



Region One ESC GEAR UP: Ready, Set, College! Mentoring Guide

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) is a **national initiative** aimed at encouraging cohort students to set their educational goals beyond high school and prepare for postsecondary education now.

GEAR UP is a partnership between:

- Region One Education Service Center
- 30 high schools in 27 school districts located along the Texas-Mexico border from Laredo to Brownsville
- Local Business and Community Partners
- Local Institutions of Higher Education

Student Demographics

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Hispanic or Latino | 98% |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 87% |
| English Language Learners | 27% |
| First Generation College | 78% |
| Total Cohort Group | 10,600 students |

(GEAR UP students are currently 9th Graders)

Salient Features of the GEAR UP: Ready, Set, College! Partnership

- Addresses all students in a grade level at the targeted campuses and follows those students from 7th grade to 12th grade with the goal of preparing students academically and affectively for admittance to and success in postsecondary environments
- Cohesive, ongoing initiatives that are intentionally linked and scaffolded from activity to activity, year to year, as opposed to one-shot, isolated “fun” experiences that are unrelated to each other

T.I.E.S. (Together in Education for Success) Initiative

In order to reverse current trends in Latino male college enrollment, Region One ESC GEAR UP, in partnership with the Rio Grande Valley Vipers basketball organization and State Farm Arena in Hidalgo, Texas, have created the Together in Education for Success (T.I.E.S.) initiative. The initiative is targeted toward cohort male students and their father or mentor.

Looking at research such as *Latino Males: Improving College Access and Degree Completion – A New National Imperative* by Saenz and Ponjuan, school

district personnel have receive vital information and statistics regarding postsecondary enrollment and degree completion, which is used to target and recruit cohort male students.

The T.I.E.S. event provides a unique opportunity to bring male cohort students and their fathers/mentors together through a series of activities that build leadership, college readiness and traditions. Students participate in presentations from local leaders, RGV Vipers players and coaching staff, and GEAR UP personnel. The highlight of the event is when students receive a necktie, and learn to tie a traditional knot with their father or mentor while learning the formality of a male wearing a necktie.

Students participating in this experience are 9th graders in the Region One GEAR UP partnership. They particularly are interested in your personal story and experiences, including the obstacles you have faced and how you have overcome these challenges to become successful in your chosen career and in your life.

Points to share with GEAR UP students

- ✿ Your background (where you were raised, your family, etc.)
- ✿ Your educational (degrees attained, schools attended)
- ✿ Your title and job description
- ✿ Classes students should be taking in high school and college to prepare them for a career in your field
- ✿ Types of college degrees needed to work at your company or in your profession
- ✿ Salary ranges in your profession
- ✿ Benefits to working in a field like yours
- ✿ Different careers available within your field
- ✿ What makes your job interesting

For more information about Region One ESC GEAR UP, visit our website at www.esc1.net/gearup.