

GEAR UP ARKANSAS

Partnership Operations Handbook
University of Central Arkansas



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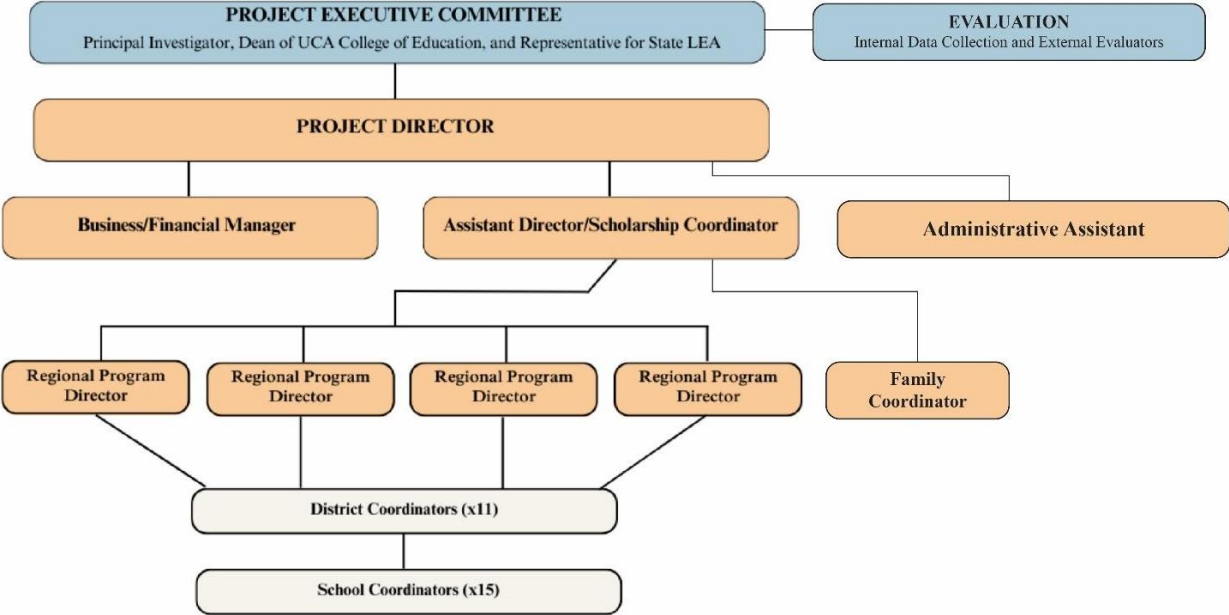
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GUAR-CRN Team

GUAR-CRN Staffing Chart

Organizational Chart



School District Partners

- Blytheville
- Brinkley
- Camden Fairview
- Clarendon
- Helena-West Helena
- Hope
- Jacksonville
- Lee County
- Little Rock School District
- Marvel-Elaine
- Pulaski

Service Partners

- Arkansas AIMS
- Cambridge Educational Service
- Camp College Prep

External Evaluator

Vela Institute supports organizations efforts to understand and demonstrate impact through external evaluation, makes data accessible and relevant through student-level data-tracking and data visualizations, and increases organization capacity to make evidenced based decisions.

Grant Document

GUAR-CRN

The **GEAR UP Arkansas (GUAR)** project, facilitated by the University of Central Arkansas, will improve academic opportunities, access, and outcomes for disadvantaged and at-risk students. GUAR will serve identified students in urban and rural school districts in Arkansas. The seven-year project is a cohort model that begins with sixth and seventh grades at 15 middle schools and will provide services to the 6th-grade cohort of students through 12th grade and the 7th-grade cohort through their freshman year of college. The GUAR schools represented in this grant represent some of the highest-poverty and low-performing schools in the state of Arkansas and the nation.

GUAR is targeting four areas of the state that combine urban and rural poverty. Pulaski County is an urban county where Little Rock, the capital city, is located and will work with three high-poverty urban school districts with failing schools (as denoted by the Arkansas Department of Education). Mississippi, Lee, Monroe, Phillips, Hempstead, and Ouachita Counties are rural high-poverty communities with a complicated racial history that impacts the culture of the community and schools. GUAR will work with six small rural school districts that have failing schools. Two of the four targeted areas are located in the Delta. The Delta Region is an extremely high-poverty area that runs along the Mississippi River. The Delta covers 35,000 square miles from southern Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico, encompassing 219 counties in seven states and approximately 8.3 million people. Although nearly all of Arkansas experiences abject poverty, in Delta counties, the poverty level nears or exceeds 40% of the population. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, (2021) Delta counties have some of the highest unemployment numbers in the state. Further, data from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE's) School Report Card and College Board AP Exam indicate that the schools in the Delta have some of the lowest scores on Advanced Placement exams in Arkansas. Below is a map of the GUAR target communities.

Section 1: Need for the Project

1.1 The Magnitude or Severity of the Problem to be Addressed by the Proposed Project

According to the Kids Count 2022 Data report, Arkansas ranks 43rd in the U.S. in child well-being, according to a study that measures youth mental health, economic challenges, and other factors that go into analyzing children and families in the country. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families reported an increase in children who experienced anxiety or depression from 8.6% in 2016 to 14.4% in 2020. That is a 67% increase within four years, above the national average of 11.8%. Arkansas is ranked #1 in the nation for the most traumatized children, with nearly 60% of all Arkansan children having experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (2022 Kids Count Data Report). According to research from the Casey Foundation, at 16%, Arkansas is also ranked #1 in the nation for children with incarcerated parents. Arkansas has the highest percentage of children with a parent or guardian who is or was incarcerated. The national percentage of children with incarcerated parents is 10% (Casey Study, 2016). These unfavorable factors in the state result from high poverty levels and reveal some of the negative impacts of poverty on children and the challenges faced for academic success (Field, 2022).

Table 1 below provides a lens to compare how Arkansas compares nationally and provides insight into the GUAR-targeted communities in the areas of poverty rate, median income, unemployment, and bachelor's degrees. The data for Pulaski County, our capital city, is an outlier because the city combines great wealth and high poverty. Like many urban areas, Little Rock, AR is segregated. There are high-performing schools in affluent areas and low-performing schools in impoverished areas. GUAR intends to serve low-performing schools in impoverished areas of Arkansas's capital city, outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Comparison of Target Counties to Arkansas and Nation

Community Area	Poverty Rate	Median Income	Unemployment Rate	Bachelor's degrees
United States	11.60%	\$69,021	3.70%	33.70%
State of Arkansas	16.30%	\$52,123	2.70%	24.30%
GUAR Communities	Poverty Rate	Median Income	Unemployment Rate	Bachelor's degrees
Hempstead County	21.20%	\$43,592	5.20%	16.00%
Lee County	34.90%	\$29,082	7.50%	9.80%
Mississippi County	23.90%	\$45,740	9.00%	14.20%
Monroe County	25.30%	\$41,667	6.70%	13.50%
Ouachita County	20.20%	\$43,338	6.00%	13.30%
Phillips County	35.70%	\$32,235	9.10%	14.30%
Pulaski County	17.60%	\$55,235	7.40%	36.30%

According to the Arkansas Division of Higher Education 2021 report, Arkansas has a high school graduation rate of 89% which is above the national average of 87%. However, Arkansas has a remediation rate of 44%, meaning that nearly half of undergraduate students in the state require a remediation course in college to be ready to take college level courses. The state of Arkansas is graduating students, but nearly half of the students are not prepared for college. When you look at the remediation rate of GUAR target schools, the problem is even worse. The average high school graduation rate for GUAR target schools is 84.9%. For the academic year 2021-2022, the average postsecondary graduation rate at Arkansas colleges is 48.4%, according to the Arkansas Division of Higher Education report. This data exemplifies the lack of academic preparedness that puts Arkansas students at risk of educational failure at both the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Rising social and economic inequality is a national issue. Lower- and upper-class communities have separated geographically, creating segregated communities based on income and race. Children growing up in poor families and neighborhoods, including many Black and Hispanic youth, complete less schooling and acquire fewer academic skills than those from more affluent backgrounds (Willey, 2019). For example, one GUAR target school has a 94% Black and Hispanic student population, of which 79% graduate from high school, and out of those students who graduate from high school, 100% require remediation when they enter college.

The University of Central Arkansas intentionally supports Black and Brown communities in Arkansas where children grow up in poor families and neighborhoods and attend failing schools. All the GUAR target schools are considered low-performing schools with a letter grade of a D or an F, as defined by the Arkansas Department of Education Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1402 requires that DESE annually prepare and publish a school performance report for each public school in the state and make the report

available to schools, parents, and the local community. The school report card assigns a letter grade ranging from A to F to each public school. According to the 2022 DESE school report card, 77 (.07%) schools received an A; 205 (2%) received a B; 415 (40%) received a C, 233(23%) received a D, and 95 (.09%) received an F. When analyzing the GUAR target schools' letter grades, six schools received a D, and nine received an F. Table 2 provides racial and poverty demographics, as well as the 2023 school letter grade assigned by the Arkansas Department of Education for the targeted schools served by GUAR.

Table 2: GUAR schools demographic and School Letter Grade

GUAR Target District/School	F/R Lunch %	Black %	Hispanic %	White %	Other %	DESE School Letter Grade
Little Rock/ Cloverdale Middle	83.8%	61.5%	34.4%	2.9%	1.2%	F
Little Rock/ Dunbar Middle	86.4%	76%	14.4%	6.1%	3.5%	F
Little Rock/ J A Fair	88.1%	70.1%	21.4%	6.4%	2.1%	F
Little Rock/Mabelvale	86.6%	65%	29.6%	3.8%	1.6%	F
Little Rock/ Mann Magnet	85.7%	70.5%	21.7%	5.3%	2.5%	D
Jacksonville Middle School	85.5%	56.7%	8.6%	32.9%	1.8%	D
Camden Fairview Middle School	86%	61.2%	1.7%	31.2%	5.9%	F
Blytheville Middle School	69%	80.9%	3.8%	12.7%	2.6%	F
Pulaski County/Mills Middle	89%	53.3%	25.5%	17.1%	4.1%	D
Hope School District/Yerger Junior	80.7%	51.8%	32.1%	15.2%	0.9%	D
Helena/West Helena	94%	93.1%	1.1%	4.2%	1.6%	F
Marvel/Elaine	100%	86.1%	4.2%	9.1%	0.6%	D
Brinkley	78%	67.2%	1.4%	28.4%	3%	D
Clarendon	92%	55.3%	7.0%	29.3%	8.4%	D
Lee County	90.7%	89.3%	3.4%	6.9%	0.4%	F

While segregated White schools in urban areas have a majority of high-income students, most segregated minority schools in urban areas have concentrations of low-income students (Owens, 2018). That is the case for the schools located in the capital city. The low-performing schools are located in high-poverty areas where Black and Brown families live. The higher performing schools in Little Rock are in predominantly White communities of higher income.

The GUAR target schools are a combination of rural and urban schools that serve low-income families who live in communities with high concentrations of poverty. The average free and reduced lunch poverty rate for the 15 GUAR schools is 86.6%. Urban and rural students, primarily from families below the poverty level, are not receiving a fundamental education (Wax, 2017). A study released by America's Promise Alliance revealed that 30% of students fail to graduate high school. However, in high-poverty settings, 50-70% of students typically fail to graduate (Wax, 2017). This difference is an example of how the isolation of White students differs from that of Non-White students. This creates a situation where you have a concentration of families living in low-income communities, and their children often attend failing schools; due to the various systemic problems impoverishing these low-income communities.

Crawford et al. (2020) discussed the gaps in educational achievement between White and Non-White students as measured by standardized test scores. The presumption that guides much of the conversation is that equal opportunity now exists; therefore, continued low levels of achievement on the part of minority students must be a function of genes, culture, or a lack of effort (Meyer, 2018). These assumptions do not provide space for understanding the opportunity gaps created by systemic oppression. Educational outcomes for minority children are much more a function of their unequal access to key educational and community resources than race, creating opportunity gaps that eventually lead to gaps in achievement (Cartern & Welner, 2013). The educational opportunity gaps and systemic oppression within low-income communities create a platform for low-income and many minority students to be disadvantaged individuals within the school system.

Disadvantaged students often face specific challenges compared to their peers (Van Hees, 2021). Disadvantaged students include students with disability, low-income families, students with little or no family support, orphans, highly mobile students, students with mental health issues, and pregnant students (Hees, 2021). Because of the complicated history of race in America, race can also disadvantage a student. The end of legal segregation made a substantial difference in what schooling looks like for Black and Brown students. However, educational experiences for Black and Brown students remain substantially separate and unequal (Cartern & Welner, 2013). Two-thirds of Black and Brown students still attend predominantly Black and Brown schools, most of them located in urban cities and funded well below those in neighboring White suburban districts, creating unequal access to educational opportunities (Cardichon et al., 2020). Educational researcher and teacher, Gloria J. Ladson-Billings, in her lecture at the American Educational Research Association research meeting, made the statement, "If we are unwilling to fully implement *Brown vs. Board of Education*, could we at least have *Plessy vs. Ferguson*?" This statement speaks directly to the inequality that exists in school systems between Black and Brown students and their White peers.

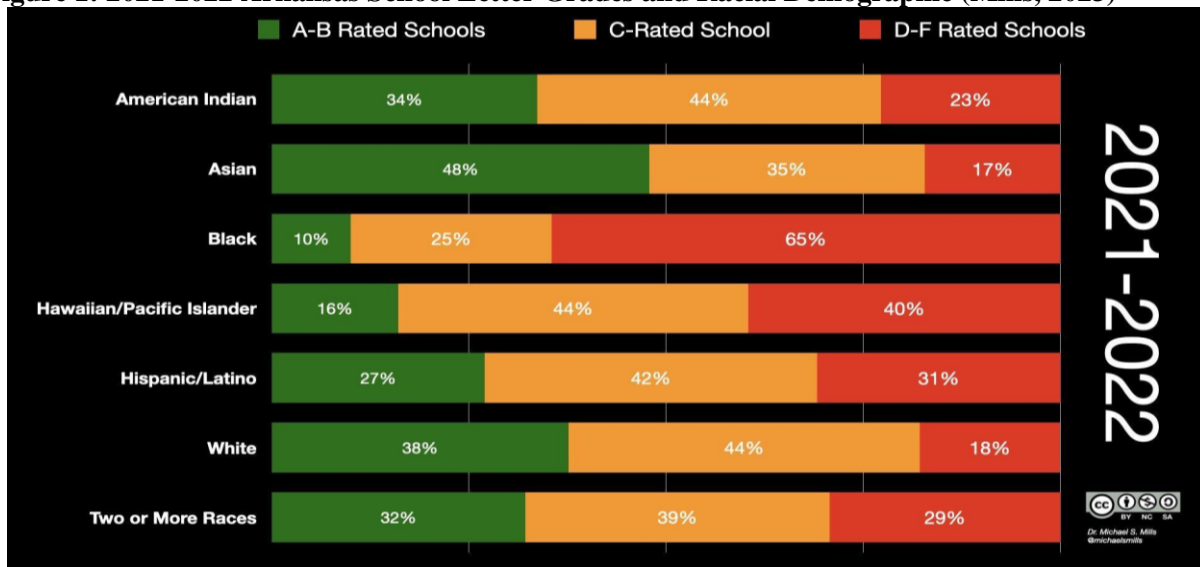
According to Cardichon et al. (2020), on every tangible measure, ranging from qualified teachers to curriculum offering, schools serving greater numbers of students of color have substantially fewer resources than schools serving mostly White students. This resource gap disadvantages the individuals attending the school with less qualified teachers, fewer rigorous courses, and less school funding for materials and resources. Almost twenty years ago, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2006) concluded that in U.S. society, there is not as much of an achievement gap as there is an "education debt" that the educational system owes to so many students it has poorly served. In 2023, the conversation regarding "education debt" is still prevalent in our society (Randall, 2023). The U.S. educational system is one of the most unequal in the industrialized world, and students routinely receive dramatically different learning opportunities

based on their social status and the communities in which they reside (Milner, 2012, Hammond, 2020). GUAR aims to address these profound needs by equalizing opportunity for students.

Poverty’s impact goes beyond the school system; the family is also affected. Often families living within low-income communities experience internalized oppression and accept the failure of their children and the school systems within their communities as normal and just the way it is (Castillo et al., 2020). Internalized oppression is a concept in which an oppressed group accepts the oppressive message of the dominant group in society to be true and continues that mindset for several generations (Castillo et al., 2020). GUAR understands that internalized oppression negatively impacts how families within low-income communities advocate for their children, making their children vulnerable to being at risk of educational failure.

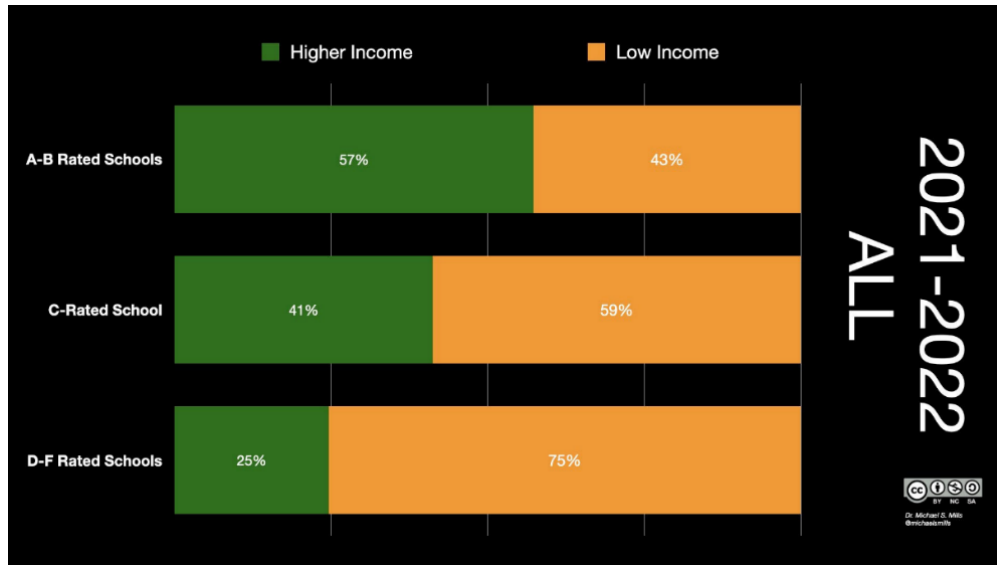
Additional analysis of Arkansas schools and assigned letter grades reveal the demographics of students' attendance at the various schools and confirms that children growing up in poor families and neighborhoods, including many Blacks and Hispanics, acquire fewer academic skills than those from more affluent backgrounds (Willey, 2019). Only 10% of Black students in Arkansas attend a school with an A-B rating, while 65% of Black students attend a school with a D-F rating. Thirty-eight percent of White students in Arkansas attend A-B schools, compared to 18% who attend D-F schools. This high-performing school access gap disadvantages Black students and puts them in a situation where education failure is the norm. Figure 1 shows Arkansas schools' student racial demographic and assigned letter grades.

Figure 1: 2021-2022 Arkansas School Letter Grades and Racial Demographic (Mills, 2023)



Continued analysis of letter grades in Arkansas schools reveal the education income achievement gap. The student population of schools in Arkansas receiving an A-B letter grade is 57 % high-income students and 43 % low-income students, while the student population of schools in Arkansas receiving a D-F letter grade is 75% of low-income students. Only 25% of higher-income students attend schools with a D-F letter grade. Figure 2 shows students’ income and assigned letter grades in Arkansas schools.

Figure 2: 2021-2022 Arkansas School Letter Grades and Income (Mills, 2023)



Arkansas’s data supports the research regarding student performance in low-income communities and the achievement gap between Black and Brown students and their White peers. The GUAR school data align with the state’s data on the low-performing schools in the state. The GUAR target cohort schools have a high percentage of low-income students and a high percentage of Black and Brown students. Table 3 is the academic performance of GUAR schools (*Arkansas Department of Education, 2023*).

Table 3: GUAR Academic Performance Compared to State Performance

1.2 The extent to which the proposed project will provide services or otherwise address the needs of students at risk of educational failure

GUAR defines students at risk of educational failure as those living in high-poverty communities and attending failing schools. Based on the data outlining the magnitude of the problem within these high-poverty communities with failing schools, students are at risk of educational failure of not graduating high school academically ready for the rigor of college, nor with the information needed to successfully plan, apply and pay for college. GUAR will address the specific needs of GUAR students that are unique to their lived experiences and evidence-

School	GUAR 6th Math	GUAR 6th English	GUAR 7th Math	GUAR 7th English	HS Grad Rate	College Remediation Rate
State	45.6%	65.5%	38.6%	73.9%	89%	44%
Cloverdale/ Hall High	2.1%	25.1%	3.2%	45.8%	90.36%	97.96%
Dunbar/ Mills High	6.4%	35.5%	3.8%	42.9%	78.31%	88.24%
J A Fair/ Southwest	7.5%	35.3%	8.7%	41.2%	75.27%	95.57%
Mabelvale/Southwest	6.5%	22.7%	7.3%	39.9%	75.27%	95.57%
Mann/Parkview	16.1%	47.6%	18.3%	69.4%	94.72%	76.39%
Jacksonville Middle	16.6%	46.6%	11.7%	57.1%	77.52%	88.16%
Camden Fairview	16.3%	47%	10.1%	57%	87.42%	91.41%
Blytheville	10.4%	33.6%	11.0%	58.9%	75.59%	95.89%
Pulaski County Mills	26.1%	46.1%	16.7%	66.7%	73.31%	88.24%
Yerger Junior	N/A	N/A	1.8%	52.7%	92.5%	82.57%
Helena/West Helena	11.4%	54.4%	8.8%	67.2%	84.28%	97.06%
Marvel/ Elaine	0%	21.7%	10.5%	52.6%	84.62%	97.06%
Brinkley	31.4%	51.4%	3.7%	51.9%	84.38%	100%
Lee County	30 %	45%	10.9	41.3%	79.59%	100%
Clarendon	20.7%	27.6%	0%	51.3%	100%	91.67%

based strategies that are proven to help students be successful.

Specifically, this section will address identified needs in Table 4 to address the primary academic needs of at-risk students. At-risk students are those who are in danger of not being promoted, not graduating, or otherwise not meeting education-related goals and benchmarks. These students have a higher likelihood of failing or dropping out of school and are part of populations that have a situational impact on this risk, including disabilities, habitual truancy/absenteeism, family welfare or marital status, parental educational attainment, income, employment status, immigration status, or households in which the primary language spoken is not English (Great Schools Partnership, 2013).

Table 4: Needs of Students at Risk of Academic Educational Failure

Need	Description
Need 1	High-quality educators. Teachers need sufficient opportunities to learn how to make data-driven decisions and strengthen instruction for rigorous class content and academic curricula to improve instruction that adequately prepares all students for college.
Need 2	Family engagement. Parental support to assist parents in recognizing internalized oppression and being effective parent navigators so they can serve as advocates for their children's academic needs.
Need 3	Academic rigor. Students need exposure to rigorous content and access to rigorous classes in middle school and junior high, and access to Advanced Placement and dual credit courses in high school.
Need 4	Cultural competence. Students need culturally competent teachers who understand diverse backgrounds, do not engage in deficit thinking, and do not make judgements about students and their families.

Need 1: High-quality educators: Teachers need sufficient opportunities to learn curriculum and instruction for rigorous class content and academic curricula to improve instruction that adequately prepares all students for college.

Students in GUAR schools need an opportunity to understand college’s rigor and see what college life is like. Preparing students for the academic demands of college courses is important to helping students succeed. AP and concurrent enrollment courses offer college credit and challenge students the way college courses do. Many teachers in the GUAR schools do not have the training to teach AP courses, and rural GUAR schools offer fewer AP courses than schools in urban areas. GUAR will provide advanced instructional strategies and Advanced Placement professional development to increase teacher instructional rigor and offer more college preparatory classes. Professional development for educators will start with the 6th-8th grade teaching staff and move to content-specific training in the high schools as the two cohorts progress through the grant.

Need 2: Family engagement: Parental support to assist parents in being effective parent navigators so they can serve as advocates for their children's academic needs.

According to Heller (2019), affluent parents and low-income parents share different views on the roles of parents and school partnerships. Heller (2019) explained that all parents have high hopes for their children to do well in school, but they often have very different assumptions about what that looks like. The upper-middle-class parents tend to see education as a joint effort. Teachers do one part in the classroom, and the parents do the other at home. Parents that view the partnership through that lens often intentionally do activities at home to support the school. These types of parents read to their kids at bedtime, help them with their homework, and so on. Heller (2019) described this approach to parenting as “concerted cultivation”; they are aware of what is going on in their child’s classroom, often critical of the teachers, and will challenge issues they don’t like happening at school.

However, Heller explains that the poor and working-class parents thought they should defer to teachers' professional expertise (2019). They often operate from the belief that you shouldn't tell teachers how to teach. This type of parenting strategy is called "natural growth". As these parents see it, education is the school's responsibility, and it occurs in the classroom, not at home with the family. The school and home were separate domains (Heller, 2019). Often that belief is layered with internalized oppression, and parents doubt their abilities. This causes the parents to accept whatever the school is doing, even when their child and the system fail. During our financial aid parenting workshops, we will provide additional parental training to empower parents to be effective advocates for their children.

Need 3: Academic rigor: Students need exposure and access to and support with rigorous courses.

Colleges are the pipeline to good jobs and the middle class, yet a higher education degree remains out of reach for many students of color and students from low-income backgrounds. High college costs are a major factor (Levine & Butcher, 2022). However, the lack of access to advanced courses is another all-too-common barrier (Hein et al., 2013). Low socioeconomic and disadvantaged students generally attend high schools with fewer academic options that will mitigate the impact of their life circumstances (Morgan et al., 2018). The number and rigor of academic courses completed in high school are strong predictors of secondary and postsecondary attainment and success (Morgan et al., 2018). According to the U.S. Government Accountability 2018 report, public high schools in smaller schools provide fewer advanced-level academic offerings when compared to urban and suburban. This is absolutely the case for GUAR schools. Although all GUAR schools need increased rigor, the GUAR rural target schools have fewer AP course offerings than the GUAR urban target schools. The GUAR program will work with target school districts to expand the offering of AP courses in their high schools and give special attention to this issue and the challenges associated with being a rural school. GUAR will also work with school districts to offer dual credit courses for high school students and provide services to support students in these courses. According to Ann & Taylor (2019), dual credits offered in high-poverty schools provide a necessary additional pathway to college, and many of the students benefit from dual credit.

Need 4: Cultural Competence: Students need culturally competent teachers who understand diverse backgrounds, do not engage in deficit thinking, and do not make judgements about students and their families.

The most striking finding from Lareau's Unequal Childhood study regarding "concerted cultivation" vs. "normal growth" was the extent to which teachers tended to misread the working-class parents' motivations (Heller, 2019). If parents were relatively hands-off, it was because they respected the teacher's expertise and doubted their own abilities. But the teachers thought they were disinterested in their kids' education (Heller, 2019). This is a space where culturally responsive teaching is important. Both concerted cultivation and natural growth can provide classrooms with experiences that inform and enrich our lives in innumerable ways. All students bring funds of knowledge that should be considered when planning instruction. The issue is that many teachers assume their own experience of childhood was the normal and correct way to grow up and devalue experiences that do not resemble their own. Creating a platform of judgment and disconnects between the teacher and the students.

This platform of judgment and disconnect can lead to behaviors from teachers to students that fosters lower expectations and missed opportunities to engage all students in learning. Zhang et al. (2021) defined Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a scientifically valid instructional framework for guiding the design of learning environments that support all students. Implementing UDL often requires proactive considerations of learner variability and instructional designs that meet diverse student needs in a learning environment. According to Kieran & Anderson (2019), Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has provided educators with a framework for differentiation to address learner differences. Using UDL principles without explicitly considering how cultural differences and perspectives affect learning may increase the disparity in student achievement for students of color. We will engage teachers in UDL professional development, explicitly discussing various cultures to support instruction that addresses the differences in the classroom and foster learning for all learners.

Restorative justice in education is a practice that “empowers students to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups. Reimer (2020) argued that restorative justice policies in a school setting helped students make sense of complexity within their school lives, building a strong sense of individual and collective coherence within them. With a prevention and intervention focus, GUAR will provide teachers with professional development on restorative justice practices in schools. GUAR aims to transform how students and adults interact with one another within the GUAR school cohorts, thereby creating a more positive school climate that decreases the practice of out-of-school suspension.

The following section will address identified needs in Table 5 to address the primary college knowledge needs of disadvantaged individuals who struggle to plan, apply, and pay for college adequately.

GUAR defines disadvantaged individuals as individuals who face specific challenges compared to their peers (Hess, 2021). This includes students with disabilities, orphans, highly mobile students, students with mental health, low-income students, first-generation college students, and Black and Brown students. Although low income, first-generation college, and race are the obvious characteristics of disadvantaged individuals in our GUAR schools, we understand that other factors like highly mobile, disabilities, and mental health may impact our GUAR students. GUAR will listen and look for signs of various qualities that might disadvantage our students to provide support and meet their specific needs.

Table 5: College Knowledge Needs of Disadvantaged Individuals

Needs	Description
Need 1	College and career exploration: Students need exposure to higher education campuses, career exploration opportunities, and workforce development.
Need 2	College planning: Students and their parents need academic, career, and financial information and counseling to provide additional support as they plan for college.
Need 3	Financial aid: Students need funding to attend college.
Need 4	College peer mentors for cultural capital. Students need opportunities to grow cultural capital

Need 1: College and career exploration: Students need exposure to higher education campuses, career opportunities, and workforce development.

Students who may be unsure of their ability to succeed may harbor some fear about leaving their communities and attending college. To address this need, GUAR will provide exposure to higher education through college tours. According to Swanson et al. (2021), students who attend college tours exhibit higher levels of college knowledge, efficacy, and grit, as well as a higher likelihood of conversing with school personnel about college. Additionally, students are more likely to enroll in advanced science/social science courses (Swanson et al., 2021). Many college tours presently offered are not easily available to all students because they require parents to take them to the schools, and because many speak to a large group of students from various walks of life, they lack the infrastructure to make a lasting impression on students. Furthermore, the tours generally occur when a child is in high school, and by that time, many students have already decided that they will or will not attend college. We will provide tours starting in middle school and will continue through high school. We will work with colleges and plan visits specifically designed for our GUAR students so that the colleges and universities can speak directly to our GUAR students and their lived experiences.

Need 2: College planning: Students and their parents need academic, career, and financial planning, as well as advising to provide additional support as they plan for college.

Need 2 is directly related to the impact of systemic oppression as it relates to general wealth and financial planning. The net wealth of a typical Black family in America is around one-tenth that of a white family (Mineo, 2021). A 2018 analysis of U.S. incomes and wealth written by economists Moritz Kuhn, Moritz Schularick, and Ulrike Steins and published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis concluded, “The historical data also reveal that no progress has been made in reducing income and wealth inequalities between black and white households over the past 70 years.” GUAR schools are located in segregated low-income Black and Brown communities with limited educational attainment. According to the Arkansas and US Census, nationally 30.9 % of adults have bachelor's degrees. In Arkansas, that number decreases to 24.3%, and in the Arkansas delta, the location of six of our GUAR schools, the number declines to 12.2%. Limited educational attainment in a community leads to lower social and cultural capital, creating an environment where students and parents have less information about college and less belief that they can be successful in college (White & Dache, 2020). We will provide financial planning to support behaviors that will help close the generational wealth gap in communities Black and Brown communities. GUAR systems need resources and training to envision and construct a viable outreach program connecting the schools to students, parents/guardians, and community members.

Need 3: Financial aid: Students need funding to attend college.

Due to the rising cost of college tuition and inflation, families find it more difficult to pay for college. GUAR will set aside 50% of funds to help our GUAR students pay for college. According to Mitchell et al., (2019), deep state cuts in funding for higher education over the last decade have contributed to rapid, significant tuition increases and pushed more of the costs of

college to students, making it harder for them to enroll and graduate. These cuts also worsened racial and class inequality since rising tuition deters low-income students and students of color from college. Rising tuition threatens affordability and access, leaving many students and their families either saddled with onerous debt or unable to afford college altogether. This is especially true for students of color (who have historically faced large barriers to attending college), low-income students, and students from non-traditional backgrounds. Higher costs jeopardize not only the prospects of those individual students but also the outlook for whole communities, which increasingly rely on highly educated workforces to grow and thrive.

Need 4: College peer mentors for cultural capital.

Students need social relationships and role models/mentors that promote advanced classes and college. According to Richards (2022) critical and intentional mentoring impacts students, particularly underrepresented students, including black, indigenous, people of color, and low-income and first-generation college students. Mentoring helps students with their identity development and helps them with building social capital. Social capital theory is useful for identifying the key strategies of effective mentoring relationships, especially for underrepresented students (Mondisa, 2020). Social capital theory asserts that relationships are essential for providing the resources necessary to reach desired goals, especially in higher education (Mondisa, 2020). According to Beals (2021)) separate modes of mentoring impact students from underrepresented students in developing and activating social capital, developing collaborative support systems, fostering confidence and self-efficacy, combatting impostor syndrome and stereotype threat, and embracing the importance of failure in the scientific process. GUAR will provide effective peer-to-peer and adult-to-peer mentoring to the GUAR cohort students.

Section 2: Quality of the Project Design

In her seminal research, *Improving College Access and Completion for Low-Income and First-Generation Students: The Role of College Access and Success Programs*, Laura Perna wrote, “Adopting a multifaceted approach delivered by a team of college access professionals enhances college readiness for traditionally underserved students”, (Perna, 2015). To achieve this multifaceted approach, GUAR proposes using a project design, referred to as **GUAR College Ready Navigator**, that will use *human-centered design* (HCD) to ensure GUAR is engaging, hearing, and incorporating the voices of the communities GUAR has targeted for GEAR UP services. Supporting HCD, GUAR will employ *adaptive leadership strategies to create disruptive innovation* to address systemic oppressive practices within school systems that hinder the learning of disadvantaged students and students at risk of educational failure. By combining these two designs, GUAR students will be academically prepared for, have the aspirations to, and follow the steps to enroll and complete postsecondary education. The next sections provide additional insight into these two frameworks with supporting evidence supporting their rationale.

Human-Centered Design. Human-centered design (HCD), a problem-solving technique that puts real people at the center of the development process, enabling you to create services that resonate and are tailored to stakeholder’s needs (Harvard, 2020). The goal is to keep stakeholders’ wants, pain points, and preferences front of mind during every phase of the process. In turn, more intuitive, accessible services that are likely to meet the needs of participants will create long-term solutions because stakeholders have already vetted the solution

and feel more invested in using it. This human-centered design approach, paired with Adaptive Leadership and Disruptive Innovation, will provide the structure to serve the most under-resourced schools and students in the target region of Arkansas to establish parity with their higher-income peers in preparation for college and career.

HCD leverages the human perspective to solve problems and the HCD framework is a continuous process engaging stakeholders--students, families, educators, and industry--at every point in the process to identify the problem, understand it, develop solutions, and test them to

Figure 3: Human Centered Design

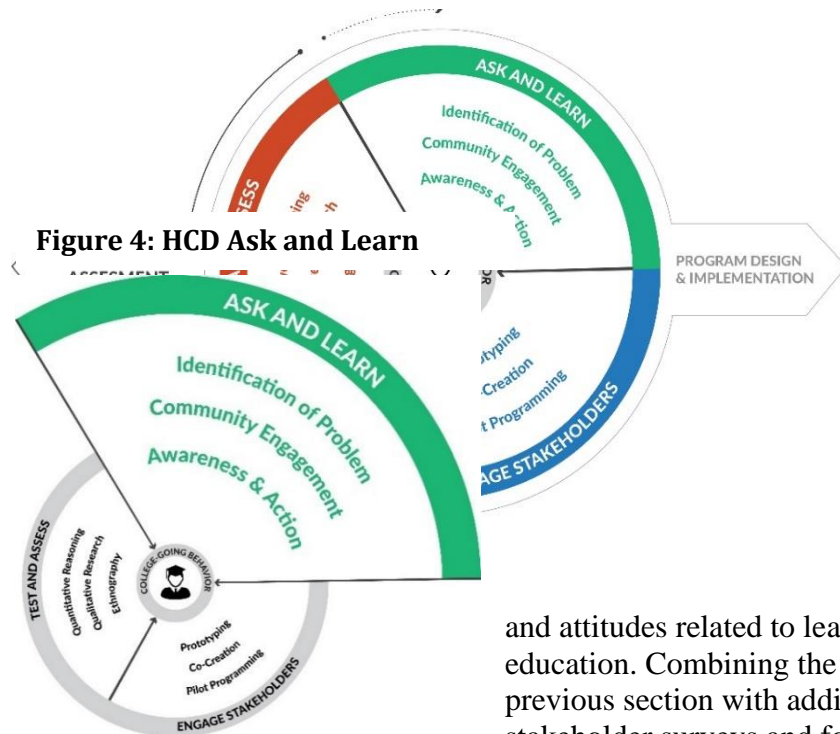


Figure 4: HCD Ask and Learn

inform future implementation. Formally, the steps in the HCD process are (Lieblich, 2021):

1. **Ask and Learn: Understanding stakeholder needs.** This step focuses on empathetically listening to and understanding the people and community who will benefit from the service. This step is critical and transforms the ability to meet participants' needs. GUAR will focus first on actively seeking out the perspectives of students and educators from the target schools to understand the needs, beliefs

and attitudes related to learning and postsecondary education. Combining the identified needs from the previous section with additional data collected through stakeholder surveys and focus groups during grant-year

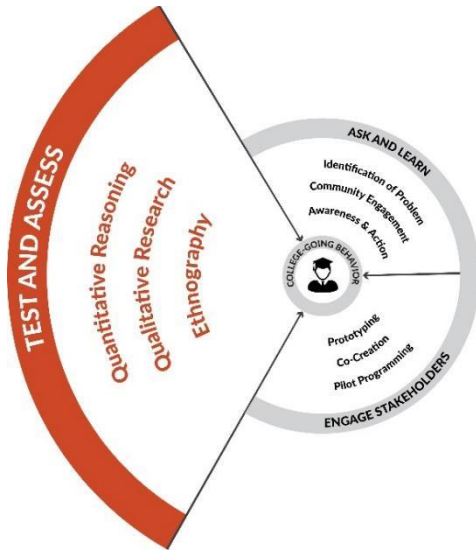
one, GUAR will effectively engage stakeholders to include a diversity of perspectives.

2. **Engage Stakeholders: Co-designing solutions to address needs.** This step requires a rigorous examination of the support students, and their families need to enroll and complete postsecondary education. GUAR will work with students, educators, and families to frame the issues and opportunities to co-create and design solutions for achieving objectives. Based on the identified needs, GUAR proposes a comprehensive suite of services to pilot and co-create with stakeholders. By seeking community engagement and including all stakeholders in the process of understanding their needs and co-designing solutions within the scope of the GUAR grant, efforts to engage all users will be strengthened. Messaging efforts to increase awareness and access to a college-going culture, while also actively requesting feedback

from these stakeholders, will strengthen the iterative nature of this HCD process and give voice to a diversity of perspectives.

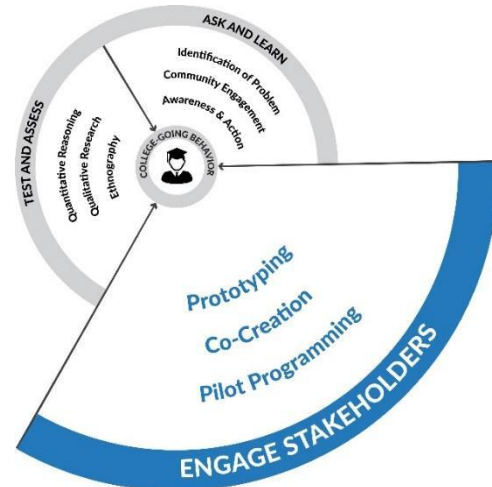
3. **Test and Assess: Iterative assessment to inform ongoing programming.** These solutions will undergo evaluation in an ongoing and iterative manner since issues and solutions may

Figure 6: HCD Test and Assess



arise after initial program

Figure 5: HCD Engage Stakeholders



implementation. By establishing milestones and continuous feedback channels, GUAR can ensure that the partner and community efforts implemented have a high chance of success and sustainability. GUAR will use the

iterative approach described in the previous step to continuously improve, test, and scale up services, messaging, and engagement efforts.

Adaptive Leadership and Disruptive Innovation. A disruption is a sudden change from normalized processes. The term *disruptive innovation*, initially coined by Harvard Business Professor Clayton Christensen, refers to innovations that challenge established norms to improve upon them in keeping up with changes over time. According to Horn & Staker (2017), disruptive innovations in education aim to identify proactive approaches to changing school systems in positive ways that include all students in the learning process. Horn & Staker (2017) discussed the importance of using disruptive innovation to improve schools. Systemic change is a complex process, particularly when the change involves different perspectives and requires significant shifts in perceptions and mindsets (Green & Nadelson, 2020). Because of the systemic oppressive issues in the educational system that involve race and income, disruptive innovation must be implemented to ensure equitable change and disrupt the normalized process of failing low-income students who are often Black and Brown. Schlechty (2009) maintains that disrupting a system requires changing the organization's operational and social systems. Operating systems are the interrelated processes that define how tasks are carried within an organization. Social systems are the relatively permanent and predictable set of relationships that define the behavior of those within an organization. When you can predict academic outcomes based on the relationship between race, income, or academics, the organization has a social system problem.

Qadach et al. (2022) supported the importance of educational leaders addressing operational and social systems in their discussion of planning, performing, monitoring, and self-reflection in effective school reform. Education leaders must have the skillset to change both operational and social systems, which require different strategies. Oftentimes operational problems can be

resolved with technical solutions; however, social problems need adaptive solutions. GUAR will help GUAR school leaders and teachers disrupt failing systems by providing educators the capacity to make changes to both operational and social through adaptive leadership techniques. Leaders who can implement adaptive leadership techniques know when to use technical strategies and when to use adaptive strategies. According to Bagwell (2020), many educational leaders can't make substantial changes because they use a technical solution for an adaptive problem. You cannot solve an adaptive social problem with an operational technical solution. Many of the issues failing high-poverty schools face or social systems issues with adaptive challenges. The table below outlines the differences between technical and adaptive challenges.

Table 6: Technical and Adaptive Challenges

Technical Challenge	Adaptive Challenge
Easy to identify	Difficult to identify but easy to deny
Quick and easy solutions	Requires changes in values, beliefs, and approaches to work
Require small changes within known boundaries.	Require a lot of change across many, sometimes unknown boundaries.
Can be solved by an expert or “authority”	Solved by people within the program
Solutions can be implemented quickly	No quick fixes, requires constant experimentation.

Disruptive innovation is also described as making a product or service accessible to a broader range of the market (Horn & Staker, 2017). GUAR is doing just that, making the difficult tasks of navigating the path to college accessible and user-friendly through the implementation of the human-centered design approach.

This HCD framework has been used to establish GUAR needs, services, and the overall management and evaluation of the proposed GUAR grant. Equally important is the framework used over the 7-year grant project period to solve problems bound to occur that we have not yet been able to consider. Combining HCD and Adaptive Leadership and Disruptive Innovation provides a framework to implement and assess services resulting from the available research.

Taking into consideration local context follows the recommendation of Perna (2015) to enhance college readiness for traditionally underserved students by adopting a multifaceted approach delivered by a team of college access professionals. Perna also reports that successful college access programs should adapt the delivery of services in response to the state, regional, and local contexts in which the programs are embedded. Additionally, the characteristics of state policies pertaining to high school graduation and assessment requirements especially influence success, as do the higher education options available in those contexts. Therefore, considering the local context, the specific needs of the target region, and the state of Arkansas, GUAR brings purposeful services that address the needs of students, increases the academic preparation, college aspirations and expectations, and knowledge of the steps needed to apply to, pay for, and successfully complete postsecondary education. The **GUAR College Ready Navigator** design ensures that systemic change will include disruptive innovation and a process for articulating problems, identifying solutions, and assessing those solutions through HCD such that GUAR students (and their families) will gain the knowledge, tools, resources, and academic preparation

necessary to enroll and complete postsecondary education, bringing increased economic development to these communities.

GUAR College Ready Navigator Design. GUAR will implement a cohort model with a scholarship component providing services to reach students in 15 target, high-needs, rural school districts beginning in year one (see Table 7). The GUAR College Ready Navigator includes a total annual budget of \$4,241,056, with 50% or \$2,120,528 for direct services and 50% dedicated to a GEAR UP scholarship to every student attending postsecondary education. During the seven-year project period, an average of 3,467 students will be served at an average annual cost of **\$612 per student**, in addition to a GEAR UP scholarship. Scholarships will vary depending on the institution students choose to attend and will adhere to legislative stipulations that the minimum scholarship must be minimum Pell (roughly \$748) and the maximum scholarship cannot exceed the total cost of attendance. The reduced number of students served in Grant Year (GY) 7 reflects the estimated number of students attending an institution of higher education based on current postsecondary data. GUAR and grant partners will serve the remaining cohort of students through twelfth grade.

Table 7: GUAR Grades and Number of Students Served

GRADE	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6	YEAR 7
6th Grade	1589						
7th Grade	1878	1589					
8th Grade		1878	1589				
9th Grade			1878	1589			
10th Grade				1878	1589		
11th Grade					1878	1589	
12th Grade						1878	1589
1st Year PSE							789
Total Students Served	3467	3467	3467	3467	3467	3467	2378

2.1 The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable

To address the needs of students, families, and schools in the target region, the **GUAR College Ready Navigator** project design establishes a framework for identifying problems, co-designing solutions and continuously assessing the effectiveness of the solutions. Based on the identified needs GUAR adopted the policy recommendations of Page and Scott-Clayton (2015) National Bureau of Economic Research paper, *Improving College Access in the United States: Barriers and Policy Responses*. This working paper identifies **academic preparation, aspirations and expectations, and steps for college entry** as priority areas for state and national policy to address to decrease the barriers to postsecondary enrollment and successful college completion. These priorities align directly with the objectives of the GEAR UP program and form the basis for GUAR services.

The GUAR project includes the three GEAR UP objectives, (1) to increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of participating students; (2) to increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education of participating students; and (3) to increase education expectations for participating students and increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing. Additionally, the performance measures directly aligned with the GUAR design, which are outlined in Table 8. Each performance indicator has baseline data sourced from the Arkansas Education Department and publicly available through the school report cards found here, <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/SRC>. For performance measures that do not have baseline data, data will be collected through surveys or the academic performance of students to report in year one of the U.S. Department of Education annual performance report. Performance measures include the federally required Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures, as well as measures related to the GUAR project design which were developed as a result of the identified needs of the target schools, students, and families. Data sources for each performance measure are included below the chart. These indicators provide a periodic assessment of progress toward achieving project objectives. Data will be collected every 9-week grading period and housed within a web-based student-level data tracking system, Performance Insights (Pi), for each of the performance measures (PMs) to meet GEAR UP APR reporting requirements and frame a rigorous evaluation.

Table 8: GUAR GPRA Indicators and Performance Measures

GUAR Design	Performance Measures	GUAR Outcomes	Baseline	Goal
Federally Required				
Academic preparation	1. The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Algebra I or its equivalent by the end of 9 th grade (GPRA 1)	Increase by 10 percentage points annually GEAR UP students who pass Algebra I by the end of 9 th grade	Year 1*	Year 1
Steps for college entry	2. The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school (GPRA 2)	The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school will increase by five percentage points by year 7.	84.9%	89.9%
Steps for college entry	3. The percentage of GEAR UP students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). (GPRA 3)	At least 75% of students will complete the FAFSA in years 6 and 7.	49.1%	75%

College aspirations and expectations	4. The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who enroll in postsecondary education. (GPRA 4)	The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who enroll in postsecondary education will increase by 5% annually in years 6 and 7.	42.1%	52.1%
College aspirations and expectations	5. The percentage of GEAR UP students who persist into year two of postsecondary education.	The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who persist into year two of postsecondary education will increase by 5% percentage points by year 7.	69.9%	74.9%
All	6. Assess the efficiency of the program, track the average cost, in Federal funds, of achieving a successful outcome. (Required Outcome)	Success is defined as enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an IHE of GEAR UP students immediately after high school graduation.	Year 6	Year 6
Design Specific: College Ready Navigator				
Academic preparation	7. The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate high school 'college ready' - they meet the minimum requirement to attend an Arkansas University system school.	60% Cohort students will meet the minimum requirements for admission to Arkansas University System schools by year 6	Year 1	60%
Academic preparation	8. The percentage of GEAR UP students who use assessments to decrease remediation in college.	As a result of identifying students early and providing remediation in high school, the remediation rate will decrease to a range of 60-80% beginning in year 6	92.6% of students require remediation	60-80%
College aspirations and expectations	9. The percentage of GEAR UP families and schools who develop a college-going culture	85% of parents and 80% of teachers will report they expect students to attend postsecondary education by year 4	Year 1	85%/80%

Steps for college entry	10. The percentage of GEAR UP students who know and execute the steps to apply for college	75% of cohort students will apply to a postsecondary institution that has been identified as a match for their academics and interest	Year 1	75%
Steps for college entry	11. The percentage of GEAR UP families who know and execute the steps to apply for the FAFSA	75% of cohort students will apply for financial aid beyond the FAFSA application	Year 1	75%
Steps for college entry	12. The percentage of GEAR UP students who know and execute the steps to apply for the FAFSA	75% of cohort students will apply for financial aid beyond the FAFSA application	Year 1	75%
Steps for college entry	13. The percentage of GEAR UP families who understand financial literacy to help close the wealth gap.	80% of families and students will report knowledge of financial literacy	Year 1	80%
Steps for college entry	14. The percentage of GEAR UP students who understand financial literacy to help close the wealth gap.	80% of families and students will report knowledge of financial literacy	Year 1	80%

*Arkansas does not currently have an End of Year Algebra 1 exam, but will begin assessing during the 2023-2024 school year. We will use the results to set our baseline in year 1.

(Data Sources: ADHE, 2022; Anderson, 2023; Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2021; Data Insight Partners, 2022; Division of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2021)

2.2 The extent to which the proposed project demonstrates a rationale

GUAR’s **College Ready Navigator** design approach will shape the rationale of the implementation of GU services that address the needs in the target region. These GUAR services are designed to help students increase their (1) academic preparation (Morgan et al., 2018), (2) aspirations and expectations for graduating high school and enrolling in college (Swanson et. al, 2021), and (3) steps for college entry (White & Dache, 2020). **Table 9** provides an overview of these evidence-based GUAR services that align to the local needs, College Ready Navigator design, and theory of change which are depicted in the logic model.

The rationale of the GUAR project is strengthened by the evidence-based design approach and GEAR UP services that will be implemented. The GUAR project is based on the NBER working paper, *Improving College Access in the United States: Barriers and Policy Responses*, (Page, Scott-Clayton, 2015), highlighting that access to higher education is a continued challenge for many students who encounter barriers in relation to academics and

information needed to access postsecondary opportunities. This NBER working paper is used specifically because it is intended to support state policy, as a state GEAR UP grant, GUAR intends to provide a suite of services that will increase postsecondary enrollment and through the evaluation will inform the future policy direction of Arkansas to support students and families across the state. Table 9 provides additional details on the connection between the GUAR design components, evidence-based recommendations and how the GUAR program will implement services based on evidence-based research. Most sources were acquired through What Works Clearinghouse with overall positive effects. Although the policy recommendations are dated from 2015, they continue to be relevant for the target schools in Arkansas. The design is bolstered by updated research that supports each of the services as outlined in the overall Project Design section under the Exceptional Approach subsection (pg. 34).

Table 9: Rationale of Evidence-Based GUAR College Ready Navigator Services

GUAR Design	Program Component / GUAR Service	What Works Clearinghouse
Academic preparation	<p>Rigorous academic curriculum, including dual enrollment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer advice on courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work, and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade 	Allensworth et al. (2008); Attewell and Domina (2008); Dougherty, Mellor, and Jian (2006); Hargrove, Godin, and Dodd (2008); Jeong (2009); Keng and Dodd (2008); Giani, et al. (2014) Morgan et al., (2018)
College aspirations and expectations	<p>College-Going Culture, Mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surround students with adults and peers to build and support their college-going aspirations 	Swanson et. al, 2021 Career Beginnings—Cave and Quint (1990); Puente—Gandara (2002); Sponsor-a-Scholar— Johnson (1998).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide mentoring for students by recent high school graduates who enrolled in college or other college-educated adults ● Connect students to peers who plan to attend college for peer mentoring ● Provide career exploration via hands-on opportunities for students to explore, and advise/counsel students on aligning their postsecondary plans with career aspirations 	
Steps for college	<p>Counseling/Advising, College Visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry ● Counsel/advice students in their college search and in completing applications ● Coordinate college visits ● Via messaging platform offering college advising info 	<p>EXCEL—Bergin, Cooks, and Bergin (2007); Career Beginnings—Cave and Quint (1990); Talent Search—Constantine et al. (2006); Sponsor-a-Scholar—Johnson (1998); QOP—Schirm, Stuart, and McKie (2006); Upward Bound—Seftor, Mamun, and Schirm (2009).</p> <p>Castleman, B. et al. (2014) White & Dache (2020)</p>
Steps for college	<p>Financial Aid Workshops</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase families’ financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid ● Organize workshops for parents and students to inform them prior to 12th grade about college affordability, scholarship and aid sources, and financial aid processes ● Help students and parents compete financial aid forms (FAFSA) prior to eligibility deadlines 	<p>FAFSA Experiment—Bettinger et al. (2009); Talent Search—Constantine et al. (2006). White & Dache (2020)</p>

The GUAR design is based on research-based practices to produce a strong theory, demonstrating a rationale and evidence of promise. The GUAR **logic model**, outlined in Figure 7 on page 33, is a linear illustration of the intended outcomes and the related inputs/outputs tracked to measure effectiveness as it relates to the target region’s need and research-based design and services. The approach for GUAR’s educational logic model is derived from two main sources, the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance and the Institute of Education Sciences and research by Catherine Cooper showing how educational alliances used Integrated Logic Models to advance coherent and sustainable research, practice, and evaluation towards educational equity for students and systems. Integrated Logic Models unify programs into a single logic model, including social science theories and research evidence to design activities for building student and system-level equity or also known as a **Theory of Action**.

The **GUAR College Ready Navigator** conceptual framework, or logic model, (Figure 7) is centered on addressing the stated need: *Students are at risk of not being academically prepared for, not aspiring to go, and not being able to navigate the complex path to enroll and complete college*. To address this, GUAR will implement a theory of action based on Human

Centered Design (HCD) and disruptive innovation as a framework to ensure stakeholders are participants of every stage of GUAR to help students navigate the path to college.

Dual Enrollment. In order to demonstrate a rationale, GUAR will increase access to dual enrollment, a project component, to produce the relevant outcomes of postsecondary access, enrollment, first-to-second year persistence, and eventual degree attainment. The dual enrollment intervention positively related to every post-secondary outcome (postsecondary access, first-to-second year persistence, and eventual degree attainment) regardless of how the outcome was defined or what sample was used for the analysis (Lee et al., 2022, Giani et al, 2014). The following study, reviewed by the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC), was found to have promising evidence, which includes demonstrating a rationale, and will be used as part of the GUAR of action in supporting students in their postsecondary endeavors:

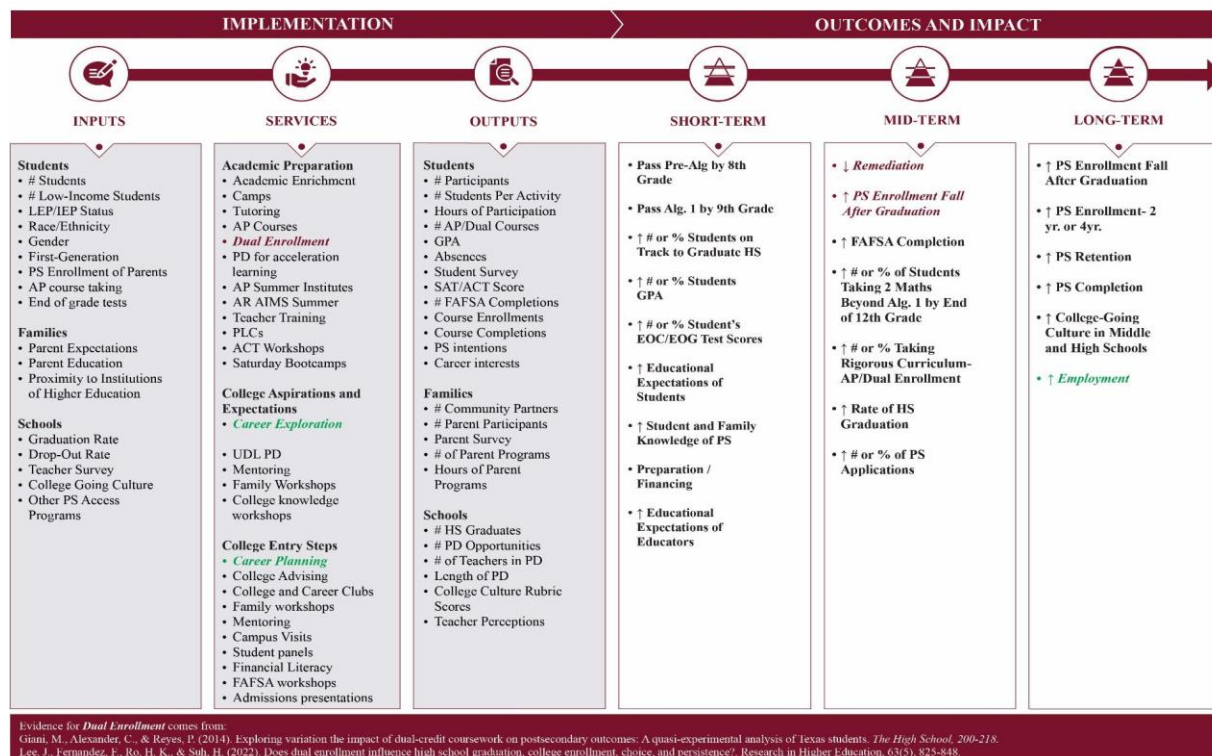
Lee, J., Fernandez, F., Ro, H. K., & Suh, H. (2022). Does dual enrollment influence high school graduation, college enrollment, choice, and persistence?. *Research in Higher Education*, 63(5), 825-848.

Giani, M., Alexander, C., & Reyes, P. (2014). Exploring Variation in the Impact of Dual- Credit Coursework on Postsecondary Outcomes: A Quasi-Experimental Analysis of Texas Students. *The High School Journal*, 97(4), 200-218. doi: 10.1353/hsj.2014.0007

Logic Model- Figure 7

Theory of Action:

Human-centered design (HCD) will ensure GUAR is engaging, hearing, and incorporating the voices of the identified communities to develop and implement relevant and meaningful services to increase postsecondary enrollment and completion



2.3 The extent to which the proposed project represents an exceptional approach

Project services were designed using the principles of Human Centered Design (HCD): **Engaging Stakeholders** to co-create services that meet specific needs of each community and school as well as meet the requirements of the GU application including comprehensive mentoring, outreach, and supportive services to students to increase the percentage of students taking rigorous courses that reflect challenging academic standards and reduce the need for remedial education at the postsecondary level, increase the percentage of secondary school completion, then test and assess efforts continuously to inform program improvements. In addition to academic preparation and access to funding, comprehensive college access and success programs should ensure that students and families have sufficient understanding of college-related requirements and processes, make appropriate college-related choices, and can navigate the complex pathways associated with higher education institutions (Perna, 2015). All services fall under either required or permissible services as required by the U.S.

Department of Education, GU legislation (404D(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA) (20 U.S.C. 1070a–24(a)).

Navigating the Path to College: An Exceptional Approach. The evidence-based recommendations in the NBER working paper, *Improving College Access in the United States: Barriers and Policy Responses*, (Page, Scott-Clayton, 2015) highlights that access to higher education is a continued challenge for many students who encounter barriers and are at-risk of educational failure. The GUAR project design will implement these evidence-based strategies aligned to the GUAR needs, GEAR UP services and performance measures to support students, organizing services in the following three categories: (1) Academic preparation (Morgan et al., 2018), (2) College aspirations and expectations (Swanson et. al, 2021), and (3) Steps for college entry (White & Dache, 2020).

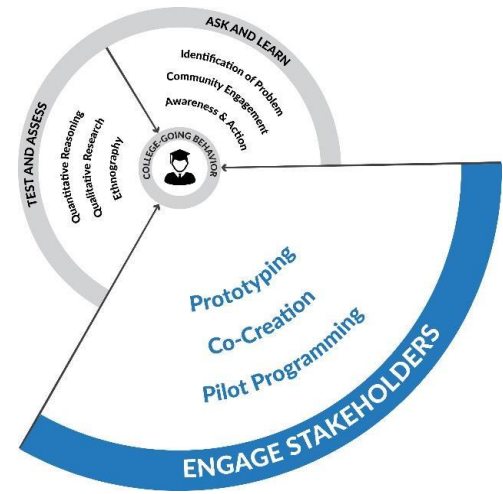
GUAR will provide multiple project components that support the project’s design, goals, objectives and seek to fill the gaps in infrastructure, resources, services, and opportunities that were previously discussed. Each project component is specifically designed to meet the needs for the underserved populations of the GUAR schools and will occur in various phases of the grant over a time period of seven years. To address CPP2, career exploration and planning are highlighted in green. The charts connect the design, project services, CPP2, project year(s), and involved partners (see logic model on p. 33 for connections between services and outcomes).

GUAR Objective 1: Academic Preparation. Table 10 outlines the project components aligned with objective one. The partners that will participate in the activities to meet this objective are Cambridge Educational Services, College Prep Associates, and AR AIMS.

Table 10: Objective 1: Services, Project Year, and Description

GUAR Design 1: Academic Preparation		
Offer courses and curricula that prepare students for college-level work and ensure that students understand what constitutes a college-ready curriculum by 9th grade.		
GUAR HCD Co-Created Service	Project Years	Description
Academic Enrichment Summer Camps (AR AIMS and College Prep Associates)	1-7	attend on-campus summer camps highlighting academic enrichment aligned with core subject areas, civic engagement, inquiry-based learning, team building, time management, cultural awareness, digital literacy and 21 st century skills (students)
Tutoring Programs-College Prep Associates	1-7	attend tutoring sessions in various core subject areas to obtain research-based tips and strategies to improve student performance (students)

Figure 8 HCD: Engaging Stakeholders



AP & Dual Enrollment Courses	3-7	obtain enrollment criteria and potentially enroll in advanced placement or dual enrollment courses from in-state IHEs (parents & students)
Book Studies and PD discussing the difference between remediation and acceleration to help students who are behind.	1-7	read, analyze, discuss in an online format strategies and interventions to core subject areas. Teachers will examine the difference between remediation and acceleration in supporting students to reach objectives and goals of the grant (teachers)
AP and Pre-AP Summer Institutes	1-7	attend collaborative multi-day trainings with a focus on content of core subject areas, critical thinking, problem solving, inquiry-based learning, and civic engagement (teachers)
AR AIMS Teacher Trainings/Workshops	1-7	attend trainings with a focus on increased rigor in core subject areas, effective learning strategies, methods, and objectives and goals of the grant (teachers)
Teacher Leadership and Capacity Building Workshops	1-7	participate in interactive conversations with guest speakers on topics related to academic project objectives, goals, and needs addressed by the grant (teachers)
Professional Learning Communities (PLUs)	1-7	work in small and large groups to successfully collaborate on development of Saturday Trainings/Workshops, Summer Institutes, Online Book Studies, and other activities embedded in the grant for students and their families as aligned with project objectives, goals, and gaps addressed (teachers)
ACT Test Preparation-Cambridge Educational Service	3-7	use preparatory materials and interactive workshops with a focus on achieving success on the ACT College Readiness Assessment (students)
AR AIMS Saturday Boot Camps	2-7	participate in summer programming designed to meet students' holistic needs and empower students to become lifelong learners through relationship-building and project-based academic learning in Math and English (students)

GUAR Objective 2: College Aspirations and Expectations. Table 11 outlines the services that align with objective two. The partners that will participate in the activities for this objective are National Math and Science Institute, Cambridge Educational Services, College Prep Associates, Philander Smith College, AAIMS, and Arkansas Imagination Library.

Table 11: Objective 2: Services, Project Year, and Description

GUAR Design 2: College Aspirations and Expectations Surround students with adults and peers of build and support their college-going aspirations		
GUAR Service	Project Years	Description
UDL and Restorative Practice Professional Development	1-7	Attend restorative practice training to examine discipline patterns in the schools to transform teacher-student relationship to achieve equity in school discipline. (teachers and students)
Mentoring Programs-College Prep Associates	1-7	participate in mentor programs highlighting the importance of academic success, career options and exploration , and postsecondary education (students)
Parental Involvement and Family Support Workshops and Program	1-7	informative workshops providing ways in which parents may establish or increase involvement for the purpose of their child(ren)'s success in school (parents)
Workshops with Statewide Colleges and Universities	1-7	interactive workshops with guest speakers who will provide engaging and interactive discussions on social and academic topics related to postsecondary education with a focus on objectives, goals, needs addressed, and career exploration (parents & students)
College and Career Clubs (CCC)	1-7	CCC programming spans grades 7 through 12 that follows a scope and sequence of grade-level college and career readiness standards. CCC curriculum contains sequenced lessons and activities to develop knowledge and skills related to topics including college and career preparation and leadership development.

Objective 3: College Entry Steps. Table 12 outlines the services that align with objective three. The partners that will participate in the activities for this objective are Arkansas Advanced Initiative in Math and Science, Cambridge Educational Services, Camp College, and the University of Central Arkansas admission and financial aid office.

Table 12: Objective 3: Services, Project Year, and Description

GUAR Design: College Entry Steps Engage and assist students in completing critical steps for college entry Increase families' financial awareness, and help students apply for financial aid		
GUAR Service	Project Years	Description
College Advising	1-7	participate in individual and group college-advising sessions with a trained counselor; individually review transcripts, test scores, and resumes to craft effective college-access action plans; in groups, participate in sessions: HS transition, define success, study skills, self-advocacy, and summer heat (students)
Parental Involvement Workshops and Family Support Programs	1-7	attend informative workshops on ways to support their child(ren)'s success in school with a focus on the program objectives, goals, and gaps addressed (parents)
Mentoring Programs	1-7	participate in skillfully designed mentor programs highlighting the importance of academic success, career planning , and postsecondary education including Success Coach peer mentors from local colleges (students)
Campus Visits	2-7	visit various college campuses in order to gain familiarity with and pose relevant questions regarding career planning to hosting faculty and staff about postsecondary environments (students)
First Generation College Student Panels	2-7	attend panel sessions led by former and current first-generation college students who will discuss authentic experiences and clarify misconceptions (parents & students)

Family Engagement and Financial Aid Workshops	1-7	attend informative workshops on financial assistance, scholarships and grants, and advice on completing college admission forms (parents and students)
Workshops from Statewide Colleges and Universities	1-7	participate in conversations with guest speakers who will provide engaging and interactive discussions on social and academic topics related to postsecondary education with a focus on objectives, goals, and gaps addressed (parents and students)

Specific programming and activities have been created to guide and direct the efforts of full implementation of GUAR. The following list and Table 13 detail the plan for oversight to ensure the project tasks and objectives are on time and within budget.

Table 13: Implementation and on-Going Timeline

Start Up Milestones	Key Personnel	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul
Start-up Kit Training with all partners	PI, PD, RPD, DOC	•	•										
Hire Staff/Coordinators	PI, PD, RPD	•	•										
Finance/Data Trainings	PL,PD, BM, RPD,DC	•			•			•			•		
Establish Local Advisory Councils	PD, RPD, DOC	•	•										
Establish Work Plan (WP)	PD, RPD, DOC, DC	•	•	•	•								
Partner Development	PL,PD,RPD	•	•										
Begin Grant-Wide Services	All		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Begin Local School Services	PD, RPD, DC,SC				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Development of survey instruments	EF, PD, RPD,DC		•	•	•								
Ongoing Implementation													
Advisory Council Meetings	All	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Annual Audit	PI, PD, EE, RPD, BM					•	•	•					
APR and Evaluation	PI, PD, EE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Coordinator/Finance MAP	PI PD, BM,			•							•		
Data Report Analysis	PL,PD, EE,RPD,DC	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
External Evaluators	PL, PD, EE	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Partner Communication	PL,PD, RPD,SC	•		•		•		•		•		•	
Reimbursement Meeting	PD, BC, DC,RPD, A	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Reimbursements	PD, BC, DC,A	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Staff Meetings	ALL, Central Office	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Sub-Contracts	PD, BM, DC, RPD, A												•
WP Development/Approval	PI, PD, RPD, DC,										•	•	•
PI= Principal Investigator, PD = Project Director, BM=Business Manager, RD=Regional Program Director, DOC= Dean of College, EE= External Evaluator, DC-Coordinator, SC-School Coordinator, A-Adm. Assistant													

The GUAR project is strengthened by the evidence-base of the design and the use of the NBER working paper, *Improving College Access in the United States: Barriers and Policy Responses*, (Page, Scott-Clayton, 2015), as an organizing framework for the implementation of services resulting in an exceptional approach for meeting the purposes and requirements of the GEAR UP grant as outlined in the published RFP. Access to higher education is a continued challenge for many students who encounter barriers in relation to academics and information needed to access postsecondary opportunities. This NBER working paper is used specifically because it is intended to support state policy, as a state GEAR UP grant, GUAR intends to provide a suite of services that will increase postsecondary enrollment and through the evaluation will inform the future policy direction of Arkansas to support students and families.

2.4 How the applicant will ensure that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the operation of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate

A tenet of Human Centered Design (HCD) is that diverse perspectives, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging result in a thriving community. Based on the GUAR design using HCD principles, the recipients of services are always at the center, providing feedback to drive processes including management, implementation and evaluation of services. *The Field Guide to Human Centered Design* by IDEO.org will serve as a resource in the on-going management of GUAR, providing guidance and hands-on learning for both administrators, practitioners, students, and families (2015). The HCD approach utilizes empathy as a core component of designing for diverse perspectives, especially when recruiting people to be involved. They propose specifically planning for and recruiting a “balance of experts and laymen, women and men, people of different ethnicities and classes, as well as a full range of behaviors, beliefs, and perspectives” to ensure a diversity of perspectives. This can be done when hiring, forming committees, outreach, partnerships with the community, and providing opportunities to students.

For administrators, the Field Guide to HCD outlines ways to recruit diverse perspectives through group and individual interviews when hiring and forming teams/plans, considering the whole team/plan and not just the individual. When considering how to craft a diversity of perspectives, demographics can be considered in addition to weaknesses and areas of improvement within the team as it relates to the goals, in this case GEAR UP implementation and management. Recruiting for diversity of skills and perspectives will ensure a robust implementation of the grant. HCD provides a lens of ensuring accessibility to and intention towards services for a diversity of participants. Considering cultural comfortability of individuals and groups can aid in designing services to be impactful and effective to everyone, especially the target demographics of GEAR UP recipients, specifically students and their families.

The community at large likely has a variety of individuals and organizations that bring a diversity of people, services, and perspectives to the table. HCD impacts this by providing a framework for recruiting, vetting, inviting, and evaluating partners. The guide outlines steps for recruiting and determining usefulness of partners, considering the unique perspectives and the subsequent roles they fill, in order to maximize successful outcomes in terms of diversity goals/intentions and how that bolsters the efforts of the grant. To provide **outreach** to the community and foster a college-going culture, GUAR will implement local GU Advisory Councils in each middle and high school in the target region inclusive of critical stakeholders, often faith-based and business leaders, elders, and others who can work with students, family members, and educators. These local GU Advisory Councils will develop,

reinforce, and promote community-wide messages aligned with the GUAR design to provide a college path for all youth.

Additionally, Vela Institute, the external evaluator, has designed and will implement Evidence-Based Practices, a framework for decision-making. Critical to the framework is a focus on equity and self-awareness, ensuring administrators are aware of bias and stereotypes. Part of the on-going training for GUAR staff, stakeholders and schools will be the use of evidence-based practices including ways to become more aware of bias as well as ways to diminish them.

Section 3: Adequacy of Resources

The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization and the relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project

Arkansas has the expertise, infrastructure, and institutional knowledge to successfully launch and implement GUAR 2023-2030 and commits the needed resources to provide the robust leadership necessary to successfully administer, implement, achieve, and sustain the far-reaching and bold goals of this project. The University of Central Arkansas has a long history of providing college access programming and scholarships across the state. It is strategically positioned to implement a successful grant with documented outcomes through collaboration with statewide partners, partner schools, and service partners who all share the goal of improving postsecondary outcomes. The grant will aid in strengthening the existing network of resources in addition to efficient delivery, ensuring a future for students that includes all the opportunities that a postsecondary education can provide. A combination of local, regional, statewide, national, and private-sector partners brings rich resources to the project including STEM programming, dual enrollment, career/college exploration, professional development, mentoring, and logistical resources to overcome barriers including transportation, facilities, and personnel. The robust resources in the state and LEAs set a strong foundation for a robust GEAR UP grant with lasting, sustainable impact and reform.

University of Central Arkansas Commitment. The University of Central Arkansas was founded in 1907 with the purpose of properly training students to become professional teachers. Since 1907, UCA has been the primary source of teachers in Arkansas. Because of that teaching history, UCA is respected by Arkansas K12 systems and is seen as a leader in teacher preparation and teacher professional development. UCA is the ideal fiscal agent for GEAR UP because of its rich history and respect for preparing teachers. Additionally, UCA has shown commitment to helping at-risk college students succeed and pursue funding to support that commitment. UCA is currently successfully managing two TRIO grants: Upward Bound and a Strengthening Institutions Program.

UCA will continue that commitment to disadvantaged and at-risk students through GUAR. They will provide workspace and telephones for the PI, project director, business coordinator, area coordinators, and administrative assistant. Office space costs will be in-kind and reflected on the cost share form. UCA will provide equipment, materials, supplies, and other resources needed by Dr. Parham, the principal investigator. UCA will provide space at a discounted rate for summer camps, Super Saturdays, teacher professional development, and other workshops for staff and students to host GUAR events and activities. The GUAR schools will provide office space, technical equipment, materials, and supplies for the district and school

coordinator. School districts will also provide buses for Super Saturdays and summer camps. Partner financial commitments are outlined in the Partner Cost Share Worksheets.

GUAR has a rich network of partners to collaborate with to provide a wide array of resources and expertise for students, families, and educators to maximize the effectiveness of project services. **Commitments of GUAR Partners to the Project:**

Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AR AIMS). The Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, Inc. (AR AIMS), an affiliate of the National Math and Science Initiative and created in 2008 with ten high schools, now has over 100 partner high and middle schools. The overall goals of AR AIMS are to increase student access and enrollment in Advanced Placement (AP®), accelerated/advanced grades 6-10, and advanced level STEM classes for grades 6-12, especially for the underserved and lower socioeconomic students in Arkansas to ensure student preparedness for the rigor and expectations of the advanced classes, colleges, technical schools, and careers. AR AIMS desires to increase the pass-rate numbers of AP math, science, and English AP Exam scores for AP-level students and standardized test scores for students in grades 6-12.

AR AIMS provides enhanced AP®, advanced, and on-level teacher support and training to improve the quality of teacher instruction and teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The student success that has resulted from the AR AIMS experiences is determined each year by an increase in students taking the advanced classes, taking the AP exams, and scoring a score of three or higher on AP® math, science, and English as well as increased performance on the ACT Aspire. In fact, since 2008, the advances made by participation in AR AIMS have impacted over 100 Arkansas high and middle schools.

The requested funding would provide AR AIMS Partnerships to GUAR-targeted schools beginning in 6th grade and following students through 12th grade. Ensuring that teachers are more effective using an aligned curriculum will enhance the effectiveness of student learning. AR AIMS will provide the following:

- On-going support, guidance, and resources to teachers to enhance teacher effectiveness
- Support and guidance to administration and counselors
- Mentoring support for students through Super Saturdays and Summer Boot Camp
- Intensive Content Mentoring Services for Teachers in Math, Science, and English
- Professional Development for teachers in the area of rigor and Advanced Placement
- Curriculum Resources aligned with ADE Standards
- Regional Super Saturday for students to engage in college campus visits and exposure to rigorous content sessions
- Partner Schools will receive six on-site mentoring support visits for mentoring, counseling, modeling, observing, conferencing, resources, support/curriculum, alignment

Summer Camps - While the cohort is in grades 6 to 8, extensive summer programming that aims to meet students' holistic needs and empower students to become lifelong learners will be provided. Emphasis will be placed on relationship building and community while also incorporating project-based academic learning in Math and English.

Summer Workshops - While the cohort is in grades 9 and 10, shorter summer programming centered around transitioning to high school and preparing for success will be a priority. Emphasis will still be placed on relationship building and community, but we will transition to focus on career exploration and standardized testing subject areas.

Cambridge Educational Services (CES). CES provides data, training, materials, licenses, and support for college readiness, core skill-building, and ACT and PSAT preparation courses in grades 7-13. This organization supports GUAR to implement moderate evidence in the recommendation of the WWC Clearinghouse. Cambridge has committed to providing teacher training on implementing college and career readiness skills, student ACT and PSAT test prep, admissions, and motivation workshops. Cambridge's scope of work will address key deliverables found in GEAR UP's request for proposal and has organized these into six sets of objectives:

- Administer diagnostic assessments to determine needs and inform core instruction and provide in-depth reports to provide baseline data and track the growth of the GUAR student.
- Provide ACT preparation materials and sample tests for use in programming.
- Design, organize, and facilitate ACT preparation courses to be delivered during and/or outside of school hours, including Saturdays and school vacations.
- Provide content tutoring and test-taking strategies to support culturally and linguistically diverse students in improving their test scores on ACT.
- Provide professional development and ongoing support to school teams in facilitating and supporting ACT preparation programming within their schools.
- Provide a recruitment and retention plan that ensures ACT prep sessions are filled to capacity and students are engaged in the program.

College Prep Associates. College Prep Associates is keenly focused on supporting students and their parents as they navigate the essential functions of the college admissions process. Our expert associates focus on cultivating a mindset that is conducive to a college-going culture. Students and parents will receive expert consultation on rigorous middle and high school courses, college admissions test preparation, FAFSA completion, college applications, and scholarships. College Prep Associates will partner with the University of Central Arkansas to complete the scope of work described below as part of the GEAR UP commitment to fostering student success beginning in middle school and continuing through high school and beyond. Through this partnership, College Prep Associates will provide services and support for the GUAR cohort of 3,467. Below is a description of the services that will be provided in the GEAR UP Arkansas program.

- College Tours – Beginning in grades 6th and 7th, summer programming will center around college tours and preparing for life beyond high school including resume building, interviewing, college applications, and budgeting.
- Student mentoring- College Prep Associates will recruit successful local college students in their sophomore year to serve a minimum two-year mentoring cycle with cohort students. Every student will have an assigned Success Coach.
- College-advising sessions with a trained counselor. Cohort students will participate in a series of five large group sessions designed to promote college awareness and put students on the right track toward: Session 1) High School Transition, Session 2) Defining Success, Session 3) Study Skills, Session 4) Self-Advocacy, and Session 5) Summer Heat. Once students reach high school, the five large group sessions will be designed to help students apply for and successfully complete college Session 1) College Transition, Session 2) Applying to College, Session 3) Completing FAFSA, Session 4) Self-Advocacy, and Session 5) Life Skills on Campus.

Using the data gathered from the pre-assessment, College Prep Associates will create a list of students underperforming respective to benchmarks. Up to 30 students per school will be identified from this list to receive extended academic support from in the form of biweekly small group tutoring sessions held virtually during or after the school day.

UCA College of Education (COE)- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Restorative Justice Practices. UCA is respected by Arkansas K12 systems and is seen as a leader in teacher preparation and teacher professional development. UCA-COE will continue that reputation and provide disruptive innovation and professional development to GUAR teachers and administrators to address nonacademic issues that hinder students from being academically successful in school systems. UCA-COE will provide the following professional development.

- UDL professional development will provide educators with instructional strategies that promote leveraging funds of knowledge to ensure culturally competent classrooms, starting with diversity and concluding with equity.
- Restorative Justice Practices include strategies that build relationships and develop community within school systems and classrooms to decrease discipline and increase engagement. The Restorative Practice strategies are divided into two areas 1) prevention and 2) intervention strategies. GEAR UP teachers and administrators will learn how to implement both prevention and intervention strategies during this professional development learning opportunity.

The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the number of persons to be served and to the anticipated results and benefits

GUAR has developed a budget plan that is reasonable and cost-effective given the magnitude and scope of services to be provided and the number of students, schools, and parents to be served. GUAR will provide a broad range of direct services to over 3,400 unduplicated students to achieve the results stated in Table 8 on page 27 and the ultimate benefit of increased college enrollment and persistence for cohort students. GUAR will also provide services to partner schools, more than 1,500 teachers and principals, and over 3,000 families.

To provide the services described in the Project Design section, GUAR is requesting \$4,331,865 million per year for the seven-year grant period to provide direct-service support to 3467 students over the 7-year project period. **The annual cost per student is \$670.00** with each student who attends postsecondary education receiving a scholarship within the legislative mandates of a minimum of Pell and a maximum of the cost of attendance.

A new module of the Performance Insights (Pi) database has been developed to associate the project service costs with outcomes achieved. Reports generated by student and service cost will provide **cost analysis** capability for the full grant. Additionally, Vela Institute will produce an **economic impact study** to highlight the return on investment of GEAR UP dollars. The report will compare the Federal funds invested to the economic impact of the increased income potential for students as a result of increased postsecondary education; clearly indicating the possible cost/benefit of the Federal dollars spent and the return on investment realized.

Grant-funded salaries are comparable to other positions within the University. Volunteer matching salaries are based on the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support

Although federal funding for this program will end after seven years, GUAR schools will be enriched in systems change, services, and support to increase postsecondary opportunities for students. The strategies and services of GUAR will create systemic changes that will last after funding ends. To support the GUAR schools, the University of Central Arkansas College of Education will continue to partner with schools to ensure best practices. UCA will not only continue support to the GUAR-targeted schools but will expand the knowledge and best practices learned through the project to other schools in the state after the completion of the grant. GUAR staff will work throughout the project to create opportunities and system changes that can be sustained after the grant ends. An example of a project that will continue will be the training teacher professional development. GUAR strategically selected professional development that addresses strategies, not curriculum, to build teachers' capacity in GUAR schools. That intentionality will increase teacher capacity in academic rigor, discipline, and equitable practices in the classroom well beyond the seven years of GUAR.

UCA has committed to supporting GUAR schools and expanding the knowledge and best practices to other Arkansas schools. The University will commit time and effort to the project by allowing the PI to have a one-course release for an additional three years beyond seven years of the grant to continue to support GUAR schools and engage in research to follow the outcomes of students. Arkansas is a state that has demonstrated a commitment to providing students an opportunity to attend college. The state has made funding commitments that allow every Arkansas student in the 11th grade to take the PSAT and ACT at no cost to the families. The state also fully funds teachers to take Advanced Placement training to expand the AP offering in schools. The PI will use her release time to continue to work with GUAR schools to make sure the schools adhere to the timelines to get teachers signed up early for AP training funded by the state. The PI will also ensure GUAR schools take advantage of the existing Arkansas-funded programs supporting college preparedness, such as the free ACT and PSAT tests and applying for the Arkansas Challenge Scholarship.

Finally, GUAR aims to shape state policy to enhance opportunities for all high need students. The PI will share evidence of GUAR's impact with legislators and policy makers and distribute reports throughout the year. As a result, the legislature and the state department of education will shape policy and scale effective services aimed at enhancing investments in access and success initiatives for more AR low-income and first-generation students. By improving these policies and systemic conditions, students and families are better positioned to turn their increased access to opportunity into a college-going future—to improve not only their own financial situations, but also boost productivity in their local economies.

Section 4: Quality of Project Personnel

In determining the quality of project personnel, the Secretary considers the extent to which the applicant encourages applications for employment from persons who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

To ensure an effective operational budget, GUAR will implement a staffing model that includes full-time staff, contracting services, and LEA employees. The university values the opportunity to work, learn, and develop in a community that embraces the diversity of individuals and ideas, including race, ethnicity, religion, spiritual beliefs, national origin, age,

gender, marital status, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, physical ability/disability, political affiliation, and intellectual perspective. All GUAR's position announcements will adhere to GEPA and UCA's hiring practices stating that UCA is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate based on race, color, national or ethnic origin, gender, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, or physical, language and/or learning disabilities in the administration of its employment practices. GUAR will post vacant positions in a variety of publications/websites to establish a diverse applicant pool, not limited to but including GUAR school district's websites, LinkedIn, Indeed, ZipRecruiter, Chronicle of Higher Education, social media platforms, as well as local and state newspapers. In addition, GUAR will utilize the organization called Community Foundations Building Black Communities, the Arkansas Latino newspaper called El Latino, to advertise positions to diverse and underserved individuals.

UCA is deeply committed to diversity and equal opportunity in its employment practices and has a record of employing and promoting individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups. The Principal Investigator for this project, a tenured associate professor, is a first-generation Black woman who grew up in a rural poverty community in Arkansas. GUAR will adhere to UCA's standard and continue to seek such applicants if/when vacancies arise. UCA also intends to attract and hire candidates who have succeeded in overcoming barriers like those of the students, families, and communities GUAR serves. Strategies used by UCA include inclusive job descriptions communicating the importance and value of diversity and diverse hiring committees. Candidates will follow the requirements established by UCA's Division of Human Resources and will be recruited, interviewed, and selected by committees made up of diverse individuals. Partners receiving GEAR UP funds to hire tutors and mentors will not discriminate against any person as protected under federal and state law, and schools are required to make appropriate/reasonable accommodations for educators as per GEPA Section 427.

4.1 The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director and principal investigator.

The project is executed under the leadership of the GUAR Project Executive Committee. This committee will consist of the principal investigator, UCA College of Education Dean, and Assistant Commissioner of Arkansas Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Principal Investigator (PI) is Dr. Charlotte Parham, Associate Professor of Leadership Studies at the University of Central Arkansas. **Qualifications and Relevant Training and Experience for PI:** In addition to the required qualifications UCA has developed for tenured track professor, this position requires 5+ years' experience with K12 leadership, management of federal funding, grant administration, and demonstrated experience and success implementing college access services to first-generation and low-income students.

The **principal investigator (PI), responsibilities include:** 1) oversight of the operational, staffing, facilities, and compliance of the GUAR project; 2) the primary legislative, businesses, and intergovernmental liaison who will communicate the grant's progress to the state; 3) build GUAR partnerships to gain political and financial support to sustain the program after the initial seven-year funding; 4) act as the lead researcher for program effectiveness and work with the external evaluation team.

Dr. Parham has relevant training to lead this project. She has 28 years of experience in K-12 and higher education. In the K12 setting, Dr. Parham served as a teacher, building administrator, and director of Advanced Placement. She is uniquely qualified to lead this project because of her lived experiences and research work in education equity and disruptive innovation. As an associate professor, Dr. Parham developed a culturally proficient training for

undergrad students to help the preservice teachers meet the needs of diverse learners in the K12 classroom. In addition to her terminal degree in Educational Leadership, Dr. Parham received a Social Justice Certificate from Harvard University. The Social Justice Certificate provided her with relevant training in systemic oppression within educational systems. Dr. Parham's research has resulted in several published books and peer review articles addressing education equity, achievement disparities, and opportunity gaps.

The **GUAR project director** is a full-time, 12-month position. **Qualifications and Relevant Training and Experience for Director:** Master's degree required; doctoral preferred. Knowledge of K-12 and/or higher education is required. Five or more years of experience directing a college access and success program in a public agency or institution, including management of fiscal and administrative tasks. **Responsibilities:** 1) grant administration which includes the management of major projects; 2) oversight of budget and financial accountability; 3) develop and implement policies and procedures; 4) hiring and supervision of personnel; 4) supervision of program delivery; 5) coordination of multiple partner services; 6) provides leadership for district work plan and service development/implementation; 7) recognize and solve potential problems.

4.2 The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.

In addition to the PI and director, GUAR will employ highly qualified staff members to serve in key personnel positions and non-key personnel (see Table 14) positions who have appropriate qualifications to their responsibilities. **Key personnel positions include the PI, the project director and assistant director/scholarship coordinator.** To provide support to the project director, Ms. Coleman, GUAR will hire another full-time key personnel in the assistant director/scholarship coordinator positions. **Qualifications and Relevant Training and Experience for Assistant Director/Scholarship Coordinator:** Master's degree required; knowledge of K-12 and/or higher education required. Five or more years of experience with college access initiatives in a public agency or institution, and experience with scholarships management. **Responsibilities:** 1) providing oversight of the four regional service areas directing implementation of services; 2) works directly with school regional program directors; 3) responsible for direction and communication with regional college partners; 4) directly supervises programmatic staff, including regional program directors, college advisors; 5) liaise with various universities' transition support teams; 6) work with the UCA Scholarship Foundation, Division of Higher Education, and DESE to manage the GUAR scholarships.

GUAR places a high value on expertise and will replace any GUAR staff who departs the program with a candidate with equal or greater qualifications by advertising through local and national networks and conducting a rigorous interview process. GUAR will ensure that ED is notified and request approval for personnel changes for these key personnel positions. GUAR will employ additional, non-key personnel both at UCA (lead fiscal agent), district and local school level. The project director and PI will adhere to the GEPA and UCA's hiring practices and will hire for the non-key personnel positions.

Non-key personnel are outlined below:

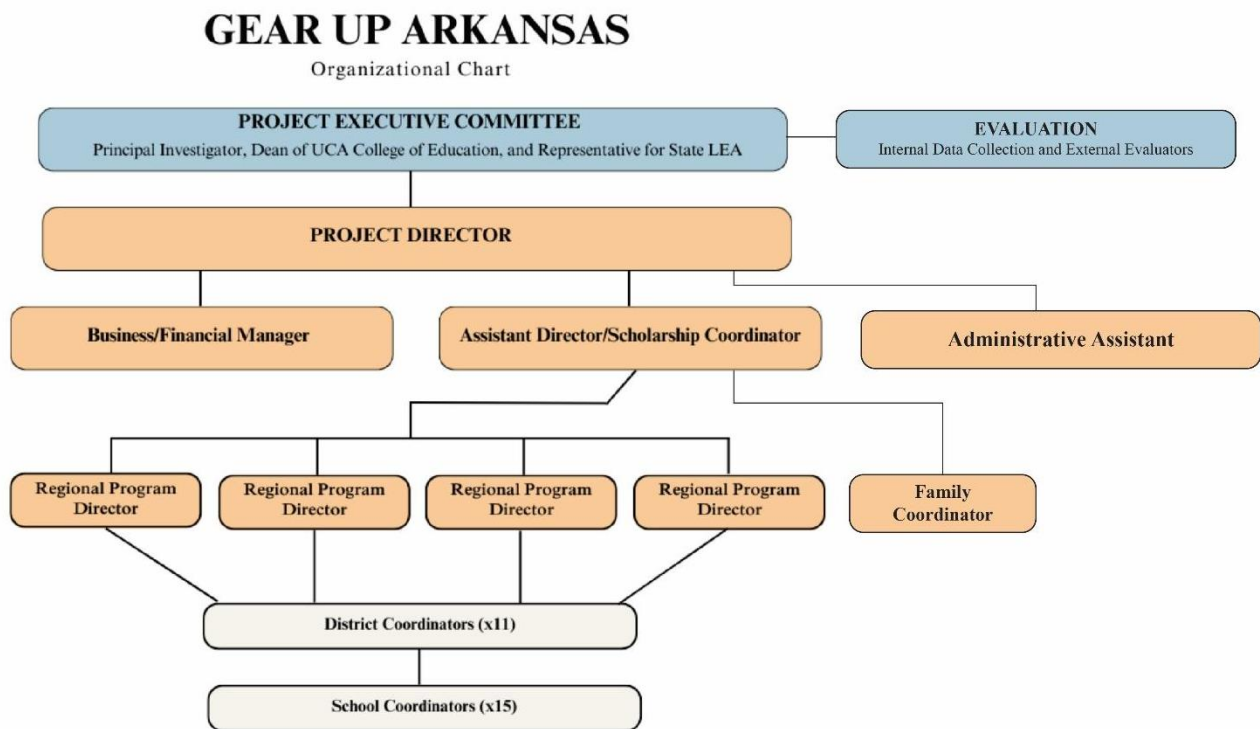
Table 14: Qualifications, Training, Experience, and responsibilities of Non-Key Personnel

Position	FTE	Qualifications	Description of Responsibilities
Business and Finance Manager	1.0	Minimum of a bachelor's degree in accounting. or related field; master's preferred. 3 or more years of relevant experience	Provides fiscal and administrative leadership; ensures ensure the GEAR UP grant meets articulated goals and are compliant with Federal regulations; assists with State and Federal annual budget development for division, Federal match documentation, expenditure oversight, processing invoices, purchasing, day-to-day oversight and monitoring of budget and grants, and providing fiscal support to staff as needed.
Regional Program Directors (4)	4.0	Minimum of a master's degree is required and at least three years of experience in coordinating college access programs, professional development, and outreach activities.	RPDs will serve the four regions across the state and provide direct support and services to LEAs. The RPDs are responsible for coordination and communication among their respective LEA sites, with the ultimate goal of working with partners to carry GU programming. RPDs will be responsible for delivering programing in the schools as listed in the services section. The RPDs will also work with AR AIMS and College Campus to plan school events.
Family Coordinator	1.0	Bachelor's degree and two years of work experience in a school or community setting, and education or counseling, work experience with diverse families and community organizations.	Encourage family members of GUAR students to participate in GUAR activities. Implement and coordinate comprehensive pre-college programs for family members of GUAR students that include and are not limited to career exploration, academic planning and preparation, college visits, mentoring, and financial planning. Serve as a postsecondary planning resource for GUAR students and their families. Work collaboratively with school personnel, families, and the community at large to increase awareness of the postsecondary education
External Evaluator/Participatory Evaluation Team	Consult (VELA)	include a Ph.D. in education or social science with experience in analytical research, a minimum of five years of experience designing and conducting analysis	The Evaluator will work closely with the GUAR PI and Director to provide support to ensure seamless data collection and evaluation. A participatory evaluation team will be formed made up of stakeholders and experts in the field. The primary purpose is to take ownership of the evaluation process, a diversity of perspectives, and increase the capacity to sustain the efforts of GU across schools.
Internal Data Collection and Evaluation	UCA	Undergraduate in Computer Science with 3-5 years' experience in data collection and analysis	Responsible for data collection support between UCA and all schools, liaise with external evaluation for data transfer, maintains data sharing agreements.

LEA-based GUAR Staff: Each proposed district has one GUAR LEA district coordinator appointed by district leadership and is based at the district administration office of each of the 11 districts GEAR UP will serve. They serve as a liaison between their school district and the state office. The District LEA Coordinator is a stipend position, devoting 10% of their time to coordinating GUAR LEA-level activities, including PD, LEA GUAR implementation team meetings, assisting with sub-award fiscal oversight, and serving on the College Access and Success Advisory Council.

The GUAR organizational chart outlined in Figure 8. denoting key and non-key personnel.

Figure 8: GUAR Organizational Chart



4.3 The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project

The time commitment of key personnel and an experienced team will ensure that the project is managed successfully at all levels. **The PI will devote overall 30% effort to effectively manage GUAR, director and assistant director will devote 100% effort each. Both having a full FTE on a 12-month salary.** Each of the project’s target schools will have a contracted site coordinator to meet objectives, mobilize the support of school staff, coordinate school-based activities, and create a culture of college readiness in the assigned school. Regional program directors will supervise site coordinators and to provide services at the local and regional level.

Additionally, GUAR will utilize a model proven successful in other GEAR UP grants by implementing district and school coordinators. District coordinators are LEA district-level

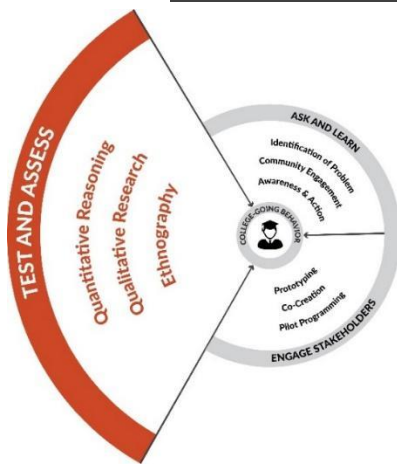
administrators who will work with regional program directors to implement GUA programs within their district. District coordinators must have a *master's degree and two years of administration experience*. School coordinators are LEA employees located at the school level. **They are campus academic coaches who will operate as the primary point of contact for the regional program directors implementing services.** School coordinators must have a *bachelor's degree and two years of teaching experience*.

GUAR will hire a family coordinator to encourage family members of GUAR students to participate in GUAR activities and serve as a postsecondary planning resource for GUAR students and their families. The family coordinator will work collaboratively with school personnel, families, and the community at large to increase awareness of postsecondary education.

The PI and project executive committee will work with an external evaluation team to provide formative and summative evaluation of services and associated student outcomes. GUAR will contract with Vela Institute, a non-profit agency, with a proven track record of evaluation of GEAR UP programs, to evaluate the program. **Requirements** for the external evaluators include a Ph.D. in education or social science with experience in analytical research, a minimum of five years of experience designing and conducting moderate- to large-scale experimental or quasi-experimental studies, a strong record that includes both methodological rigor and education policy relevance, experience evaluating college access programs including GEAR UP, and experience with programs serving K-12 schools, first-generation students, low-income families, and rural populations.

The GUAR management structure makes use of several tools and processes to ensure success, including work plans and budgets, training, project and financial monitoring and support, data collection and management, and statewide partner coordination. GUAR has successfully managed TRIO and other college access grants under a similar staffing model, meeting objectives and complying with all federal and state requirements. GUAR has established clear areas of responsibility in its management structure to promote efficient time management to staff for the administration of the project. GUAR staffing structures ensure sufficient time commitment to the project. This staffing structure is adequate and appropriate to fully implement and maintain a high level of grant service statewide.

Section 5: Quality of Project Evaluation



Test The final stage of the GUAR HCD design is Test and Assess.

Utilizing the recommended evaluation strategies, the GUAR evaluation will prioritize reporting on project performance as measured by required federal performance measures, along with a series of research questions. GUAR aims to ensure that students from the low-income target

Figure 10: Vela's Evidence-Based Practices Framework



region schools graduate high school, enroll in postsecondary education, and complete college. The evaluation plan includes an examination of the competitive priority, evidence-based components, rigorous formative and summative evaluation, quantitative and qualitative analytics, an embedded quasi-experimental research study, and strategies for study replication in other settings. Vela Institute will provide evaluation services through utilization of their Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) framework adapted from the Center of Evidence-Based Management (CEBMa)—to guide data and analytics. The EBP framework process is a tool to guide decision-making and provide alignment and evaluation of services. The process is iterative, so if an intervention/service is found to be less effective, then the project or partners will go back to reassess the evidence and identify researched interventions that match the population to increase the efficacy of the intervention and related outcome(s). Dr. Shawn Bergman, Director of Research for Vela Institute, is a Fellow for CEBMa and notes, “The basic idea of evidence-based practice (EBP) is that good-quality decisions should be based on a combination of critical thinking and the best available evidence.”

EBP is an approach to problem-solving and day-to-day work practice that critically evaluates outcomes by exploring the extent to which they can trust the evidence at hand. Evidence, as defined by CEBMa, includes more than just data, it is a robust combination of organizational information, professional expertise, stakeholders, technology, and scientific literature. The EBP Framework has 7 phases which mesh well with the HCD design approach, as the Field Guide to HCD includes similar considerations during the initial planning phases of decision-making and evaluation including audience, outcomes, key performance indicators, asking questions, and designing research around specific, tightly formed questions. Vela Institute will utilize this framework to map, collect, and evaluate relevant qualitative and quantitative data, conveniently stored in one system (Performance Insights, or Pi) for ease of access and use.

The GUAR evaluation plan adheres to the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), Uniform Guidance Regulations, the Higher Education Opportunity Act (HEOA), Government Performance and Result Act (GPRA), and national GU objectives.

5.1. The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible

The methods of evaluation offer an opportunity for partner school districts, the state of AR, and ED to better understand postsecondary enrollment and success, as well as the GEAR UP services associated with these outcomes. Distinct to this project is the opportunity to determine the impact of formative, data-driven services delivered under the GUAR Path to College model. This data will enable continuous assessment of GEAR UP services and how they influence project outcomes related to academic growth, high school graduation, and postsecondary enrollment, persistence, and completion. The primary *purpose of the evaluation is to measure progress toward the project objectives and performance measures set forth in this proposal (Table 8, pg. 27), provide continuous feedback to GUAR school districts and stakeholders, and to produce evidence-based results and strategies that can guide future implementation of college access and success programs in Arkansas.*

Longitudinal data collection system. Central to GUAR is a robust longitudinal data collection system (Performance Insights, or Pi, through Vela Institute) for gathering and storing identifiable student-level demographic, academic performance, attendance, and end-of-year testing data. In addition, students’ post-secondary enrollment, persistence, and completion data from the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), a third-party verification warehouse of postsecondary enrollment, will be imported to Pi. These capabilities improve the efficiency with which outcome measures and project performance can be measured. The data system will enable increased data-driven decisions about the effectiveness of programming, ensuring progress towards improving GUAR outcomes and effective management of all GUAR funding.

The following **Questions** in Table 15 will address formative evaluation, summative evaluation, and embedded research studies.

Table 15: GUAR Research Questions

#	Type	Question
1	Formative Evaluation	What is the effect of GEAR UP targeted services on increasing academic success as measured by GPA in Middle School, as a predictor of High School success?
2	Summative Evaluation	What is the relationship between the number of service events (occurrences) and hours (duration) spent in GEAR UP services in middle and high school and the outcomes of college enrollment, persistence and completion?
3	Research Study 1- Enrollment	What effect does GEAR UP have on postsecondary enrollment compared to the comparison group (matched comparison cohort of students who did not receive GEAR UP services)?
4	Research Study 2- Dual Enrollment	What effect does dual enrollment participation in high school have on postsecondary enrollment, and persistence?
5	Research Study 3- Career Exploration	What effect does career exploration and advising have on students’ career intentions?
6	Case Study- HCD/Disruptive Innovation	What effect does HCD and Disruptive Innovation have on the implementation of GU services and student outcomes?
7	Economic Impact Study	What is the average cost of GEAR UP per participant and is that investment returned in increased earnings?

Quantitative measures in the GUAR evaluation plan include descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate and track the progress of project outcomes. Advanced statistical and analytic techniques including but not limited to cluster-level comparison, Mahalanobis distance measure, adjusted linear probability model, and Cox Index will be used to examine the relationships between GU service delivery and the project's outcomes. The hierarchical structure of the quantitative data (e.g., students nested within schools) will be accounted for in the analyses using either a fixed- or random-effects (i.e., hierarchical linear or linear mixed modeling) modeling with a preference for the random-effect approach. Employing random-effects models will allow the evaluation to provide statistical control for student-level characteristics (e.g., gender, race-ethnicity, first-generation) and school-level factors (e.g., percentage of free and reduced-price lunch, cohort graduation rate, percentage of fully licensed teachers). Additional analyses also include chi-square, Pearson and Spearman correlations, and Analysis of Variance. The summative impact analysis will employ logistic regression to evaluate the differential results between student enrollment, persistence, and completion in postsecondary education. Standardized effect sizes will be calculated to determine the magnitude of the effects (e.g., Hedge's *g* or Cox index). The longitudinal quantitative plan includes linking all data with a unique identifier so that specific service interventions can be measured in relation to their impact

Qualitative data will also be collected through focus groups and open-ended survey questions. NVivo will be used to manually thematically code and analyze data to identify common topics in unstructured text. Vela Institute's EBP approach brings additional sources of information and provides a deeper understanding of the program impact than traditional evaluation approaches by providing an integrated system by which to combine insight gathered from traditional evaluation methodologies. For instance, professional experience, stakeholder, and organizational data will primarily be qualitative data and will be collected through in-person focus groups, virtual and phone interviews, and open-ended comments on surveys to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of HCD as an implementation strategy. Data collection and analysis will be guided by widely accepted best practices and the application of sound manual and analytic coding techniques to produce valuable insights and actionable results.

Individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups will be recorded and follow an interview guide containing a series of open-ended questions following the same protocol in each interview. Rough transcriptions from the recordings will be analyzed using open coding to identify themes and assess for consistency, frequency, intensity, and big-picture ideas or key words. Survey instruments will also be utilized to collect information. Our process includes creating a chart of survey questions including the question type (closed, open-ended), response options, and purpose. This process keeps survey questions limited to only those we need, thereby keeping surveys as short as possible. Vela Institute uses Qualtrics to build and implement surveys. The scientific literature and technology evidence gathering will be conducted using methodologies to produce valid and reliable synopses of the literature. Focus groups will be guided by widely accepted design and the application of sound manual and analytic coding techniques to produce valuable insights and actionable results from the project's qualitative data.

Surveys will be utilized for gaining perspective on and identifying trends impacting the quantitative data. Student and family surveys will be administered annually to obtain important information about perceptions and expectations about current experiences within GEAR UP, the student's future academic goals, and where they are on their path toward achieving their postsecondary intentions. The aggregation of survey results will aid in intermittent information that can be coupled with academic data to illustrate a whole student and school picture.

5.2 The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes

Supporting and growing students' intentions to enroll and successfully complete postsecondary education is central to the project design. Central to assessing and quantifying students' intentions also includes assessing their families and teachers' perceptions. Results from annual surveys will be provided to grant leadership and stakeholders for formative decision-making regarding service implementation.

The GUAR evaluation plan systematically reviews performance and outcome data to ensure short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes are met. As outlined in Figure 7, the logic model is the theory of action. Formative evaluation efforts include analysis at the student level made possible through frequent data pulls from the student information system and alignment with the longitudinal tracking system Performance Insights. This longitudinal student-level data will: 1) facilitate the development of GUAR annual service framework, 2) guide professional development to facilitate local programming better, 3) facilitate the coordination of reporting annual evaluation results, 4) identify and summarize performance measures and student outcomes, and 5) provide continuous feedback in easy-to-understand formats. Analyses will allow for a deeper understanding of student characteristics of students who are most at risk and with time to act on that evidence. Table 16 on page 65 illustrates the full evaluation effort.

One of GUAR's primary goals and associated with CPP2, is to develop better use of data to drive student progress. Given the commitment to enhance data use, this is the ideal model to truly implement a formative, ongoing framework that provides real-time performance feedback to leverage target GU services. The continuous evaluation includes data analyses at the student-level to target students for services that will most help them meet educational objectives. Student-level analyses will also allow for disaggregation of data to understand the student characteristics of those most at-risk. This model will ensure that GU funds have a strong return on investment for the students in GUAR.

Arkansas is in great need, especially in the area of child well-being (ranked 43rd), educational improvement and subsequent increased economic mobility are vital. GUAR's human-centered design coupled with the recommendations from NBER related to state policy for reducing the barriers to postsecondary education make this proposal a unique opportunity for the students and communities of AR to develop economic prosperity for generations.

*All GUAR references are located in the 'Other' Documents submitted with the full proposal

Table 16: Elements of the Evaluation Plan

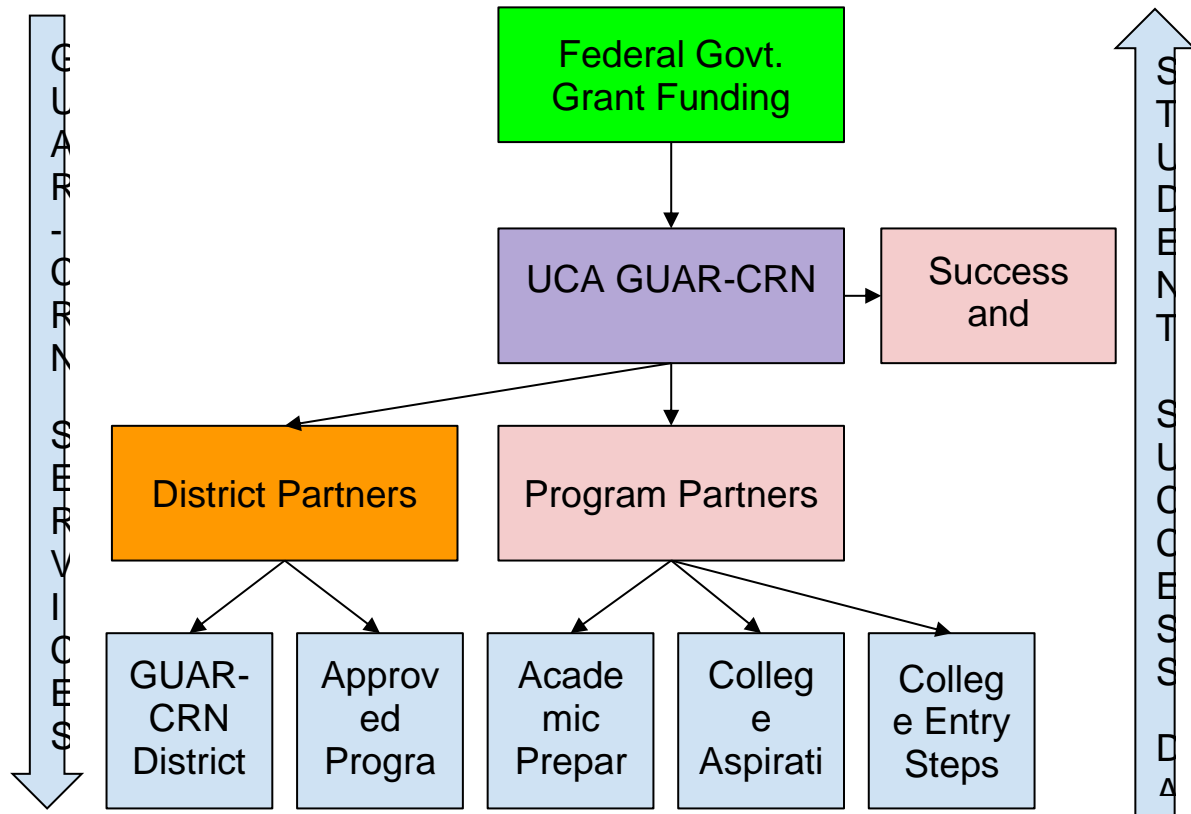
Purpose	Data Types	Timeline	Sample	Data Collection	Analyses	Reporting
Federal GEAR UP Reporting	GPRA Data, Program Measures, Project-Specific Measures, Courses, GPA, ACT/SAT, Promotion, Graduation, FAFSA, Postsecondary	Annual	GUAR students, family, staff	Pi, Transcripts, Surveys, NSC	Descriptive statistics	—Annual Performance Report —Final Performance Report
Rationale Component-Dual Enrollment (Research Study 1, 2) Research Study 3-Career intentions	Transcripts with Dual Enrollment and grades Advising services, career exploration	Year 6 and 7 Year 3-7	GUAR students GUAR students	Services, Student Survey, NSC Services, Student Survey	Descriptive statistics, Propensity score match, statistical tests, effect size	—Annual Performance Report (Belonging and Academic Readiness) —Final Performance Report (Dual Enrollment and Obtaining College Credentials) —Publications (Both)
Formative Evaluation	Services, Demographic, Academic, Postsecondary aspirations/plans, Surveys, Focus Groups/Case Study	Quarterly	GUAR students, family, staff	Pi, Transcripts, Surveys, Services, NSC	Descriptive statistics, statistical tests, case study	—Ongoing; Quarterly and annual reports —Publications
Summative Evaluation	Services, Demographic, Academic, Postsecondary (quant.)	Year 1= Baseline; Year 7= Reporting	GUAR students; comparison group (All)	Pi, Transcripts, Services, NSC	Propensity score match, logistic regression, effect size	—Final Performance Report —Publication
Case study-Human-Centered Design impact Economic Impact Study	Services, Demographic, Academic, Postsecondary (quant.) Cost per service per student enrolled in PS	Year 3-7 Year 7	GUAR students; comparison group (All)	Pi, Transcripts, Services, NSC Pi and Financials	Student, parent, educator focus groups Descriptive	—Final Performance Report —Publication Both

Pi=Performance Insights; NSC=National Student Clearinghouse

Policies and Procedures

GUAR-CRN Workflow Plan

The workflow shown in the graphic indicates the flow of services, information, and funding for the GUAR-CRN program.



District Financial Procedures

District Reimbursement Personnel Process

District reimbursement for the district and school coordinators

District partners must complete the following tasks each month to be reimbursed for expenses incurred under the GUAR-CRN Grant program.

- Districts will complete the digital time and effort form each month This for can be found at: <http://uca.edu/go/GUAR-CRN-TIME&EFFORT>
- Districts will submit the time and effort form with their monthly invoice.

District Reimbursement for Approved Program Expenditures

All program expenditures must be approved by the GUAR-CRN leadership prior to purchases implementation and requests for reimbursement. These expenditures can fall under either programming or materials. Programming can include curriculum and educational enrichment activities and experiences. Materials can include physical and digital support resources that directly align with the GUAR-CRN mission.

Approval Process

- Districts will complete the digital Programs and Materials Approval Form
 - An example form can be found at <http://uca.edu/go/GUAR-CRN-PROGMATAPPROVE>
- Upon Approval from GUAR-CRN Leadership, districts will follow the GUAR-CRN Leadership instructions for processing.
- Districts will submit one invoice per month for all materials and reimbursement.

District Matching

Dollar for Dollar Matching: Section 404C(b) of the Higher Education Act requires that at least 50 percent of the total cost of a GEAR UP project to be paid with State, local, institutional, or private funds (i.e., for each dollar of Federal funds received, at least one dollar of State or private funds must be contributed). Matching contributions can be in the form of cash or documented in-kind contributions.

To learn more about matching requirements go to <http://uca.edu/go/GUAR-CRN-MATCHEXPLAINED>
Examples of Matches can be found at: <http://uca.edu/go/GUAR-CRN-MATCHEXAMPLES>

**Memorandum of Understanding between
Gear Up Arkansas College Ready Navigator (GUAR-CRN)**

And

Local School District

This contract is entered into between the Office of GUAR-CRN and (School District), and has its purpose in setting forth the terms of the partnership between GUAR-CRN and the School District for the development, implementation and evaluation of the GUAR-CRN program within the School District.

WHEREAS, University of Central Arkansas (UCA) the lead agency for the GUAR-CRN (GUA) grant and is committed to the project; and

WHEREAS, the School District is committed to fully support and assist in the development, implementation and evaluation of all aspects of the program for each GUAR-CRN school within its district in order to achieve the program's goals, objectives and vision in said School District;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the foregoing recitals, which are incorporated herein as if set forth in full, and the mutual promises and covenants herein contained, the parties agree as follows:

I. The School District agrees as follows:

A. Point of Contact

For each GUAR-CRN school within its district, the District will identify to the GUAR-CRN individual (District/School Coordinator) who will serve as a single point of contact. Individuals identified as the point of contact for a GUAR-CRN school will be responsible for communication and correspondence between the school and GUAR-CRN for the duration of the contract period. Written notification is required for any point of contact changes.

B. Students to be Served

Services under this contract must be accessible to all sixth and/or seventh-grade students within each GUAR-CRN school. A GUAR-CRN student is defined as a sixth or seventh-grade student within a GUAR-CRN school who has not opted out of services with written notification. A parent or guardian must sign a written notification to opt out of services.

C. School Team

The School District will ensure each GUAR-CRN school maintains a school team that will meet at least once a month. The school team will be comprised of:

1. A District and/or Site Coordinator . The GUAR-CRN Staff in collaboration with the School District and the school will designate a GUAR-CRN Site Coordinator for each GUAR-CRN school.

2. At least two members from each GUAR-CRN middle school, junior high school or high school where the majority of the GUAR-CRN students will attend will comprise the GUAR-CRN District Team. The Team may include:

- Principals
- Teachers
- Counselors
- Parents
- Community volunteers

3. Additional members may be added by districts, at their discretion, in order to meet the outcomes and goals of GUAR-CRN. School coordinators and teams will work with the Regional Coordinator to establish the following:

- Prepare and submit GUAR-CRN Program Plan
- Implement GUAR-CRN Program Plan
- Review progress on implementation of Program Plan
- Participate in both the mid-year and final program review
- Integrate GUAR-CRN services within school curriculum
- Communicate GUAR-CRN Activities to school staff, students, and their families
- Document and report all GUAR-CRN and GUAR-CRN related activities

D. Participation in a comprehensive College- and Career-Readiness Needs Assessment.

The needs assessment will provide a detailed analysis of the practices in each school including the adequacy of programs to meet workforce demands in the region, the quality of instruction and the success of students in postsecondary endeavors. At the completion of all aspects of the needs assessment, a written report of findings will be provided that includes a set of commendations and recommendations for improvement that will guide support planning and give a baseline for upcoming years of the grant. Key elements of the College- and Career-Readiness Needs Assessment will include:

1. **College- and Career-Readiness Review of School Data** will be completed for each participating school and a written comprehensive case study report will be provided. The School District will ensure that each GUAR-CRN school helps provide the necessary data needed in order for the report to be developed.
2. **Student Surveys** will be given each year to the participating students in GUAR-CRN. Year one the student survey will be given to the sixth-grade and seventh-grade students at each middle school with reports provided per school and district. Each GUAR-CRN school will allow time for the students to take the survey.

3. **Faculty Surveys** will be given to all teaching staff of the participating students each year from each school in the grant. A composite report will be provided per school and a compiled district report provided of the results. Each GUAR-CRN school will designate a time for the teachers to take the survey.
4. **Technical Assistant On-site Reviews (TAV)** will be conducted at each GUAR-CRN school. The district will ensure that each participating school will host the TAV visit following the preparation guidelines within the selected designated timeframe given by the GUAR-CRN director. The review will provide a snapshot of the overall school's structure, programs of study, instruction, systems of student and teacher support, and leadership. This will include a review of how school leaders, academic and technical teachers, school counselors and other staff: a) support integration of instruction, b) align assignments, assessments and classroom instruction to college and career readiness standards, c) provide students information and support needed to make informed career and educational choices, d) support teachers to consistently improve instruction; and e) provide the time and resources to support teachers to work together to graduate more students college- and career-ready.

E. Materials

All materials that contain the GUAR-CRN logo must be approved by a GUAR-CRN Regional Coordinator before distribution.

F. Data

The School District will work with the Regional Coordinator to ensure that each GUAR-CRN school collects and compiles data for all GUAR-CRN services and activities on a monthly basis. Forms for reporting data will be provided by GUAR-CRN.

- 1) Demographic data, and data regarding services provided
 - (a) Demographic data
 - (i) Number of students served
 - (ii) Number of students by ethnicity and gender
 - (iii) Student distribution by grade
 - (iv) Number of students with Limited English Proficiency
 - (v) Number of students with Individualized Education Programs
 - (b) Participating schools
 - (i) Name of school
 - (ii) Grade levels offered
 - (iii) Grade levels served by GUAR-CRN
 - (iv) Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch
 - (v) City, State and Zip
 - (c) Services provided to students
 - (i) Type of service
 - (ii) Number of students who received the service
 - (iii) Average hours of service per participant receiving the service per year
 - (d) Services provided to parents

- (i) Type of service
 - (ii) Number of parents who received the service
 - (iii) Average hours of service per participant receiving the service per year
- (e) Services provided to teachers
 - (i) Number of teachers who taught GUAR-CRN students
 - (ii) Number of teachers who participated in GUAR-CRN professional development
 - (iii) Average hours of professional development per participant during the reporting period
- (f) Services provided to schools
 - (i) Type of service
- 2) GUAR-CRN Student Outcomes
 - (a) Students enrolled in advanced courses
 - (i) Number of students enrolled in advanced mathematics classes
 - (ii) Number of students enrolled in advanced English/language arts courses
 - (iii) Number of students enrolled in advanced science courses
 - (b) Course completion
 - (i) Pre-algebra, Algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, calculus, chemistry, physics, AP Classes, trigonometry, pre-calculus, biology, International Baccalaureate classes
 - (c) Educational progress by GUAR-CRN students
 - (i) Number of students performing at grade level
 - (ii) Number of students promoted to next grade
 - (iii) Number of students with five (5) or more unexcused absences
 - (iv) Number of students meeting ACT's college and Career readiness benchmarks on the ACT Aspire and the ACT in reading and mathematics.
 - (d) Baseline high school graduation and college enrollment data
 - (e) High school, school year, number of 12th grade students, number who graduated, number who enrolled in a post secondary institution
- 3) Survey Data
 - (a) Survey administration description
 - (b) Response rates
 - (i) Parent response rate
 - (ii) Student response rate
 - (c) Student survey results
 - (i) Grade level of student respondents
 - (ii) Number of students who have spoken with someone about college
 - (iii) Educational expectations of the students
 - (iv) Perception of affordability by students
 - (d) Parent survey results
 - (i) Number of parents given and completing the survey
 - (ii) Number of parents who have spoken with someone about college entrance and financial aid
 - (iii) Educational expectations of the parents
 - (iv) Perceptions of affordability by parents

G. External Data Collection

The School District will ensure that each GUAR-CRN school will cooperate with statewide data collection activities conducted by GUAR-CRN.

H. Mid Year Review and Final Review

Beginning with the 2023-2024 School Year, the School District will ensure that each GUAR-CRN school uses the Program Plan to document a mid-year and final review. School teams will work with the Regional Coordinator to complete a mid-year and final year review.

Mid-year reviews will be conducted in November/December. Each school will provide an update of the school's GUAR-CRN program status for each planned activity by indicating the *actual* status of implementation, and *anticipated* status at the next review, following the mid-year review template. At that time, schools will also identify original Program Plan goals for which performance is not meeting expectations, and detail corrective action to ensure goals and objectives are met by the final review.

Regional Coordinators will conduct a one-on-one final review with each GUAR-CRN school in May to determine the *actual* status of implementation for each activity. School teams will work with the Regional Coordinators to submit an updated Program Plan for the upcoming school year at the final review.

I. GUAR-CRN agrees as follows:

A. Resources and Services

GUAR-CRN will provide resources and services to GUAR-CRN Schools in accordance with an approved Program Plan.

B. Staff

GUAR-CRN will provide a Regional Program Coordinator for all GUAR-CRN schools to provide program support and technical assistance. In addition to the regional program coordinator, GUAR-CRN will provide a stipend for the district to hire a district and/or site coordinator.

C. Assessments

GUAR-CRN will provide all materials and training for GUAR-CRN required cognitive and non-cognitive assessments.

III. The parties agree as follows:

A. Term

This Agreement's term shall begin on November 2023 and shall remain in force until September 2030. This Agreement will automatically review on an annual basis.

B. Termination

GUAR-CRN reserves the right to terminate this Agreement with the School District if it, in its discretion, determines the School District has failed to implement this contract with its best

efforts and as outlined in supporting documents such as the Program Plan or data reports. The School District may withdraw from the GUAR-CRN program for any reason upon thirty (30) days written notice.

C . Notices

Any notice given in connection with the Agreement shall be given in writing and shall be delivered either by hand to the other party or by certified mail with return receipt requested to the other party at the other party's address stated above. Either party may change its address by giving notice of the change in accordance with this paragraph.

D. No Authority to Bind GUAR-CRN

The School District has no authority to enter into contracts or agreements on behalf of GUAR-CRN. Nothing contained in this Agreement shall be interpreted to create an employer-employee or principal-agent relationship between GUAR-CRN and the School District in any respect.

E. Confidentiality

Any and all reports, analyses and data, whether statistical or otherwise, transmitted to GUAR-CRN by the School District shall become the property of the GUAR-CRN for such uses as it shall deem appropriate and shall not be disclosed to any person without prior written consent of the District. In addition, except as may be required by applicable law or in any governmental or judicial proceeding or inquiry the School District shall maintain strict confidence with respect to the GUAR-CRN and all of its services under this Agreement. The School District shall maintain any student information obtained in the furtherance of this Agreement in a secure manner in accordance with requirements of state and federal law, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Rights provisions, 20 U.S.C section 1232g, and the rules interpreting and applying such provisions. The GUA may require that School District's officers, employees, agents or subcontractors agree in writing to the obligations contained in this section. This obligation shall survive termination of this Agreement.

F. Waiver

The waiver by either party of a breach of any provision of this Agreement shall not operate or be construed as a waiver of any subsequent breach.

G. Amendment

No amendment, change, modification, or waiver of any term of this Agreement shall be valid unless it is in writing and signed by both GUAR-CRN and the School District.

H. Entire Agreement

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes all prior agreements or understandings between GUAR-CRN and the School District.

I. Legal Compliance

The School District agrees to comply with all applicable requirements of federal and state statutes, rules, and regulations.

J. Legal Construction

In the event any provision of this Agreement is for any reason held to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable in any respect, such invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision will not affect any other provision, and this Agreement shall be construed as if such invalid, illegal, or unenforceable provision had never been contained herein.

K. Sufficient Appropriation by Legislature Required

Grant funding is subject to the availability of funds appropriated by legislative act for the purpose stated in the grant award. GUAR-CRN reserves to right to reduce or void the grant award upon appropriated funds becoming reduced or unavailable.

L. Officials, Agents and Employees of GUA Not Personally Liable

It is agreed by and between the parties hereto that in no event shall any official, officer, employee or agent of GUAR-CRN be in any way liable or responsible for any covenant or agreement, whether expressed or implied, nor for any statement, representation or warranty made in or in connection with this Agreement. In particular, and without limitation of the foregoing, no full-time or part-time agent or employee of GUAR-CRN shall have any personal liability or responsibility under this Agreement, and the sole responsibility and liability for the performance of this Agreement and all of the provisions and covenants contained in this Agreement shall rest in and be vested with the State of Arkansas.

M. Headings

The headings have been inserted for convenience solely and are not to be considered when interpreting the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement as of the first day set forth above.

GUAR-CRN:

By:

Title

Date:

SCHOOL DISTRICT:

By:

Title

Date:

Service Partners Financial Procedures

General Service Partners Procedures for Program Expenditures

Non-District partnership agreements will include invoicing payment procedures and will align with UCA financial policies and procedures.

Partners and Services

Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science (AR AIMS)

The Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, Inc. (AR AIMS), an affiliate of the National Math and Science Initiative and created in 2008 with ten high schools, now has over 100 partner high and middle schools. AR AIMS provides enhanced AP®, advanced, and on-level teacher support and training to improve the quality of teacher instruction and teacher effectiveness and student achievement. The student success that has resulted from the AR AIMS experiences is determined each year by an increase in students taking the advanced classes, taking the AP exams, and scoring a score of three or higher on AP® math, science, and English as well as increased performance on the ACT Aspire. In fact, since 2008, the advances made by participation in AR AIMS have impacted over 100 Arkansas high and middle schools.

AR AIMS will provide the following:

- On-going support, guidance, and resources to teachers to enhance teacher effectiveness.
- Support and guidance to administration and counselors
- Mentoring support for students through Super Saturdays and Summer Boot Camp
- Intensive Content Mentoring Services for Teachers in Math, Science, and English
- Professional Development for teachers in rigor and Advanced Placement
- Curriculum Resources aligned with ADE Standards
- Super Saturday for students to engage in college campus visits and exposure to rigorous content sessions.
- Partner Schools will receive six on-site mentoring support visits for mentoring, counseling, modeling, observing, conferencing, resources, support/curriculum, alignment.
- Students' Summer Camps - While the cohort is in grades 6 to 8, extensive summer programming that aims to meet students' holistic needs and empower students to become lifelong learners will be provided. Emphasis will be placed on relationship building and community while also incorporating project-based academic learning in Math and English.
- Teachers' Summer Workshops - While the cohort is in grades 9 and 10, shorter summer programming centered around transitioning to high school and preparing for success will be a priority. Emphasis will still be placed on relationship building and community, but we will transition to focus on career exploration and standardized testing subject areas.

Cambridge Educational Services (CES)

CES provides data, training, materials, licenses, and support for college readiness, core skill-building, and ACT and PSAT preparation courses in grades 6-13. This organization supports GUAR-CRN to implement moderate evidence in the recommendation of the WWC Clearinghouse. Cambridge has committed to providing teacher training on implementing college and career readiness skills, student ACT and SAT test prep, admissions, and motivation workshops.

Cambridge Educational Services will provide the following:

- Administer diagnostic assessments to determine needs and inform core instruction and provide in-depth reports to provide baseline data and track the growth of the GUAR student.
- Provide academic skills building tutoring in the earlier grade to provide a foundation for successful ACT preparation sessions during later grades.
- Design, organize, and facilitate ACT preparation courses to be delivered during and/or outside of school hours.
- Provide content tutoring and test-taking strategies to support culturally and linguistically diverse students in improving their test scores on ACT.
- Provide professional development and ongoing support to school teams in facilitating and supporting skills building and ACT preparation programming within their schools.
- Provide a recruitment and retention plan that ensures ACT prep sessions are filled to capacity and students are engaged in the program.

College Prep Associates

College Prep Associates is keenly focused on supporting students and their parents as they navigate the essential functions of the college admissions process. Our expert associates focus on cultivating a mindset that is conducive to a college-going culture. Students and parents will receive expert consultation on rigorous middle and high school courses, college admissions test preparation, FAFSA completion, college applications, and scholarships. College Prep Associates will partner with the University of Central Arkansas to complete the scope of work described below as part of the GEAR UP commitment to fostering student success beginning in middle school and continuing through high school and beyond.

College Prep Associates will provide the following services:

- College Tours – Beginning in grades 6th and 7th, summer programming will center around college tours and preparing for life beyond high school including resume building, interviewing, college applications, and budgeting.
- Student mentoring- College Prep Associates will recruit successful local college students in their sophomore year to serve a minimum two-year mentoring cycle with cohort students. Every student will have an assigned Success Coach.
- College advising sessions with a trained counselor. Cohort students will participate in a series of five large group sessions designed to promote college awareness and put students on the right track toward: Session 1) High School Transition, Session 2) Defining Success, Session 3) Study Skills, Session 4) Self-Advocacy, and Session 5) Summer Heat. Once students reach high school, the five large group sessions will be designed to help students apply for and successfully complete college Session 1) College Transition, Session 2) Applying to College, Session 3) Completing FAFSA, Session 4) Self-Advocacy, and Session 5) Life Skills on Campus.
- Using the data gathered from the pre-assessment, College Prep Associates will create a list of students underperforming respective to benchmarks. Up to 30 students per school will be identified from this list to receive extended academic support from in the form of biweekly small group tutoring sessions held virtually during or after the school day.

GUAR-CRN: Academic Preparation and Classroom Rigor

GUAR-CRN Service	Responsible Partner	Description of Activities
Academic Enrichment Summer Camps	Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, College Prep Associates, and GUAR-CRN Staff	Students will attend summer camps highlighting academic enrichment aligned with core subject areas, civic engagement, inquiry-based learning, team building, time management, cultural awareness, digital literacy and 21 st century skills.
Tutoring Programs	College Prep Associates	Students will have access to tutoring sessions in various core subject areas to obtain research-based tips and strategies to improve student performance
AP & Dual Enrollment Courses	Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science and GUAR-CRN Staff	Students will have more access to AP offerings and/ or dual enrollment courses
Book Studies and PD addressing needs outlined by the district	GUAR-CRN Staff	Teachers will have access to read, analyze, discuss strategies and interventions to core subject areas.
AP and Classroom Rigor Summer Institutes	Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science	Teachers will attend collaborative multi-day trainings with a focus on Advanced Placement content of core subject areas, critical thinking, problem solving, inquiry-based learning.

<p>AR AIMS Teacher Trainings/Work shops</p>	<p>Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science</p>	<p>Teachers will attend trainings with a focus on increased rigor in core subject areas, effective learning strategies, methods, and objectives and goals of the grant (teachers)</p>
<p>Teacher Leadership and Capacity Building Workshops</p>	<p>GUAR-CRN Staff</p>	<p>Teachers can participate in interactive conversations with guest speakers on topics related to academic project objectives, goals, and needs addressed by the grant.</p>
<p>Skills Building and ACT Test Preparation</p>	<p>Cambridge Educational Service</p>	<p>Students will have access to preparatory materials and interactive workshops with a focus on achieving success on the ACT College Readiness Assessment</p>
<p>AR AIMS Saturday Boot Camps</p>	<p>Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science</p>	<p>Students will participate in Saturday programming designed to meet...</p>

GUAR-CRN: Educational Aspirations and Students' Expectations

GUAR-CRN Service	Responsible Partner	Description of Activities
Restorative Practice Professional Development	UCA College of Education	Teachers will attend restorative practice training to examine discipline patterns in the schools to transform teacher-student relationship to achieve help with discipline.
Universal Design for Learning	UCA College of Education	Teachers will have the opportunity to learn about Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a way of thinking about teaching and learning that helps give all students opportunity to succeed.
Mentoring Programs	College Prep Associates	Students will participate in mentor programs highlighting the importance of academic success, career options and exploration, and postsecondary education (students)
Parental Involvement and Family Support Workshops and Program	GUAR-CRN Staff and College Prep Associates	Families will engage informative workshops providing ways in which parents may establish or increase involvement for the purpose of their child(ren)'s success in school (parents)
Workshops with Colleges and Universities	GUAR-CRN	Students will engage in interactive workshops with guest speakers who will provide engaging and interactive discussions on social and academic topics related to postsecondary education with a focus on objectives, goals, needs addressed, and career exploration
College and Career Clubs (CCC)	College and Career Readiness Evaluation Consortium and GUAR-CRN Staff	Students will engage in CCC programming that follows a scope and sequence of grade-level college and career readiness standards. CCC curriculum contains sequenced lessons and activities to develop knowledge and skills related to topics including college and career preparation and leadership development.

GUAR-CRN: College Entry Steps and College Entrance Exams Test Preparation

GUAR-CRN Service	Responsible Partner	Description of Activities
College Advising	College Prep Associates	Students will participate in individual and group college-advising sessions with a trained counselor; individually review transcripts, test scores, and resumes to craft effective college-access action plans; in groups, participate in sessions: HS transition, define success, study skills, self-advocacy, and summer heat (students)
Parental Involvement Workshops and Family Support Programs	GUAR-CRN Staff and College Prep Associates	Families will attend informative workshops on ways to support their child(ren)'s success in school with a focus on the program objectives, goals, and gaps addressed (parents)
Mentoring Programs	College Prep Associates	Students will participate in skillfully designed mentor programs highlighting the importance of academic success, career planning, and postsecondary education including Success Coach peer mentors from local colleges.
Campus Visits	GUAR-CRN Staff and College Prep Associates	Students will visit various college campuses in order to gain familiarity with and pose relevant questions regarding career planning to hosting faculty and staff about postsecondary environments
First Generation College Student Panels	College Prep Associates and GUAR-CRN Staff	Students will attend panel sessions led by former and current first-generation college students who will discuss authentic experiences and clarify misconceptions.
Family Engagement and Financial Aid Workshops	GUAR-CRN Staff	Families will attend informative workshops on financial assistance, scholarships and grants, and advice on completing college admission forms (parents and students)
Workshops from Statewide Colleges and Universities	College Prep Associates and GUAR-CRN Staff	Students and families will participate in conversations with guest speakers who will provide engaging and interactive discussions on social and academic topics related to postsecondary education with a focus on objectives, goals, and gaps addressed.

Vela Institute-External Evaluation

Vela Institute supports organizations efforts to understand and demonstrate impact through external evaluation, makes data accessible and relevant through student-level data-tracking and data visualizations, and increases organization capacity to make evidenced based decisions.

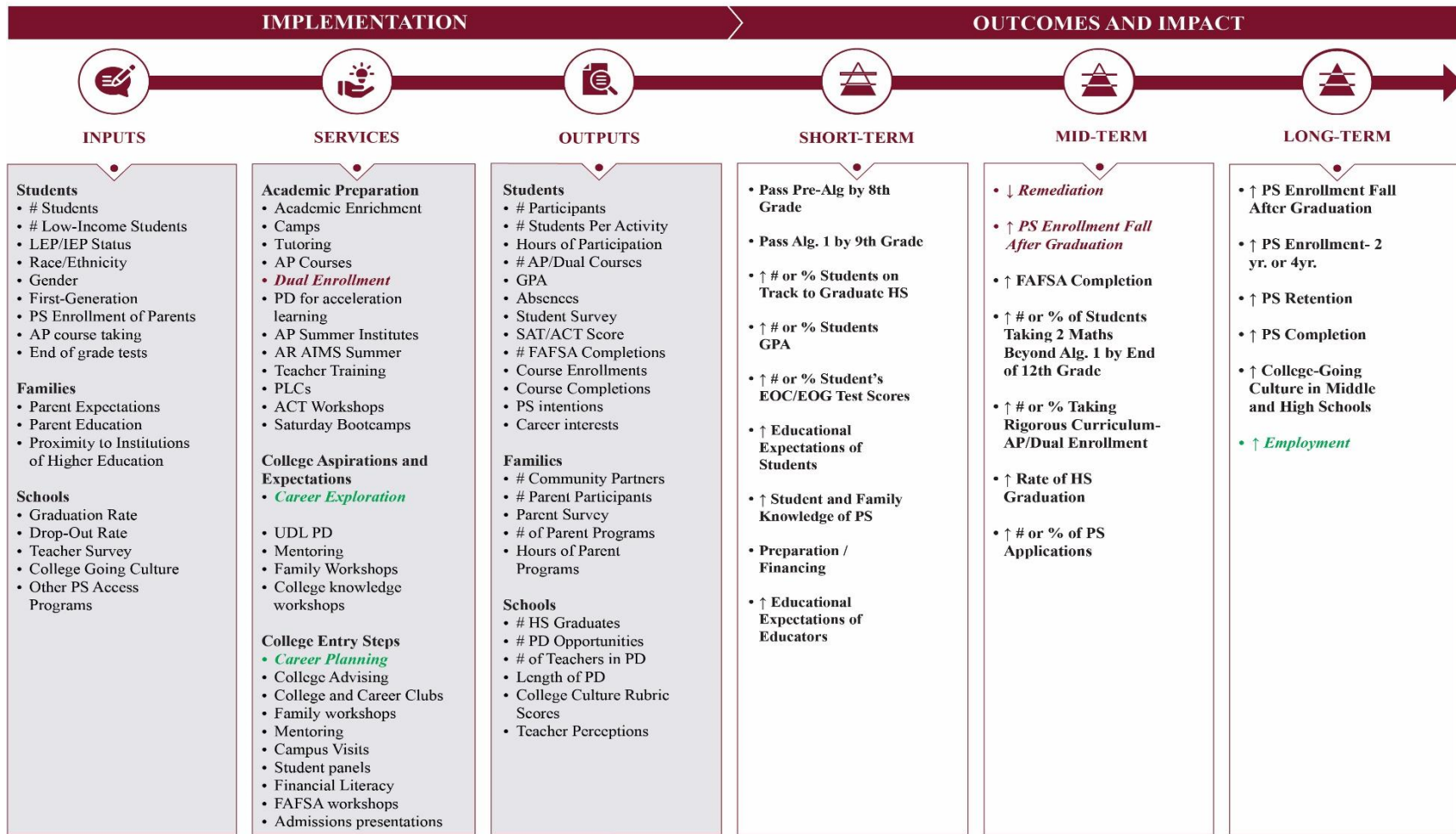
Vela Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to increasing access to evaluation, analytics and data tracking to education partners to improve student and community outcomes. Established in 2017, Vela Institute accomplishes its mission through applied research, data analytics, and the use of evidence-based practices. <https://velainstitute.org/>

Progress Monitoring and Evaluation

Logic Model

Theory of Action:

Human-centered design (HCD) will ensure GUAR is engaging, hearing, and incorporating the voices of the identified communities to develop and implement relevant and meaningful services to increase postsecondary enrollment and completion



Evidence for **Dual Enrollment** comes from:

Giani, M., Alexander, C., & Reyes, P. (2014). Exploring variation the impact of dual-credit coursework on postsecondary outcomes: A quasi-experimental analysis of Texas students. *The High School*, 200-218.
 Lee, J., Fernandez, F., Ro, H. K., & Suh, H. (2022). Does dual enrollment influence high school graduation, college enrollment, choice, and persistence?. *Research in Higher Education*, 63(5), 825-848.

GUAR-CRN Performance Measures District Data Collection

GUAR-CRN Design	Performance Measures	GUAR-CRN Outcomes	Baseline	Goal
Federally Required				
Academic preparation	1. The percentage of GEAR UP students who pass Algebra I or its equivalent by the end of 9 th grade (GPRA 1)	Increase by 10 percentage points annually GEAR UP students who pass Algebra I by the end of 9 th grade	Year 1*	Year 1
Steps for college entry	2. The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school (GPRA 2)	The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate from high school will increase by five percentage points by year 7.	84.9%	89.9%
Steps for college entry	3. The percentage of GEAR UP students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). (GPRA 3)	At least 75% of students will complete the FAFSA in years 6 and 7.	49.1%	75%
College aspirations and expectations	4. The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who enroll in postsecondary education. (GPRA 4)	The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who enroll in postsecondary education will increase by 5% annually in years 6 and 7.	42.1%	52.1%
College aspirations and expectations	5. The percentage of GEAR UP students who persist into year two of postsecondary education.	The percentage of GEAR UP students and former GEAR UP students who persist into year two of postsecondary education will increase by 5% percentage points by year 7.	69.9%	74.9%
All	6. Assess the efficiency of the program, track the average cost, in Federal funds, of achieving a successful outcome. (Required Outcome)	Success is defined as enrollment in a program of undergraduate instruction at an IHE of GEAR UP students immediately after high school graduation.	Year 6	Year 6

Design Specific: GUAR-CRN				
Academic preparation	7. The percentage of GEAR UP students who graduate high school 'college ready'- they meet the minimum requirement to attend an Arkansas University system school.	60% Cohort students will meet the minimum requirements for admission to attend an Arkansas University System school by year 6 (based on ACT score)	Year 1	60%
Academic preparation	8. The percentage of GEAR UP students who use assessments to decrease remediation in college.	As a result of identifying students early and providing remediation in high school, the remediation rate will decrease to a range of 60-80% beginning in year 6	92.6% of students require remediation	60-80%
College aspirations and expectations	9. The percentage of GEAR UP families and schools who develop a college-going culture	85% of parents and 80% of teachers will report they expect students to attend postsecondary education by year 4	Year 1	85%/80%
Steps for college entry	10. The percentage of GEAR UP students who know and execute the steps to apply for college	75% of cohort students will apply to a postsecondary institution that has been identified as a match for their academics and interest	Year 1	75%
Steps for college entry	11. The percentage of GEAR UP families who know and execute the steps to apply for the FAFSA	75% of cohort students will apply for financial aid beyond the FAFSA application	Year 1	75%
Steps for college entry	12. The percentage of GEAR UP students who know and execute the steps to apply for the FAFSA	75% of cohort students will apply for financial aid beyond the FAFSA application	Year 1	75%
Steps for college entry	13. The percentage of GEAR UP families who understand financial literacy to help close the wealth gap.	80% of families and students will report knowledge of financial literacy	Year 1	80%

Steps for college entry	14. The percentage of GEAR UP students who understand financial literacy to help close the wealth gap.	80% of families and students will report knowledge of financial literacy	Year 1	80%
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Districts and Regional Program Coordinators will record and document all student and family support activities. These activities include services provided by partners and GUAR-CRN staff.

GUAR-CRN Data Confidentially Agreement

I acknowledge that my work involves sensitive student data. The information is confidential information that must be protected under both State and Federal law, including but not limited to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

I agree as follows:

1. For purposes of this Agreement, “confidential information” is defined as information disclosed to me or known by me as a consequence of my employment that is personally identifiable information in any form.
2. During my employment and after the termination of my employment, I will hold the confidential information in trust and confidence and will not use or disclose it or any embodiment thereof, directly or indirectly, except as may be necessary in the performance of my duties. I understand that any disclosure or unauthorized use could be a violation of both State and Federal law.
3. I specifically acknowledge the privacy rights relating to student education records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and to health information pursuant to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and I agree to comply with the provisions of these and other laws and policies that impose obligations of confidentiality.
4. I will not include any personally identifiable information in any form of communication with anyone outside of work with GUAR=CRN. This includes but is not limited to email, instant messaging, faxes, written correspondence of any type and oral correspondence of any type.
5. I will not remove any personally identifiable data from the database, unless authorized in writing to do so by my supervisor. Upon termination of any assignment or as requested by my supervisor, I will return all such materials and copies. Any information that must be utilized by me in the course of my employment shall not be stored on flash drives, CDs or any other device that is not secure. I shall only access the system via a secured website.
6. I will not access, use, or disclose confidential information for any personal purpose or out of curiosity, or allow others to do so.
7. I will report any unauthorized disclosure(s) of confidential information to my supervisor immediately upon becoming aware of such disclosure(s).
8. I will not share my credentials for accessing student data, secured files or the database with any other person for any purpose.
9. I will comply with FERPA and will not access or make any disclosures of student educational records to third parties without prior notice to and consent from GUAR-CRN otherwise provided by law. If I violate the terms of this section, I will immediately provide notice of the violation to GUAR-CRN.

I have read the above statements and understand them. I understand that divulging confidential information in violation of this Agreement may make me subject to disciplinary action under applicable civil or criminal penalties under applicable laws and regulations.

Signed this day of _____, 20 __.

EMPLOYEE:

WITNESS:

(Signature)

(Signature)

(Print Name)

(Print Name)

Contact Information

GUAR-CRN Principal Investigator

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