GEAR UP, based in Yakima, Wash., is a grant program that helps middle and high school students from low-income families increase their academic preparation, get ready for college, graduate from high school and have postsecondary success.

Since its inception in 1999, UW GEAR UP has provided over $62 million in funding and served over 17,000 students in the Skagit and Yakima Valleys of Washington state.

The UW has successfully completed and met the goals and objectives of three six-year awards and is currently in a fourth: Lower Yakima Valley GEAR UP (1999-2005/6); Two Valleys-One Vision GEAR UP (2005-2011/12); GEAR UP Sky’s the Limit (2006-2012/13) and Rural Initiative in STEM Education and Undergraduate Preparation GEAR UP (2011-2018).

GEAR UP schools are selected for funding based on the percentage of 6th and 7th grade students who qualify for free and reduced lunch. Eligibility requires 50%; the average for UW GEAR UP/RISE UP schools is 82%.

UW GEAR UP high school graduation rates have improved since 1999, and are now approaching the Washington state average.

In 2011, almost 60 percent of the students served by Two Valleys-One Vision GEAR UP transitioned to higher education compared to 35 percent in 2010.

Since 2005, 457 UW GEAR UP students have enrolled at UW-Seattle. Of those students, 190 have earned an undergraduate degree and 196 are still enrolled.

Among the UW GEAR UP students who have attended UW-Seattle, 40 are Diversity Scholars and 23 are Endowed Scholars.

Toppenish’s Trevor Greene was named 2013 National High School Principal of the Year and Zillah High School’s Jeff Charbonneau was named 2013 National Teacher of the Year.

The “Principles of Engineering” class at East Valley High School was one of five national winners of the 2014 Samsung Solve for Tomorrow contest. More than 2,300 schools from across the country participated. East Valley’s project demonstrated enhanced uses of irrigation water.

Grandview High School received a 2013 Washington Achievement Award from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the State Board of Education for high progress and improving its five-year graduation rate.

Toppenish High School has been the recipient of numerous awards in recent years including the following: 2013 Washington Achievement Award, 2012 KCTS Golden Apple/Stanley O. McNaughton Award, 2011 Project Lead the Way National Certified Engineering Program, 2011 OSPI School of Innovation, 2010 Washington Achievement Award and 2008 U.S. News & World Report Silver Medal (top 3% of high schools in the nation).

Granger Middle School received a 2013 Washington Achievement Award for teaching English language acquisition.

In 2013, the Sunnyside School District Board of Directors was named School Board of the Year and School Board of Distinction by the Washington State School Director’s Association. Among Sunnyside’s accomplishments was a remarkable graduation rate increase from 45 percent in 2006-07 to 80 percent in 2011-12.

Four VEX robotics teams from Toppenish Middle School qualified for the 2013 World Championships in Anaheim, Calif.
IN THE NEWS

• **Focus on Science, Tech Pays Off in Soaring Graduation Rate**
  Seattle Times/June 14, 2014

• **Eighth and Ninth Graders Get Early Introduction to Engineering at Summer Institute**
  OMA&D Web Site/August 15, 2013

• **Senator Patty Murray Honored for Commitment to Education**
  OMA&D Web Site/August 18, 2013

• **Gearing Up Kids for Success**
  UW Viewpoint Magazine/Fall 2013 (Pg 8)

• **UW GEAR UP Partner Accolades Reflect Program’s Impact**
  OMA&D Web Site/July 22, 2013

• **Jeff Charbonneau is National Teacher of the Year**
  Huffington Post/April 22, 2013

• **UW and Regional Organizations to Participate in Yakima Valley Science & Engineering Festival**
  OMA&D Web Site/March 22, 2013

• **UW GEAR UP Celebrates New Building in Toppenish**
  OMA&D Web Site/February 25, 2013

• **Toppenish High School Principal Named National Principal of the Year**
  KIMATV.com/Sept. 6, 2012

• **GEAR UP Program Helps Students Look Up**
  Seattle Times/August 8, 2012

• **Congressman Chaka Fattah Visits with UW GEAR UP Students**
  OMA&D Web Site/August 9, 2012

www.uwgearup.org

AREAS OF IMPACT

IMPROVED RESULTS IN MATH & READING

• The Lower Yakima Valley GEAR UP, the first UW GEAR UP grant that began in 1999, fostered tremendous progress in students successfully passing the state standardized tests for math and reading. In these schools, reading achievement increased from 17.5% in 1999 to 43.4% in 2004-05. Math achievement increased from 7.5% in 1999 to 23.7% in 2004-05.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT & SUCCESS IN ADVANCED MATH

• GEAR UP Two Valleys-One Vision (TVOV) and Sky’s the Limit (SKY) saw an increased advanced math course-passing rate from 2007-11. Specifically, GEAR UP TVOV saw a 10.4 percent increase in 2011 compared to 2007. To accomplish this, GEAR UP provided students services in tutoring and homework assistance, computer assisted lab instruction, counseling and academic planning, and family engagement opportunities. GEAR UP also offered professional development for teachers and supported the implementation of Project Lead the Way (PLTW) which provides a world-class curriculum and high-quality teacher professional development model, combined with an engaged network of educators and corporate and community partners, to help students develop the skills necessary to succeed in the global economy.

INCREASE IN SAT/ACT TEST TAKING

• According to the College Board, an indicator of college readiness and persistence is the SAT exam. GEAR UP student participation increased in SAT/ACT in 2011. Within one-year, TVOV GEAR UP saw a 149-student increase. GEAR UP contributing factors included family and community engagement, learning-based field trips along with guided site visits, and an increase in career and college requirement awareness. In short, these various programs made shifts toward more proactive student academic preparation.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) STUDENT PERFORMANCE

• Enrollment in college preparatory coursework such as Advanced Placement (AP) provides students with the opportunity to engage in rigorous classes with the expectation of college matriculation and completion. GEAR UP school districts have seen the value of providing students access to these advanced courses and creating the necessary support networks to help them succeed at the high school and postsecondary levels. In 2010-2011, Burlington-Edison School District, located in the Skagit Valley, had 24 percent of their students participating in AP courses, with 72 percent passing the courses and 67 percent passing the exam. Wapato School District, located in the Yakima Valley, had 28 percent of their students participating in AP courses, with 42 percent passing the courses and 67 percent passing the exam.