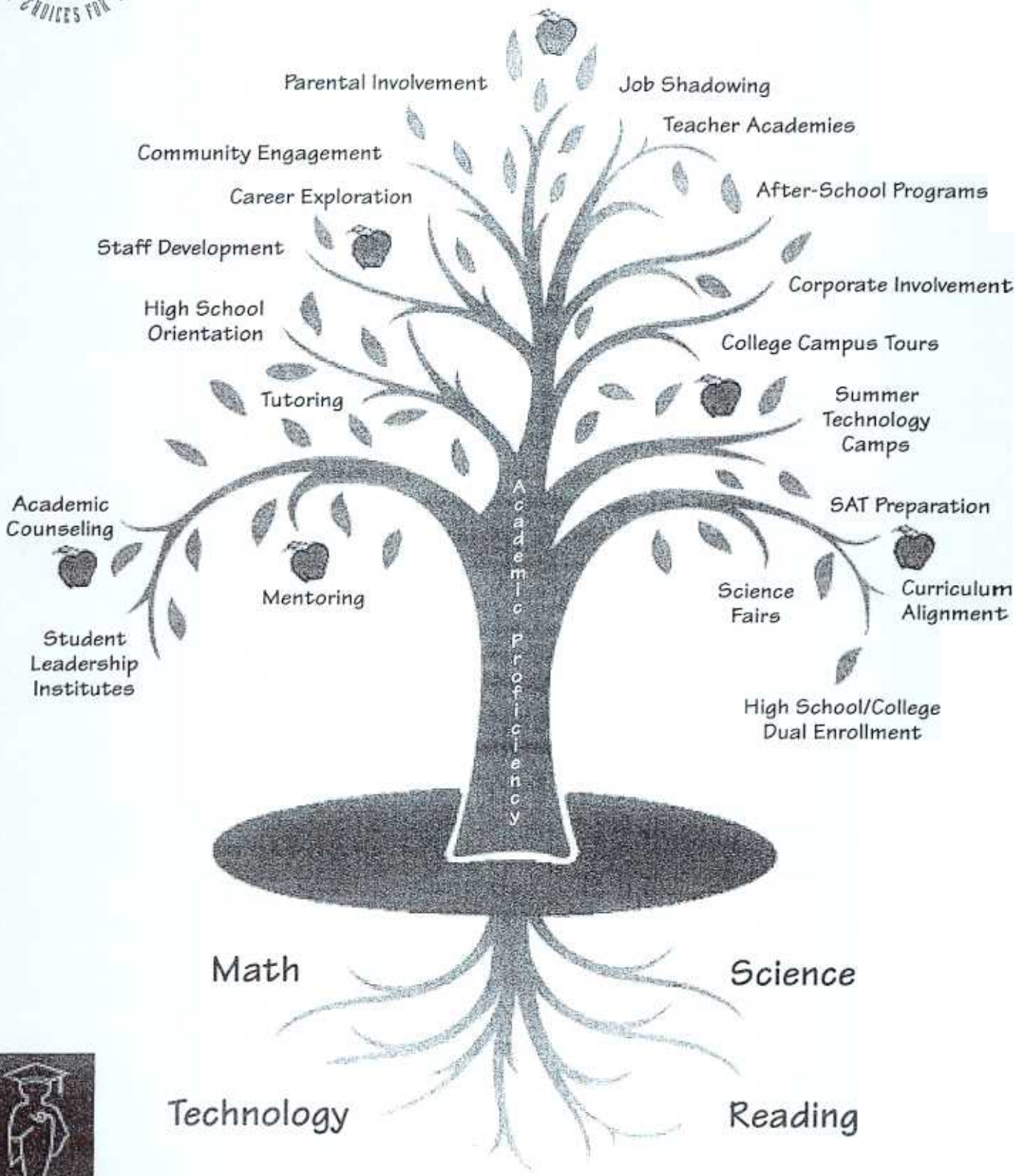
12. design comprehensive research-based projects on effective practices that include careful evaluations to enable continuous improvement and to guide project replication.
13. ensure that all GEAR UP partners and stakeholder groups receive the most current information related to the national GEAR UP effort by facilitating the participation of relevant partners and stakeholders.

GEAR UP Grants Awarded

Fiscal Year	Funding	Number of New Projects	Number of Students Served
1999	$120,000,000	• 163 Partnerships • 21 States	449,120
2000	$200,000,000	• 73 Partnerships • 7 States	710,272
2001	$295,000,000	• 6 Partnerships • 2 States	971,606
2002	$285,000,000	• 45 Partnerships • 6 States	1,236,606

1999-2002
287 Partnership Grants Awarded — 36 State Grants Awarded

Keeping Our Eyes on What Matters Most: Academic Achievement and Student Success



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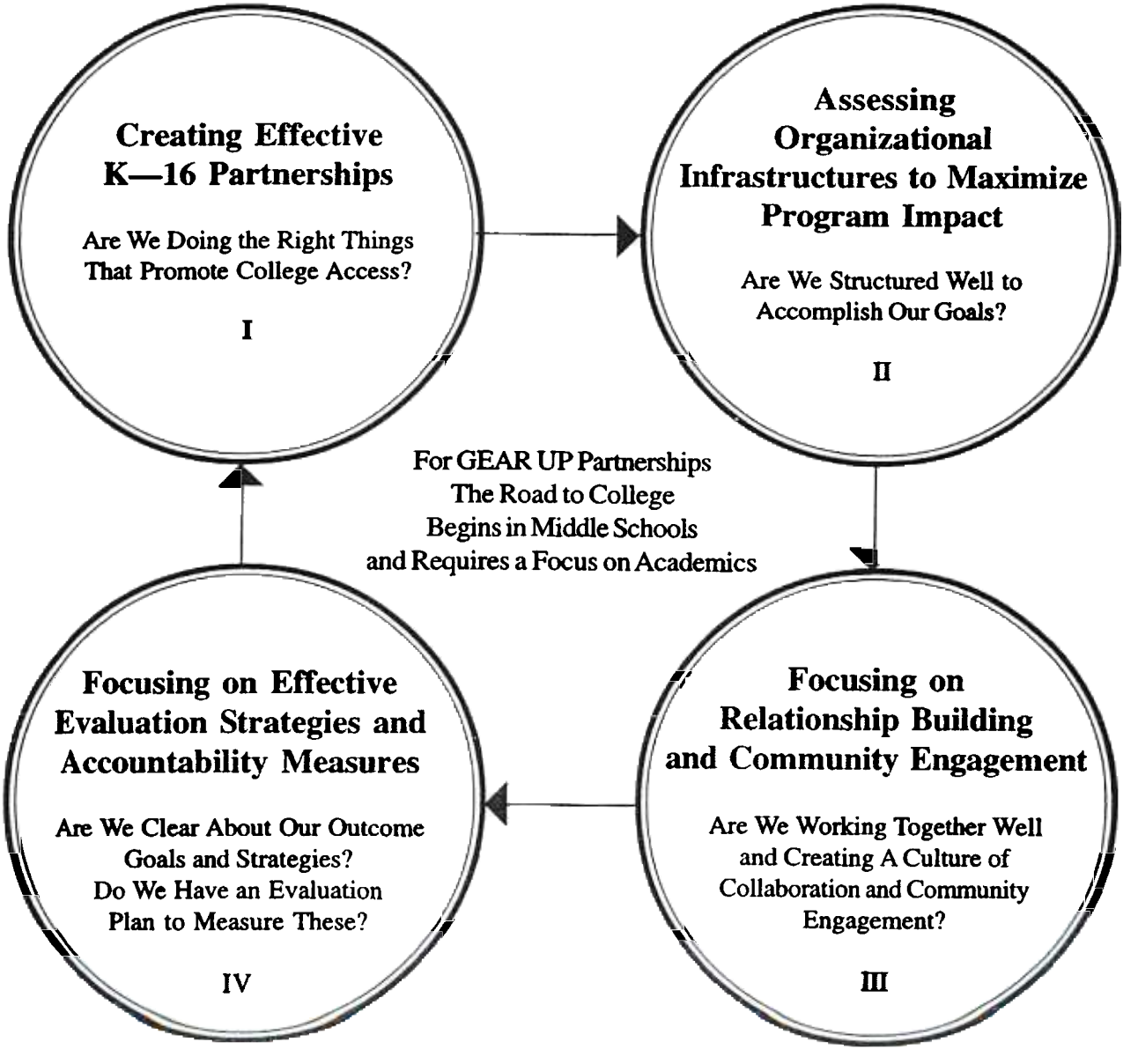
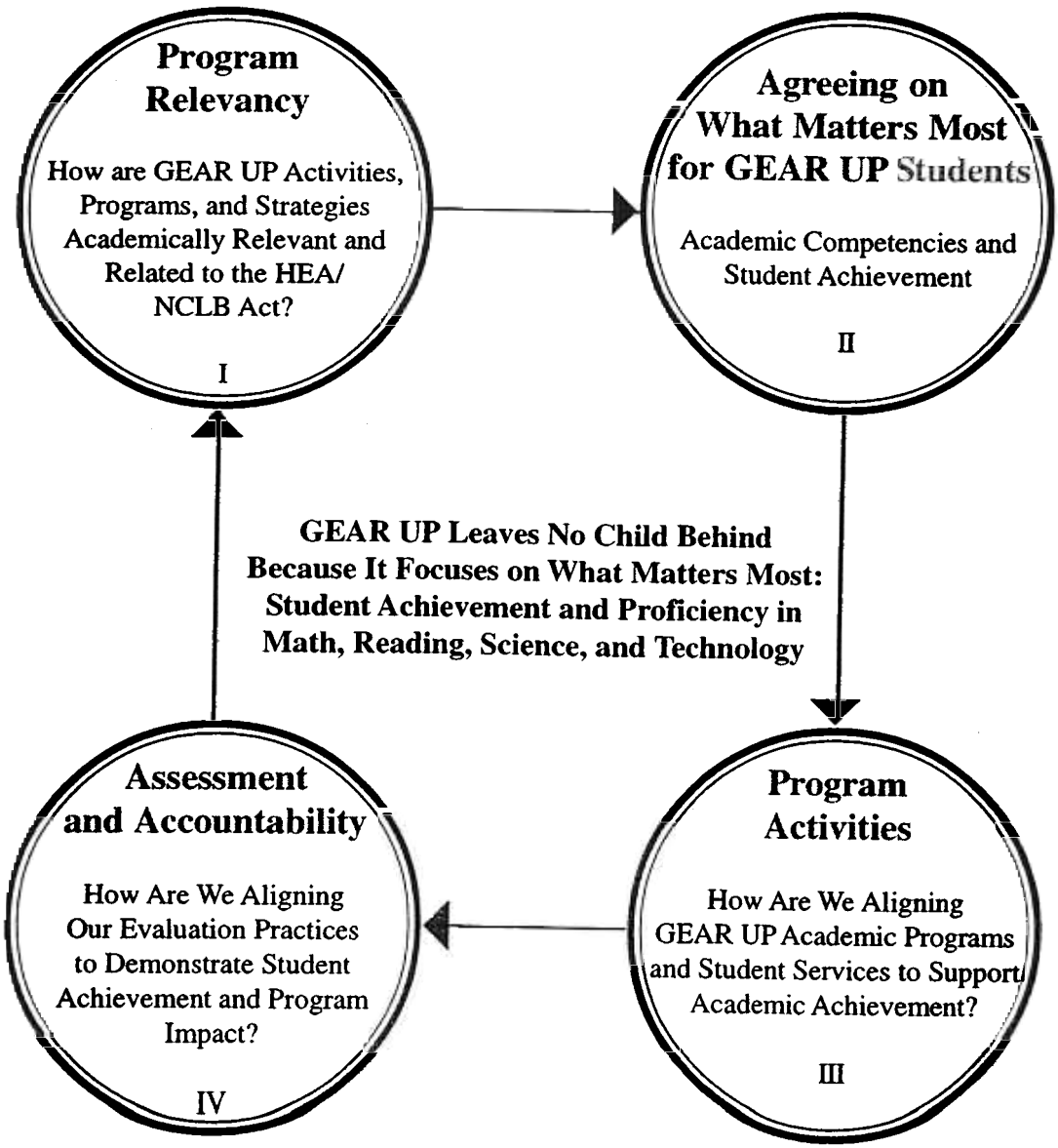
A Conceptual Framework for Developing and Sustaining GEAR UP Partnerships & Keeping Them Relevant to the No Child Left Behind Act

Key Questions to Consider:



A Conceptual Framework for Sustaining GEAR UP Partnerships and Keeping Them Relevant to the No Child Left Behind Act

Key Questions to Consider



GEAR UP Fact Sheet

GEAR UP is about providing low-income students with greater access to postsecondary education.

Using a collaborative K–16 partnership approach, GEAR UP programs seek to:

1. Serve whole grade-level cohorts in order to raise expectations for all students.
2. Provide comprehensive academic and student support services to students in 6th or 7th grade through high school graduation.
3. Focus on key transition points and facilitate student transitions between grade and school levels.
4. Inform students and parents about college options and financial aid earlier in the education process.
5. Promote vigorous academic coursework based on college entrance requirements.
6. Build the foundation for enduring institutional change that will result in ongoing support for all students to enter college.
7. Establish or maintain a financial assistance program that awards scholarships to eligible students so they may attend an institution of higher education.

Through GEAR UP partnerships, local schools, community-based organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher education work together to help parents gain the knowledge to encourage and guide their children to attend college and to strengthen academic programs and student services in the schools so that students are prepared academically and financially to enter and succeed in college.

Through GEAR UP state grants, states provide to students early college awareness activities, improved academic support, and information on paying for college and scholarships, with priority given to low-income students. These efforts must be coordinated with those of schools, local community organizations, and colleges and universities.

GEAR UP: Unique among Federal Programs

- **This year, GEAR UP is building pathways to college for more than 1.2 million disadvantaged youths.**
  GEAR UP supports partnerships of schools, colleges and universities, and community organizations to strengthen academics and tutoring, raise expectations, plan college visits and counseling, and provide college scholarships. It also funds state efforts to promote college awareness and to provide scholarships for needy students. More than 1,000 organizations are GEAR UP partners, including colleges and universities, libraries, arts organizations, and chambers of commerce. GEAR UP is inspired by businessman Eugene Lang's I Have a Dream Foundation and is modeled on Project GRAD.

GEAR UP Complements Other Federal Programs by:

- **Starting earlier.** GEAR UP partnerships start no later than the 7th grade. Research shows that middle school students who take challenging coursework, including algebra, are far more likely to succeed in high school and college.

- **Staying with children through high school graduation.** GEAR UP intervenes in youths' lives over a period of six or more years, helping them stay on track for college and often providing scholarships once they reach college.

- **Transforming schools.** GEAR UP partnerships work with entire grades of students to transform their schools. Services include mentoring, tutoring, strengthening curricula, teacher professional development, summer and after-school academic and enrichment programs, and college visits.

  Supporting college scholarships. Some GEAR UP partnerships provide college scholarships, which research shows to be particularly important in preventing low-income students from dropping out.

  Leveraging local resources. GEAR UP encourages colleges and other community organizations to partner with low-income middle schools and leverages non-federal resources with a one-for-one match requirement.

- **Bolstering state efforts.** GEAR UP supports state early college preparation and scholarship efforts.

GEAR UP Facts

For many American children, the likelihood of attending and succeeding in college is small. Too many low-income students face seemingly insurmountable barriers, including low expectations, inadequate academic preparation, and a lack of information about education options and opportunities. Although these problems cut across all income levels, they are particularly acute for the nation's poor. Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) helps prepare low-income students to attend and succeed in college.

GEAR UP is a federal program created in 1999 to address these education challenges by working to significantly increase the number of low-income students who attend and succeed in college. GEAR UP provides seed funding to state and community partnerships of high-poverty middle schools, colleges, community organizations, and businesses. GEAR UP projects provide entire grade levels of students with tutoring, mentoring, information on college preparation and financial aid, core academic preparation, and college scholarships.

Low-Income Students are Far Less Likely to Enroll in and Complete College

- **College Enrollment Gap —** Seventy-six (76) percent of high-income high school graduates enroll in college or trade school immediately whereas only 49 percent of low-income graduates, 42 percent of Hispanic graduates, and 59 percent of black high school graduates do so (National Center for Education Statistics, Condition of Education, 2001).

  College Completion Gap — Although 33 percent of all high school graduates earn a four-year college degree before they turn 30, only 15 percent of Hispanic graduates and 21 percent of black graduates do (National Center for Education Statistics, Condition of Education, 2001).

  The gaps are evident even among qualified students. High academic achievers from low-income families are only one-fifth as likely to enroll in college as high achievers from high-income families (U.S. Department of Education).

GEAR UP Places College within Reach of More than One Million Low-Income Students

- GEAR UP provides federal funding for 323 state and community partnerships serving more than 1.2 million low-income students in 47 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Micronesia, and Puerto Rico.

- More than 2,000 community colleges, universities, businesses, and civic and education organizations participate in GEAR UP partnerships nationwide.

  GEAR UP serves low-income students of every race and ethnicity:
  American Indian - 3.9%; Asian-American- 3.2%; black or African American - 31.1%;
  Hispanic or Latino - 34.0%; white - 26.8%;

GEAR UP Is Modeled on Programs That Work

The success of early intervention programs sponsored by philanthropists, colleges, universities, and foundations proves that we can overcome the college opportunity gap. GEAR UP is modeled after proven programs, including:

- I Have a Dream (IHAD). In 1982, Harlem businessman Eugene Lang promised college scholarships to any sixth graders attending his former elementary school who went on to graduate from high school. The promise of those scholarships—as well as a sustained program of mentoring, tutoring, and community service—helped 90 percent of these students graduate when only 25 percent were expected to do so. Over the past two decades, IHAD has grown to more than 175 projects in 58 cities (IHAD Foundation). In a controlled experiment in Chicago, IHAD students were twice as likely as their peers to graduate from high school (Kahne and Bailey, Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, Fall 1999).

  Project GRAD. Founded in 1988 in Houston, Texas, by James L. Ketelsen, former chairman of Tenneco, Project GRAD works to improve student academic performance and increase graduation rates. Project GRAD includes research-based curricula for instruction in reading and math, a research-based program for classroom/school management, an established social service and parent/community involvement program, and a college scholarship program for high school graduates. The percentage of Project GRAD middle school students passing a statewide math test tripled from 21 percent in 1995 to 63 percent in 1998. The number of students graduating from one Project GRAD high school increased 64 percent between 1988 and 1998, during which time the number district wide decreased 7 percent. Five times as many students are going to college.

GEAR UP Provides Local Flexibility and Leverages Local Resources

- **GEAR UP is a cost-effective federal program** because it provides seed monies for colleges, low-income schools, and states to establish early intervention programs. GEAR UP:

- **Is a One-Time Intervention** — GEAR UP provides one-time, five-year grants as seed funding to begin early intervention programs and strengthen schools. Applicants are required to demonstrate that they have a plan to sustain the project after federal funding ends.

- **Allows Local Flexibility** — GEAR UP projects establish their own objectives, develop strategies to achieve them, and then measure their success. The Department of Education funds only the best applicants.

- **Requires a Dollar-for-Dollar Match** — GEAR UP requires grantees to meet the dollar-for-dollar match requirement. It has already mobilized more than $500 million in private and state funds for early intervention and college scholarships. This matching requirement makes GEAR UP highly cost-effective.

  Encourages State Efforts — GEAR UP is the only federal program that encourages states to establish college outreach and early intervention initiatives.