

AUGUST 2025

THE GEAR UP GAZETTE

*A quarterly bulletin for GEAR UP Maine RISE students, parents,
and community members.*

Happy Summer!

GEAR UP is bustling with activity right now. Even though we are wrapping up the academic years with our schools and students, we are very much gearing up (see what I did there?) for the coming year.

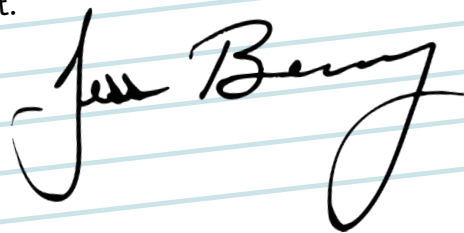
We've just returned from our annual conference in San Francisco and were so excited to have three students and family members join us there. We're bursting with fresh ideas and enthusiasm for Year 3 of the GEAR UP grant, and growing our relationships with student leaders and families is just one part of the plan.

We're in the midst of hiring new staff to support the additional grade levels GEAR UP will be serving this coming school year. We're excited to be able to provide services for 8th through 12th grade now. As such, our School Specialist Team has been busy planning and brainstorming these past couple of months to prepare.

The GEAR UP team is also well entrenched in reviewing Action Plans for our schools. These action plans are filled with all of the activities and services that will be offered throughout the year for students to participate in. From college visits to job site exploration, there will be something for everyone's interest!

Finally, as we approach the Fall, keep an eye out for information about GEAR UP Week. We hope you'll spread the word of the importance of GEAR UP during the week!

We're so excited to be part of your community. Thank you for your trust and support as we move into another year of the GEAR UP Grant.



WHAT'S UP, STUDENTS?

Get Ahead on Fall Opportunities!

Apply for the GEAR UP Maine RISE Extended Learning Opportunity (ELO): Student Content Creator! Students in grades 7 through 12 at GEAR UP Maine RISE schools are invited to apply for the Social Media Student Content Creator ELO.

Participants will:

- Create short videos and posts for Instagram and TikTok
- Work with the GEAR UP and MXH Marketing teams
- Highlight student life, events, college visits, and more
- Build media, communication, and storytelling skills

This ELO runs for one semester. You may apply for Fall or Spring. We are accepting only 2 to 3 students per term.

Show Up, Stay Connected:

Did you know missing just a couple of days each month, excused or not, can make it harder to keep up with school and slow down your learning?

In Maine, one in four students misses this much school, and that can make things feel overwhelming.

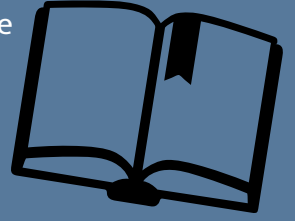
If school starts to feel tough, reach out to your GEAR UP School Specialist for help. Every day you show up, you're building a stronger foundation for your success.

Students from Fort Fairfield ended school with a visit to UMO and Husson College! Sign up for college visits whenever you can!



Back-to-School Kickoff

A new school year is your chance to reset and refocus!



Start by getting your supplies and schedule organized so you feel prepared from day one.

Set one academic goal and one personal goal that excites you.

And don't forget to introduce yourself to your teachers and school specialists early; they're here to support you and can be a big help throughout the year.

FAFSA & Financial Aid Reminder

Planning for life after high school starts now—FAFSA is key to unlocking grants, scholarships, and low-interest student loans.

If you haven't started your FAFSA yet, fall is the perfect time. Attend your school FAFSA info sessions.

Need help? GEAR UP School Specialists can guide you through it step-by-step. The earlier you apply, the more options you'll have!



College Prep: Explore Your Future

Thinking about what's next?

Use tools like GEAR UP AcadeME to explore careers and colleges, visit campuses, and connect with programs that match your interests.

Even if graduation feels far away, the steps you take now, like exploring majors, visiting a college fair, or job shadowing, can make your path clearer.



NATIONAL GEAR UP WEEK

SEPTEMBER 22-26, 2025

This week is all about highlighting the opportunities, growth, and accomplishments our students achieve through the **GEAR UP Maine RISE** program. Together, we're building bright futures and opening doors to college and career success.

National GEAR UP Week is your chance to:

- Share what GEAR UP has meant to you and your school
- Showcase the experiences, skills, and achievements gained through the program
- Thank the teachers, specialists, and community partners who make it possible
- Inspire others to get involved in helping students reach their dreams



Let's fill the week with positivity and excitement! Even if your school isn't holding an in-person event, you can still join the celebration by:

- Posting your GEAR UP stories and photos on social media using #GEARUPWorks and #GEARUPMaineRISE
- Sharing highlights on your school website
- Writing a thank-you note to your School Specialist or a mentor
- Talking to friends and family about your future plans and how GEAR UP is helping you get there

Let's commemorate the progress our students are making toward their lifelong goals.

Share your story, inspire your community, and help us spread the word: GEAR UP works!



FOR FAMILIES & CAREGIVERS



Maine Loves Public Schools:

We're excited to partner with Maine Loves Public Schools to celebrate and share the incredible stories happening in our schools every day. Their mission is all about building trust and community support by highlighting what makes Maine's public schools shine.

What does this mean for you?
We'll be sharing GEAR UP stories, and you get an inside peek!

Follow @mainelovespublicschools for daily inspiration.
Learn more: mainelovespublicschools.org

Let's keep shining a light on the amazing things happening in our schools.



Every Day Counts!

Let's stay on track together! In Maine, about 25% of students miss 10% or more of the school year (almost 20 days) and these missed days can lead to challenges in learning and staying engaged.

Absences often stem from real-life issues like illness, mental health, or unstable housing and not by choice.

You can make a big difference by encouraging your student to attend every day possible and by working with us to address any barriers that come up. **If your family is facing challenges that make attendance difficult, please reach out to your student's GEAR UP School Specialist.** We're here to help with resources, guidance, and support.



Back to School **BINGO**

Talked to your School Specialist	Got to school on time	Helped someone find their class	Introduced yourself to a teacher
Brought all your supplies on day one	Wrote down your goals for the year	Signed up for a college or career event	Joined a club or sports team
Got your school ID	Got homework on the first day	Took a first day of school selfie	Made a new friend
Followed GEAR UP on social media	Used your planner or calendar	Made a to-do list	Free Space for GEAR UP Students!