

Senior Year Checklist

By: Ann Pike, GEAR UP Regional Technical Assistance Coordinator

May

- Most colleges require an answer from you with a deposit by May 1st.
- As soon as you have decided which offer to accept, notify all colleges to which you have been accepted of your decision.
- Send the acceptance deposit by deadline specified.
- If you qualified for student or parent loans, get the right forms and review the lenders to see which one is right for you.

June

- Make sure your final transcript is sent to the college you chose.
- Finalize college-housing plans.
- Use the summer to earn extra money for your post-secondary education.
- Shop carefully for everything you will need for college.
- Keep in touch with your college financial aid office to check the status of finances.
- Find out what supports might be available at your college to make your first year successful.
- Relax and look forward to a great college experience.

Congratulations on your hard work toward accomplishing your college goals!

NCCEP/GEARUP Capacity Building Workshop "Raising the Bar on Academic Excellence"

By: Angela Burgess, Maine Parent Federation GEAR UP Statewide Parent Involvement Coordinator

Six Maine Parent Federation staff members (Angela Burgess, Maurie Stockford, Cynthia Sproul, Casey Kimball, Marian Desrosiers, and Janice LaChance) and Judy Pottle, a GEAR UP Regional Technical Assistance Coordinator from Maine Support Network, attended the NCCEP/GEAR UP Capacity Building Workshop on February 11-14, 2007, in Atlanta, Georgia.

The first two sessions focused on helping our team with "Unbundling the Problem." In the first session, "Research and Design," we conducted self assessments and discussed these with other group members. In the second session, "Problem Identification," we discussed measurable outcomes and identified some of the greatest challenges for students.

In the afternoon there were a variety of workshops from which to choose. Our team attended workshops on the unique challenges and opportunities for rural schools and information about Indian Education. The team also had a homework assignment for the first night to prepare us for our work on day two.

Sessions three and four were on "Academic Rigor and Support." There was discussion on an overview of research; high-impact strategies; what we need to stop, start, and continue within our group planning; how to use the planning pyramid and activity fishbone; adding measures and taking ownership; and a 12-month calendar of planning to improve and support academic rigor.

We learned a lot from other GEAR UP programs as well. For example, the team from Oregon talked about a state standard for writing in the middle school that is a model embedded in the curriculum across subject areas. This model will be passed forward to the teachers at the high school and developed further for that age group.

Vermont has a Tutor Academy to train tutors. Oregon had some relationship based tutors called "advocates" whose role was also to contact parents if the students' grades were slipping.

Chicago GEAR UP shared information about their Saturday School at the High School for middle school students to be tutored by high school teachers (who were paid). The students were electing to attend so the teachers enjoyed teaching a full class of kids who wanted to be there.

Many states are still working to identify the most effective and efficient ways to engage parents. Maine seems to be farther along in its commitment to, and process for, engaging parents.

Overall, the conference offered a great learning experience, and the Maine GEAR UP team was glad to have had the opportunity to participate.

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Maine GEAR UP Newsletter

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Developing an Integrated Student Support System: Mt. Abram High's Leveraging Resources to Ensure Student Success

By: Margaret Arbuckle, GEAR UP Regional Technical Assistance Coordinator

Traditional silos have been replaced with an integrated student support system at Mt. Abram High School. GEAR-UP, guidance/counseling, administration, and career planning personnel are now working as a united team to increase student and family awareness, aspirations, and readiness for college. The changes were prompted by a downsized and overworked guidance department, increasing student needs regarding post-secondary planning, and heightened concern about college retention rates. It started with the creation of a visual map depicting all of the available support services. Staff were able to see who was doing what and where there were overlaps or gaps. Shifts were made, leading to more coordination and collaboration, as well as improved efficiency and effectiveness. The GEAR-UP liaison, Bonnie Clark, is well integrated in the system. She serves as a member of the Grade 9 team, as well as the transition team; works with guidance and career planning visiting sending schools, meeting with parents and students, and assisting with PSAT and SAT prep; and provides direct assistance to students and their parents during and after school hours. "The system works because we're playing as a team," noted Kirsten Brown-Burbank, the assistant director of community education. The result is deeper utilization of college-going resources and services. She concluded that "it feels like we've done more to really help students explore and focus on postsecondary planning - far more than just visiting colleges. We're all in here every day for students and have all these support services in place. It's pretty exciting."

The New GEAR UP Maine Podcast

By: Emily Liebling, AmeriCorps VISTA GEAR UP Coordinator

If you have visited the GEAR UP website recently (www.gearupme.org) you may have noticed our new podcast! Podcasting is a fun way to pass along information through an audio file posted on the internet. You can listen to new episodes (interviews and information) online by accessing our website. Another option is to have the episodes automatically download onto your computer by subscribing (free of charge) to our podcasts.

Our first episode is an interview with a few Maine GEAR UP high school students about their plans for college and beyond. You will hear about their aspirations, what steps they are taking to accomplish their goals, and the influential people who support them.

Next, we interviewed a senior who spoke with us about the importance of early preparation for college. As a student who has only recently buckled down to her school work and is having difficulty being accepted into the college programs to which she has applied, she shares with us what can be done to involve students at a younger age so that they are prepared when their senior year comes around.

The final episode to date was the inspiration for the article in our fall '07 newsletter about all of the wonderful things Narraguagus High School is up to. Listen to this episode to hear first-hand what these exceptional teachers and administrators have to say.

If you have an idea for a podcast, or someone you think we should interview, we're all ears! Please email emily@mainesupportnetwork.org.

Virtual Tours: There is more than one way to visit colleges today.

Jessica Walker, the GEAR UP Liaison for Southern Aroostook High School, planned a fun and educational event for SAHS students and parents. She hosted a virtual college tour evening for all students in grades 10 and 11. The event was a huge success! Below is a picture of Jessica with two student participants. Congratulations, Jess!



Maine Parent Federation Regional Parent Involvement Coordinator Profiles



Angela Burgess
Statewide Parent Involvement Coordinator

Angela Burgess has worked with the Maine Parent Federation for over six years. Prior to her current position she was employed in business management, and she also worked for the Maine Army National Guard in Augusta. She has been continuing her education by taking classes at the University of Maine in Augusta on a part time basis to work toward her degree in public administration. Raised in Hallowell, Maine, Angela now lives in Winsor with her husband. Angela has two grown children, Jason and Meaghen, as well as a grandson, Caleb.

Marian Desrosiers
Counties: Cumberland
GU Districts: Portland Public Schools

Marian Desrosiers comes to Maine via rural New York where she was a family and community partnership manager, an early childhood adjunct professor, and a public school teacher with a degree in interdisciplinary studies education.



Casey Kimball
Counties: Franklin, Somerset
GU Districts: MSAD 49, MSAD 58, MSAD 59, MSAD 74

Casey Kimball is a graduate of the University of Maine System with a bachelor's degree in mental health and human services, as well as a certified mental health rehabilitation technician. Casey has gained teaching experience as an Education Technician as well as a Substitute Teacher for MSAD #11. Her experience in substituting for the head teacher of the Life Skills room for Gardiner Regional Middle School led her to pursue her BSN in the mental health field.

Casey was instrumental in developing the Maine Parent Federation E-Mentoring Program. Being a parent of two young children herself, Casey can certainly appreciate the many difficulties faced in the world of parenting! Casey currently resides in Chelsea, Maine, with her husband and their two sons.

Cynthia Sproul
Counties: Aroostook, Hancock, Piscataquis, Penobscot
GU Districts: CSD 9, MSAD 04, MSAD 30, MSAD 70, Union 90, Union 96

Cynthia Sproul has raised two children, a boy and a girl, and is now helping with six grandchildren in her hometown of Augusta, ME. After graduating from UMO and earning a B.S. in Education, she later attended the University of Miami graduate school in early childhood special education. Cynthia has taught pre-K to 2nd grade for more than ten years, in addition to some middle school math and science, and high school special education. In 1996, she became the Children with Disabilities Coordinator for childcare centers and family childcare homes in a program in central Texas. She was promoted in this program to Child Care Coordinator for fourteen counties in East Texas in 1998, and then became the Program Director in Austin. Cynthia returned to Augusta, Maine, in late 2003 and became the Early Intervention Specialist for Project Plus, the Early Learning Opportunities Grant for Kennebec and Somerset counties. Before coming to MPF, she worked at Lee Academy as librarian, dorm parent, editor of their alumni magazine, and as their public relations person. Although she enjoyed that experience very much, she is glad to be home in Augusta again.



Maurie Stockford
Counties: Washington
GU Districts: ME Indian Ed., Union 103, MSAD 14, MSAD 19, MSAD 37, Union 102, Union 104, Union 106

Maurie Stockford has been involved in education for over ten years, teaching students in kindergarten through high school. Prior to her work in education, she was employed in business management for eleven years. Maurie grew up in central Maine, attended Maranacook area schools, and graduated from Bowdoin College with degrees in English and government. She has attended graduate school at Southwest Texas State University and the University of Maine, both in education. Maurie lives in Mount Vernon with her son Andrew, a senior at Maranacook Community School.

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GEAR UP Regional Technical Assistance Coordinator Profiles



WENDY ALLEN
Region: North-Eastern | GU Districts: Union 90, Union 96

Wendy Allen lives in West Paris with her 11-year-old son Ian and husband Tom. She also has a 28-year-old daughter, Maureen, who is finishing law school, and a 25-year-old son, Colin, who is working in LA. She enjoys singing, swimming and various creative pursuits. Her areas of expertise include teaching leadership skills and transition planning with young people with disabilities, facilitating groups and organizations, and organizing professional development activities. In the last 10 years she has worked as a consultant for the Center for Educational Transformation at the Maine Department of Education and as a technical assistance coordinator for the Maine Committee on Transition. Currently she is running an after school program in addition to her work with GEAR UP.



MARGARET ARBUCKLE
Region: Western | GU Districts: MSAD 04, MSAD 49, MSAD 58, MSAD 59, MDAS 74

Margaret Arbuckle is the executive director of the Western Maine Partnership, working to promote the development of learning-centered schools, where students as well as their educators are deeply engaged in learning. She has consulted with school systems throughout the United States and Canada and has written several books or chapters on professional development systems. Current work and learning of particular interest to Margaret is the assessment of professional learning capacity in schools and the development of the distributed leadership necessary to build and sustain such learning communities.



THERESE BERNIER BURNS
Region: Southern | GU Districts: Portland Public Schools

Therese Bernier Burns is the Assistant Director of the Maine Support Network. This job encompasses many areas of education. Therese has the exciting task of not only developing and providing professional development in schools, but working in schools with teachers and students as a GEAR UP Regional Support Staff in the southern region. On any given day she may be supervising her team of regional facilitators as they strive to provide updated professional development across the state, providing professional development for a district in-service, or helping to raise aspirations for all students as a GEAR UP coordinator in Portland schools. Her position takes her to all regions of the state where she has the advantage of learning about all the new and innovative things happening in our schools. Therese recently earned her master's degree in education from Cambridge College. Congratulations, Therese!



BETTY JORDAN
Region: Eastern | GU Districts: ME Indian Ed., MSAD 19, MSAD 37, Union 102, Union 103, Union 104, Union 106

Betty Jordan has spent nearly 40 years in education. She has taught in regular classrooms and worked in the area of special education for a total of 14 years. She has also worked in administration as a special education director, curriculum coordinator, gifted and talented director, and superintendent of schools. Since 2000, she has been the director of the Washington County Consortium for School Improvement (WCCSI), a regional partnership. Projects for WCCSI have included a research study on adolescent literacy with THE LAB at Brown University, a Federal grant for polycoms in every K-16 school in Washington County, Early College as part of Washington County's DECLA grant (Gates) for five rural high schools, a Title IIA literacy grant for grades 4-12, and the on-going provision of high quality professional development to the schools. Betty is enjoying her new work with GEAR UP and focusing on harnessing distance learning, as well as increased student literacy, in keeping with the goals of GEAR UP.



ANN PIKE
Region: Western | GU Districts: MSAD 04, MSAD 49, MSAD 58, MSAD 59, MSAD 74

Ann Pike is an educational consultant for the Western Maine Partnership. She designs, and delivers or directs, professional development opportunities serving school districts, administrative teams, school staff, and educators statewide. Formats vary from multi-year on-site professional learning, to weeklong institutes and graduate level courses, as well as workshops with follow-up. Content has included managing meetings for learning, developing writers, assessment, standards-based grading, using data, engaging parents, differentiation, mentoring, strategies for powerful teaching and learning, and, most recently, working with the issues of poverty. Ann has served as director of both the Teacher Leadership Grant Network and the Consulting Schools Project for the Western Maine Partnership. She has also served as a regional coordinator for SEED and a facilitator for School Learning Lab. Currently she is a regional facilitator for Maine Support Network in addition to her work with GEAR UP.



JUDY POTTLE
Region: Northern | GU Districts: CSD 9, MSAD 14, MSAD 70

Judy Pottle lives in Littleton, Maine, and has been a high school science teacher, home/school coordinator, Title 1 teacher, and tutor. While in Title 1, she worked on school-wide changes and initiatives. Judy also worked as a GEAR UP advisor for five years before assuming her new role as a regional coordinator, and she has seen many positive changes within the schools where she works that support college readiness. Judy and her husband are both first-generation college graduates and have three children who have all graduated from college, one of whom is now in graduate school.