



SCHOOL SELF-ASSESSMENT RUBRIC (SSAR)

The SSAR is used by California GEAR UP middle schools as a part of their whole school reform and systemic change efforts in developing a *college-going culture* for all students.

Six Conditions for Developing a *College-Going Culture**

1. Development of a *College-Going Culture*

In a college-going culture, teachers, administrators, parents, and students expect students to have all the experiences they need for high achievement and college preparation. Adults encourage students to exert the necessary effort and persistence throughout their entire educational career, and adults work diligently to eliminate school-sanctioned alternatives to hard work and high expectations. These high expectations are coupled with specific interventions and information that emphasizes to students that college preparation is a normal part of their childhood and youth. Students believe that college is for *them* and is not reserved for the exceptional few who triumph over adversity to rise above all others.

2. Rigorous Academic Curriculum

Students in middle school are prepared for and have access to algebra and courses which prepare them for success in college preparatory and AP courses in high school.

3. High Quality Teaching.

Knowledgeable, experienced, and fully certified teachers provide instruction that engages students in work of high intellectual quality. Importantly, in diverse communities, high quality teaching makes valued knowledge accessible to students from diverse backgrounds.

4. Intensive Academic and College-Going Support

Teachers and counselors play a pivotal role in informing and preparing secondary students for college. Yet, all students require supports and assistance that takes place outside the classroom or school. To navigate the pathway to college successfully, students need support networks of adults and peers who help access tutors, material resources, counseling services, summer academic programs, SAT prep, coaching about college admissions and financial aid, and other timely assistance.

5. College-Going Identity

Students see college going as integral to their identities; they have the confidence and skills to negotiate college without sacrificing their own identity and connections with their home communities. They recognize that college is a pathway to careers that are valued in their families, peer groups, and local communities.

6. Family - Neighborhood - School Supports

Connections between families and schools build on parents' strengths and consider them a valuable education resource for students. Educators and community groups work together to ensure that all families have access to essential knowledge of college preparation, admission, and financial aid. Moreover, parents and the community are actively involved in creating all of the other critical conditions described above.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN (PDAP)

Each California GEAR UP middle school develops a PDAP for the professional development of staff and families. The school's Leadership Team, composed of the Principal, Counselor(s), Mathematics Teachers, and English/ Language Arts Teachers, uses the results of the SSAR to develop plans. The leadership team identifies program needs for each of the conditions of the SSAR, and sets short and long-term plans for the two years of participation. The PDAP is funded by California GEAR UP, with matching funds from the schools and California GEAR UP partners.

* Based on: Oakes, J. (2003). *Critical Conditions for Equity and Diversity in College Access: Informing Policy and Monitoring Results*, UC/ACCORD. Full document at: <http://ucaccord.gseis.ucla.edu/research/indicators/pdfs/criticalconditions.pdf>.