



TEAM RETREAT

Berkeley Marina Hotel April 11-12 2007

In early April, GEAR UP staff held its annual Team meeting, focused on Progress and Change within the organization. Consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the primary foci of the meeting was to:

- Recommit to team solidarity;
- Reach consensus about essential program components;
- Review the program plan through 2011; and
- Define sustainability for and with GEAR UP schools.

The team meeting challenged staff and participating program consultants to understand our role as Change Agents with continued emphasis on assessing and improving the services we provide to students, schools, families and communities.

GOAL

To Better Understand How We Work as Individuals, as a Team, and within the Education Community

OUTCOMES

Recommit to Team Solidarity

Review Program Plan through 2011

Reach Consensus about the Essential Elements of the California GEAR UP Model

Define Sustainability for/with GEAR UP Schools

Participants (25)

Shelley Davis	Penny Edgert	Gina Rodriguez
Lynn Baranco	Vance Mills	Don Watson
Marsha King	Jill Campbell	Crystal Graves
Bernadette Ramirez	Tommy Lam	Renee East
Nicole Billups	Joann Zgonc	Don Mar
Bob Van Zant	Frank Holmes	Sandy Carpenter-Stevenson
Shirley Cunningham	Susan Bonoff	Linda White
Carlos Lemus	Mary Unveferth`	Bill Vasey
	Natalie Smyers	

Background Materials: National/Statewide/Local Perspective

NCCEP Legislative Update (Higher Education Act funding)

New York Times (Middle School Series)

State of Education Address (Superintendent O'Connell)

Los Angeles Times (February 2007)

San Francisco Magazine (University of California)

Visual Cues

Communication	Community	Commitment	Collegiality
Family	Value Added	Voice	Respect
Trust	Integrity	Safe Space	Support

Thoughts On Change

- Imagine Life After 2011: *Group 1*
- Become A Change Agent: *Group 2*
- “It is Not Trespassing to Reach Beyond Your Own Boundaries”: *Group 3*
- “If your Mind can Conceive it and your Heart can Believe it, then you know You can Achieve it”: *Group 4*
- Answer Every Question and Question Every Answer: *Group 5*

CALIFORNIA GEAR UP TEAM RETREAT – April 11-12, 2007
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Day One Morning

Discussion of Background Readings (Facilitated Breakout Groups)

Group 1: *The Scandal that Rocked UC (San Francisco Magazine)*

Q. What did you learn?

- Gender Issues
- White-Male domination in U.C. system
- Distractions in Education, losing what is important
- Trust Issues
- Standards Issues
- Equity Standards

Q. Does the Article Portray Issues or a Crisis in Education?

- Modeling role & leadership –not happening
- Bonuses for those in higher education
- Accountable for budget spending

Q. How did the Article Affect Your Thinking About What You Do?

- President Dynes-? As leader
- Cover-up
- Dishonesty
- Lacking good judgment
- Denton & Greenwood sacrificed-not Dynes
- Guilty until proven innocent
- Has to be “UC-approved
- Kept in the box-follow UC ways
- Always held accountable
- Be supportive of all your employees
- Carefully own our relationship w/ higher education
- Campus experience has value for GEAR-UP
- Focus on the real mission-EDUCATION

- Acknowledge abuse of power
- University has been a good steward for CA GEAR-UP

Group 2: *Grades are Rising but Learning is Lagging (Los Angeles Times)*

Q. What did you learn?

- Discouraging...Difficult to trust the system
- **STUDENTS BEING LIED TO!!!**
- Nothing has changed
- When did this downward trend begin? We need to examine this and try to reverse the trend and not let it repeat.
- Window Dressing- Why is this all o.k.?
- Are subjects really being taught?

Q. Does the Article Portray Issues Or A Crisis in Education?

- Dumbing down because we feel sorry for them, and then we pass them!
- What is the role of the Universities in not adequately training teachers?
- Something really has to change
- What is really needed to change the system?
- If it is a crisis, why isn't there legitimate action being taken?
- Why are students being offered and taking tougher classes if they are learning less?
- Just going through the motions is feeding the crisis.
- The crisis also involves the most successful students-What about the ones that dropout?
- Middle School-gauge point
- We need to look at our language as we address this issues-Are we owning the truth in this? (Most successful, what does this mean?)

Q. How Did the Article Affect Your Thinking About What You Do?

- Reinforces what we do-puts value on opportunities to address these issues.

Examples:

- ACT workshop = good student behavior
- Regular classroom =classroom management issues
- -Attitude of presenter or teacher?
- -Kids with potential, genuine high expectations
- -Kids from poverty, ethnic groups that can't learn, perception creates low expectations
- In many respects our thinking is not affected because it is the same old story, just a different day. Major overhaul must occur.
- Why should people go into teaching? Summer & Christmas break? , A calling?
- Has to be one kid at a time.
- Top down management continues to interfere with meaningful change
- Professional Development must emphasize academic rigor and use facilitation to work with smaller groups of teachers to define rigor, look at student work and use data to assess & create a cycle so they can carry the work on.

- **We need to become more vocal** for our kids. We need to start asking the Tough questions.

Group 3: *National Council for Community and Educational Partnerships*
(Legislative Update)

Q. What Did You Learn About the Current Climate In Education?

- (1) Need to gather data for funding
 - California GEAR-UP to take lead to track students from middle school to beyond.
 - Feedback from colleges: What worked? What didn't?
 - Political process, education process, professional development
- (2) Expectations that GEAR-UP students will provide feedback
- (3) (GEAR-UP Alumni Network)
 - Education Trust Awards have responsibilities/expectations
 - "Once a GEAR-UP kid always a GEAR-UP kid"
 - Testimony is the power
 - Students /Families as Ambassadors
- (3) Greater Recognition of GEAR-UP
 - By schools/students/families about GEAR UP opportunities
 - Marketing packet for new schools
- (4) Knowing& Understanding resources available to school
- (5) Middle Schools to "Prepare Students for College"
- (6) How to change from student focus to a systemic sustainability focus.

Group 4: *Superintendent O'Connell – 2007 State of Education Address*

Q. What did You Learn About the Current Climate in Education?

- Don't back down from goals
- Achievement Gap of specific groups
- Do all teachers/staff at GEAR-UP schools know about GEAR-UP resources?
- How does GEAR-UP help schools be more organized? To affect preparation of all students?
- Identifying GEAR-UP to whom-ever answers school site phones (Communication focus)
- Explore facilitations on-site for Leadership Team, How much? When? (Sharing with all school staff)
- Develop a better strategy for working with partnerships
- Plan orientation for entire staff for year 2 GEAR UP schools (Moving forward)
- GEAR-UP expectations for principal institutes, team and resources.
- Leadership team discussion of progress- (new staff)
- Good resources
- P-16 Council recommendations (How can GEAR-UP help you/the school?)
- Using "Career Technical Education" as part of GEAR-UP
- California Partnership Academics –goal oriented
- How much do we know about talents & skills at the school site?

Group 5: Middle School Series (New York Times)

Q. What Did You Learn About the Current Climate In Education?

- Middle school students are in a very vulnerable stage.
- Reconfiguration isn't making the difference

Q. Group 5 asked: What do we believe?

- High expectations, school wide, make a difference
- High expectations has a different meaning to different people; promote the belief that failure is not an option.
- Instructional leaders need to model high expectations for their teachers.
- We must respect education
- Families must partner with schools
- Teachers/Principals don't know the power they have, because they are limited by their experiences.
- We (GEAR-UP), can bring the positive, "Can Do" experiences to non-believers
- There are specific (practices) skills sets that all teachers need

Q. What can we do as a result of our conversation?

- Ask our schools to focus on SSAR condition(s) that deal with instruction, instructional leadership & learning
- Identifying our past "Schools on the Move" to mentor other new schools
- Include families
- Do we take on new schools, or revisit old schools? Is the two-maybe three-year model sufficient to help schools achieve phase 4 on all six conditions?
- Planting seeds that can continue to blossom through on-going partnership

Day One Afternoon

Understanding How We Work (Facilitated breakout groups)

Group 1: Q. What is your role?

(Broader Picture)

- Aware and current about what is going on in schools, legislation. (A broad scope of awareness)
- Know the roles of GEAR-UP colleagues
- Take the attitude that we want to do it, not that we have to do it
- Instead of managing, take leadership role. (*Critical Friend*)
- Get to know the schools. How? Go to school meetings
- Make tough decisions
- Hold schools accountable to be a reminder
- If you capture the heart, the mind will follow

Group 2: Q. What do schools need?

- An infrastructure that does not rely on top hierarchy
- Accountability about using GEAR UP tools
- Better understanding of value of GEAR-UP principles in school community

- GEAR UP Leadership Teams need ongoing coaching to guide activities
- Ongoing, consistent contact with GEAR-UP Regional Coordinators and tools in place to measure this outreach
- Workshops for parents/guardians/teachers on adolescent development
- Identify existing resources “A Day in the A Life of a 12-15 year old”
- Revise orientation model to include ALL school personal
- A strategy to inform new arrivals to campus of GEAR UP
- Design tools to measure knowledge/awareness of personnel
- A formalized mechanism to advise GEAR UP what they need on an ongoing basis
- Support in data analysis, data collection, and working with teacher sub-sets to modify instruction

Group 3: Q. What can we deliver?

- Link job alike entities between old GEAR-UP & new GEAR-UP schools in order to model behavior
- Link and enhance involvement of higher education with K-12 & its outcome
 - Colleges of Education
 - Students returning to their community of origin thru student organizations
 - Develop model; integrate school/family/community
 - “College Making It Happen”
- Enhance our capacity to address academic rigor
- Develop new partners-CSMP
- Better Identify our role

Group 4: Q. What is Our Message?

- School –to middle school personnel
- IN-program we work with Middle school staff to provide College-Going Culture
- IN- to provide awareness of GEAR UP resources to get your child to go to college
- We believe all students can be successful
- As Messengers we have to be conscious of ourselves
- Messengers have to be kind & supportive to the school
- Messengers have an advantage of understanding the school language
- Be specific about our resources; have list of resources for schools
- How to be more persuasive

Cohort B-Delivery System for Pre-Planning

- Orientation-Leadership team, What’s your plan to share with staff?
- Facilitation- Leadership Team
- Resources Material & Clearing House- Leadership Team
- Presentation with staff

Cohort A & B

- Revisit all schools –GEAR UP team
- Presentation with staff (Participation data to share)
- Create a talking paper- Everybody is on the same page with our message
- Create simple directions for web site, how to print newsletters

- Important that message be created in all publications
- Increase the circulation of the Newsletter
- Consider making a poster for schools

Group 5: Q. What is Sustainability?

- Rigorous instruction, qualified teachers
- Parent & Family involvement
- Process for continuous improvement
- Change in practices, use of data
- College going culture
- Passion; Hunger for learning

Day Two

(Full Group Discussions)

Q. How Do the Data Inform Us?

- Develop check list of sources of data
- Change in Principal, Site Contact, Leadership Team
- How do Leadership Teams use the data evaluation
- Compile the data together
- High turnover of staff leadership
- Follow through on implementation

Statewide Community Services

Counseling Institutes

- District-Specific Data
- Bringing together counselors to better understand their role in preparing students to be college eligible
- Available resources (College Prep Info)
- Possible Counseling Institute II- case studies
- Acknowledge Importance of their role
- Connect Counselors to families

Principal Leadership Institutes

- Think outside the box
- Place for principals to come together to share and collaborate with each other
- Attitude building

Business Network

- Build human & fiscal resources for GEAR-UP
- Friend & Fundraising
- Statewide GEAR UP “messengers”

Community Based Project(s)

Focus:

Model integration of GEAR UP resources beyond the school site

Services provided outside school hours:

- Open dialect
- Parent Group
- Resources and Materials Clearinghouse/College Corner available

Sacramento Project:

Existing community elements

- Church as Hub
- Community Center
- Area Elementary schools

San Diego Project:

- Steering/Advisory Committee
- HUD complex
- YMCA Computer lab- (Mobile)
- Institute of Science/Harriet Tubman-Chavez Center
- Ministerial Alliance

Continuing Schools Project

Focus:

- “Cross-pollenization”
- School Focus on Sustainability
- Strategic Planning
- Finding out the “HOW”
- 1 yearly; 2 workshops - Spring & Fall
- Limited Services

Student Services Model Project

Focus:

- Rigorous Coursework
- How do we build a bridge from Middle school to High school?

Statistics from Jackman Middle School:

- Almost 500-600 students matriculate to Valley High School in 9th grade
- 300 are no longer at Valley after the 2nd semester of their 9th grade year
- Constant conversation with Adults (counselors) at school to track student progress

Faculty Workgroup

Focus:

- 1st year teachers
- Beliefs/Knowledge/Skills
- Why: Is it about instruction?
- Pre-service is an opportunity
- High % of new teachers in GEAR-UP schools