



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0023

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GOVERNOR

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COMMISSIONER

February 24, 2010

To: GEAR UP Superintendents, Principals and Guidance Directors  
From: David Noble Stockford, GEAR UP Project Director, Team Leader and Policy Director  
Re: New Enrollment of GEAR UP Students and Access to Student Data

On March 18, 2009, Maine State GEAR UP received permission from James Davis, our federal project officer, to enroll all students in 7-10th grade that attend a GEAR UP school, starting with the 2009-2010 school year. This means that these students are now officially identified GEAR UP students, and the following FERPA exception applies: A school MAY disclose education records without parental consent when the disclosure is to state or local educational authorities auditing or evaluating Federal or State supported education programs or enforcing Federal laws which relate to those programs (34 CFR § 99.31).

However, a parent letter template was distributed to all principals and GEAR UP liaisons on August 19, 2009, and should have been sent to all parents of the newly enrolled students to notify them of their child's involvement. While this is not mandated federally, parental involvement and clear communication is important to the success of the GEAR UP project.

This enrollment supports our collective ability to:

- Determine best practices through analyzing outcome data;
- Support sustainability of best practices;
- Increased flexibility with the identification of match dollars; and
- Prepare to write a competitive grant application for continued GEAR UP funding in 2011, when this grant expires.

It is important to note that scholarships are not available to these newly enrolled students – scholarship funding is contingent upon renewed GEAR UP funding.

The Maine Department of Education contracts with the Maine Support Network (MSN) to administer and implement the project. They are acting as agents of the state and have access to all student data and information that they require to complete our federally mandated Annual Performance Reports. This includes grades, attendance, test scores, disability information and free/reduced lunch status.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

David Noble Stockford  
Policy Director and Team Leader  
Special Services  
DNS/el:msn/gdw