

Jay school gears up for college-bound students



[Eileen Adams](#), Special to the Sun Journal

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JAY — Spruce Mountain High School Principal T.J. Plourde said a series of meetings is planned this spring to promote attendance at colleges, universities and other institutions of higher learning.

He announced in January that the school received a federal Gear-Up grant of \$75,000 per year for seven years — a total of \$525,000 — to increase post secondary education. The program is coordinated by the University of Maine at Farmington.

"This grant will get parents to visualize that their children will go to college," he said. "Eighty-five of 120 seniors have been accepted. But the issue is, will they go to college?"

Parent meetings and college visits will begin just prior to April vacation.

The plan for using the money is expected to be finalized in about two weeks.

School guidance counselors Charlene Roussel and Brooke Bernier said they are pleased Gear-Up follows students from seventh grade through the first year of college.

"We want to track what happens after they begin. We'll prep them while they are here," Bernier said.

They two are helping students with college applications. Also, financial aid nights earlier this school year were well attended, Roussel said.

She said the grant will help provide more opportunities for college-related activities, as well as ways to overcome obstacles to college attendance.

Plourde said he'd like to see college visits extend to overnight, rather than just a day for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

"The biggest thing is that kids will understand how to get there and what they want to do," he said.