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Colorado GEAR UP's Early Remediation Pilot

How the Early Remediation Pilot works

Colorado GEAR UP students in our partner middle and high schools participate in online, self-paced courses that mirror the content of the remedial courses offered in state colleges and universities. These classes are supervised by licensed teachers and are a part of the regular school day.

How do these classes benefit students?

Students work their way through the typical sequence of college remedial courses. The pilot began with math, the subject in which Colorado students most often need remedial help.

As students complete these classes, they receive a college transcript documenting their completion of the courses.

The importance of the college transcript

Colorado GEAR UP partnered with Adams State University in Alamosa to create the courses and ensure our students meet the requirements of mastering the classes. When students complete the classes, they receive an Adams State transcript. GEAR UP students can then use these transcripts to enroll in college-level classes as early as grade 10.

How big is the Early Remediation Pilot?

Colorado GEAR UP began its early remediation pilot in the fall of 2011 in two middle schools in the Adams 14 School District. We started with 54 8th-graders in math courses. As of April 1 of this year, 689 8th-graders and 9th-graders were enrolled in remedial math courses in more than a dozen middle and high schools.

Results of the Early Remediation Pilot

As of April 1, 100 of the 689 students enrolled in remedial math classes had completed at least one course. By the end of this school year, we expect another 87 students will have finished their first course for a total of 187. Of the 100 who already had completed their first course, 99 are working on their second remedial class and one student is nearly through his third remedial class. Students who do not finish a course by school year's end can pick up where they left off when they return to school in the fall.

What happens next?

Colorado GEAR UP will continue to expand its remedial math courses in its partner middle and high schools. In January of this year, the pilot also added reading and writing remedial classes at three partner schools.

The bottom line

We know the students we serve –low-income and minority –are the most likely to need remediation when they enter college and the least likely to earn a degree. Our Early Remediation Pilot has the potential to reduce our students' remedial needs to zero while allowing them to build their college credits before graduating high school. It is the only program of its kind in the country and our outcomes are being studied by a consortium of researchers from Stanford, Vanderbilt and the universities of Colorado, Michigan, Northern Colorado and Southern California.

Colorado GEAR UP Quick Facts

Colorado GEAR UP is a federally-funded program serving low-income students in middle and high schools across the state. The GEAR UP model includes intense advising, concurrent enrollment, early remediation and CLEP testing to ensure students receive college credit for their skills. Students also receive up to \$10,000 in scholarships for college. Most GEAR UP students would be the first in their families to go to college.

Student Population, High School Graduation and College Enrollment

- 87% of GEAR UP students graduated from high school compared to a statewide graduation rate of 72%.
 - 75% of GEAR UP students who graduated had earned a partially proficient or unsatisfactory score in at least one subject on state tests while in middle school.
- 84% enrolled in college the fall after high school graduation compared to a statewide enrollment rate of 57%.
- 81% of GEAR UP students persisted through their first year of college compared to a statewide average retention rate of 70%.

What's Different about Colorado GEAR UP: Our Four Key Strategies

Concurrent Enrollment

- GEAR UP students may begin taking college-prep courses in middle school and college classes as high school sophomores.
- The average GEAR UP student graduates high school having completed five college classes and earning an average of 17 college credits.
- 86% of GEAR UP college courses are completed with a C or better.

CLEP Testing:

- College Level Examination Program or CLEP tests allow students to earn college credits in areas that they have prior knowledge or coursework. GEAR UP offers the Spanish Language CLEP test and some subject tests to students.
- Nearly 600 tests have been completed; 88% of students earned some level of credits, with more than 50 percent of test-takers earning up to 12 college credits.

Intense Advising:

- Pre-collegiate advisors recruit students as seventh-graders, begin twice-monthly contacts with students as eighth-graders and follow them through their first year of college.

Remedial Education Courses:

- GEAR UP offers remedial education courses in English and math in many of our partner middle and high schools.
- In a pilot, more than 80% of students passed the courses and either completed their remedial education requirements for college or advanced toward that goal. That pilot has grown to nearly 700 students.

Analysis of Return on Investment: 2011-2017

- Total Cost of Program -\$35 million (\$5 million per year over seven years, including scholarships)
- Economic Benefits -\$172.8 million (Provided 45% of an estimated 6,400 GEAR UP students achieve a bachelor's degree and pay lifetime taxes of \$60,000)
- Total Tax Increase Benefit -\$137.8 million (total cost of program minus economic benefits)