

Getting Ready

Helping your
**freshman or
sophomore**
prepare for
college and career

WASHINGTON
**HIGHER
EDUCATION**
COORDINATING BOARD

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

GEAR UP is a national effort to encourage and prepare more students from low-income families to enter and succeed in post-secondary education.

Washington State GEAR UP is a partnership of the Office of the Governor, the Higher Education Coordinating Board, the University of Washington and the College Success Foundation.

GEAR UP is funded by the U.S. Department of Education in collaboration with state government, local communities, school districts, colleges, universities and the private sector.

The parent handbook was funded by a grant from the College Spark Washington.

COLLEGE SPARK
WASHINGTON
FUNDING SUCCESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



A **GEAR UP**
Publication



CONGRATULATIONS

You've got a student in high school!

The next several years will be challenging but also exciting. You'll see your student grow from a teen into a confident young adult ready to explore the world beyond high school.

But what can you do? How can you help your student do well in the first several years of high school and prepare for the future?

Here are **some tips** to make the most of high school.



9th GRADE

- ▶ Encourage your student to **join an extracurricular activity** at school. This could be sports or music, student government or the yearbook, or anything else. Getting involved is the best way to get to know teachers and other students and to show the student is "well-rounded" for colleges and employers.
- ▶ Encourage your student to **participate in class, turn in homework** on time, and **focus on learning**. High school grades become a part of your student's permanent record. If your school has an on-line program to share grades, find out how you can log on.
- ▶ Find out if **you can volunteer** at the high school. Volunteering will help you meet teachers and other parents, and show your student that school is important.
- ▶ Schedule time to meet with your student's **advisor**. Find out what the school will be doing to help your student prepare for college and careers. This may include taking an **interest inventory**, learning about **career pathways**, and **researching careers and postsecondary options**.
- ▶ Review your student's **high school course plan** and ensure that your student is being encouraged to register for advanced classes, particularly in **math and science**.
- ▶ Start **saving money for college**, and review the FAFSA 4caster (www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov) to see what financial aid your family might receive.

10th GRADE

- ▶ Encourage your student to remain involved in **extracurricular and volunteer service activities** at school. (Your school may have a volunteer service requirement.) Continue to **volunteer** as a parent.
- ▶ Encourage your student to take the **PSAT** (a college entrance exam) for practice during the fall, and to prepare for the **WASL exam**, which will be given in the spring. Ask your school counselor how to help your student prepare for **other entrance exams** – for the military, community college, or four-year college.
- ▶ Schedule time to meet with your student's **advisor**. Find out how your student is **researching careers and postsecondary options**. Find out if your student can apply for a **summer job or internship**.
- ▶ Review your student's **high school course plan** and ensure that your student is being encouraged to register for advanced classes. Find out if your student can register for **Running Start, Tech Prep, Advanced Placement (AP)** or **International Baccalaureate (IB)** classes.
- ▶ Continue **saving money for college**, and help your student **research scholarships**.

11th & 12th GRADE

- ▶ Encourage your student to **remain involved in extracurricular and volunteer service activities** at school. (Your school may have a volunteer service requirement for graduation.) Continue to **volunteer** as a parent.
- ▶ Encourage your student to **take the PSAT exam** in the fall of junior year, and the **SAT exam** by the fall of senior year. Ask your school counselor how to help your student prepare for **other entrance exams** – for the military (ASVAB), community college (ASSET or COMPASS), or four-year college (PSAT, SAT, PLAN, ACT).
- ▶ Schedule time to meet with your student's **advisor**. Find out how your student is progressing with **comparing postsecondary options and majors**. Learn about college application deadlines and what you can do to help.
- ▶ Review your student's **high school course plan** and ensure that your student is registering for advanced classes. Find out how your student can enroll in **Running Start, Tech Prep, AP** or **IB** classes during junior and senior year.
- ▶ Continue **saving money for college**, complete a **FAFSA financial aid form** (www.fafsa.ed.gov) and help your student **apply for scholarships**.



College is more important than ever

Fifty years ago, it was easy to get a good job right out of high school. In 1950, **80 percent** of American jobs didn't require any higher education. You could get a job with just a year or two of high school, and you certainly didn't need to go to college.

But things are different now. Today, **only 15 percent** of jobs are open to people without "postsecondary" education – that

is, education or specialized training after high school.

Your student will need postsecondary education to succeed. That may be an apprenticeship or community college, a four-year college, or even a graduate degree. There are many different options for postsecondary education. Finding the right one depends on what your student wants to do for a career.

Median Earnings for Workers Age 25 and Up

The skills and knowledge students need to be admitted to college are the same ones they need to succeed at a job. Being **college-ready** means your child is ready to do well in a four-year university, a community college, an apprenticeship or a good job.

On average, people who get college degrees will earn almost **twice as much** money in their lifetime as those with only a high school diploma.

Didn't finish high school

\$23,176

GED or high school diploma

\$31,075

Some college – but no degree

\$36,381

Associate (2-year) degree

\$38,597

Bachelor's (4-year) degree

\$50,394

Master's degree

\$60,154

Doctorate degree (Ph.D.)

\$77,445

Professional degree (Doctor, lawyer, MBA)

\$97,443



Who am I?

College might seem far away for a student who is just starting high school, but it's important to start planning now.

One good way to prepare during the first two years of high school is to help your student

answer the question, **"Who am I?"** Talk with your student about the things he or she likes to do. Find out about jobs that sound interesting and the **Career Pathway** for those jobs. Ask your student these questions:

DO YOU LIKE?				
working outdoors or solving problems	expressing yourself creatively or performing	organizing things or persuading people	helping other people	working on a team to solve problems
YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN CAREERS IN:				
Agriculture, Science & Natural Resources Pathway	Art, Media, Communications, & Design Pathway	Management, & Finance Pathway	Education, Social, & Health Services Pathway	Engineering, Science, & Technology Pathway
CAREERS INCLUDE:				
Farmer/Rancher Fisherman Forest Ranger Geologist Timber Harvester Veterinarian	Actor Director Graphic Designer Journalist Librarian Spokesperson	Accountant Business Owner Office Manager Salesperson Stock Broker Store Manager	Cosmetologist Doctor Firefighter Police Officer Teacher Travel Agent	Architect Computer Scientist Electrician Engineer HVAC Technician Mechanic

Then help your student learn more about careers in these areas and the education they require. Your student's advisor may be able to help your student take interest assessments or aptitude tests to explore different careers. Or you can use the Internet or a library to learn more about different career ideas.

This chart shows the type of postsecondary education needed for different types of careers. Which of these sound interesting to your student?

Two Years of College (Associate Degree or Apprenticeship)	Four Years of College (Bachelor's Degree)	More Than Four Years of College (Graduate Degree)
Auto Mechanic Commercial Artist Computer Technician Dental Hygienist Drafter Graphic Designer Hotel/Restaurant Manager Medical Lab Technician Insurance Agent Registered Nurse Surgical Technologist Surveyor	Accountant Computer Systems Analyst Dietitian Editor Engineer FBI Agent Forensic Technician Investment Banker Journalist Pharmacist Public Relations Specialist Social Worker Teacher Writer	Architect Biologist Chiropractor Dentist Doctor Economist Geologist Lawyer Librarian Priest or Rabbi Psychologist Public Policy Analyst Sociologist University Professor Veterinarian

Source: US Census Bureau, Earnings year-round full-time workers age 25 and over, [DATE] www.pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032005perinc/new03_010.htm

WHY HIGH SCHOOL MATTERS

Five tips to help your child make the most of high school

1. Work hard in core classes.

High school students should take Math, Science, English and Social Studies every year, even if your school does not require it.

2. Take advanced classes.

Find out if your student's school offers advanced or honors classes. Your student may be able to get college credit in high school.

3. Take electives in areas that interest you.

Encourage your student to explore electives in different areas. The first two years of high school are a great time for students to explore their interests and gain skills in different areas.

4. Get involved in at least one activity at school.

Getting involved will make your student a better candidate for college and careers – colleges and employers want “well-rounded” applicants.

5. Get to know at least one adult at school.

Your student's advisor or a favorite teacher can give advice on classes and how to prepare

Your student will have many opportunities during high school. But he or she will get only one chance – so it's important to take school seriously.

The single most important thing your student can do to make the most of high school is to take the most challenging course load possible. The courses students take in high school matter more to their future success than family income, race or even grades. That's why involvement and encouragement are so important.

Make a High School Course Plan

Your student will need to develop a course plan for his or her years in high school. This plan will be your student's road map to success – in high school and beyond.

STEP 1. Choose a Career Pathway. Career pathways are groups of jobs that are based on similar interests, skills, and abilities. Many high schools ask students to choose a career pathway during 9th grade. Ask your student to choose a pathway from the chart on page __.

STEP 2. Choose two or three careers to research. Which careers in the career pathway sound the most interesting? What education will they require after high school?

STEP 3. Learn what to take during high school. Many high schools set students' course plans based on their career pathway. What does your high school recommend?

STEP 4. Plan courses for each year. As you'll see in the chart on pages ____, it's important to take more than the minimum required for graduation.



SAMPLE COURSE PLAN

Freshman Year	First Semester	Second Semester
	English:	English
	Math:	Math:
	Science:	Science:
	Social Studies:	Social Studies:
	Elective (Language?):	Elective (Language?):
	Elective (Career Prep?)	Elective (Career Prep?)
Sophomore Year	First Semester	Second Semester
	English:	English
	Math:	Math:
	Science:	Science:
	Social Studies:	Social Studies:
	Elective (Language?):	Elective (Language?):
	Elective (Career Prep?)	Elective (Career Prep?)
Junior Year	First Semester	Second Semester
	English:	English
	Math:	Math:
	Science:	Science:
	Social Studies:	Social Studies:
	Elective (Language?):	Elective (Language?):
	Elective (Career Prep?)	Elective (Career Prep?)
Senior Year	First Semester	Second Semester
	English:	English
	Math:	Math:
	Science:	Science:
	Social Studies:	Social Studies:
	Elective (Language?):	Elective (Language?):

Do More than the Minimum!

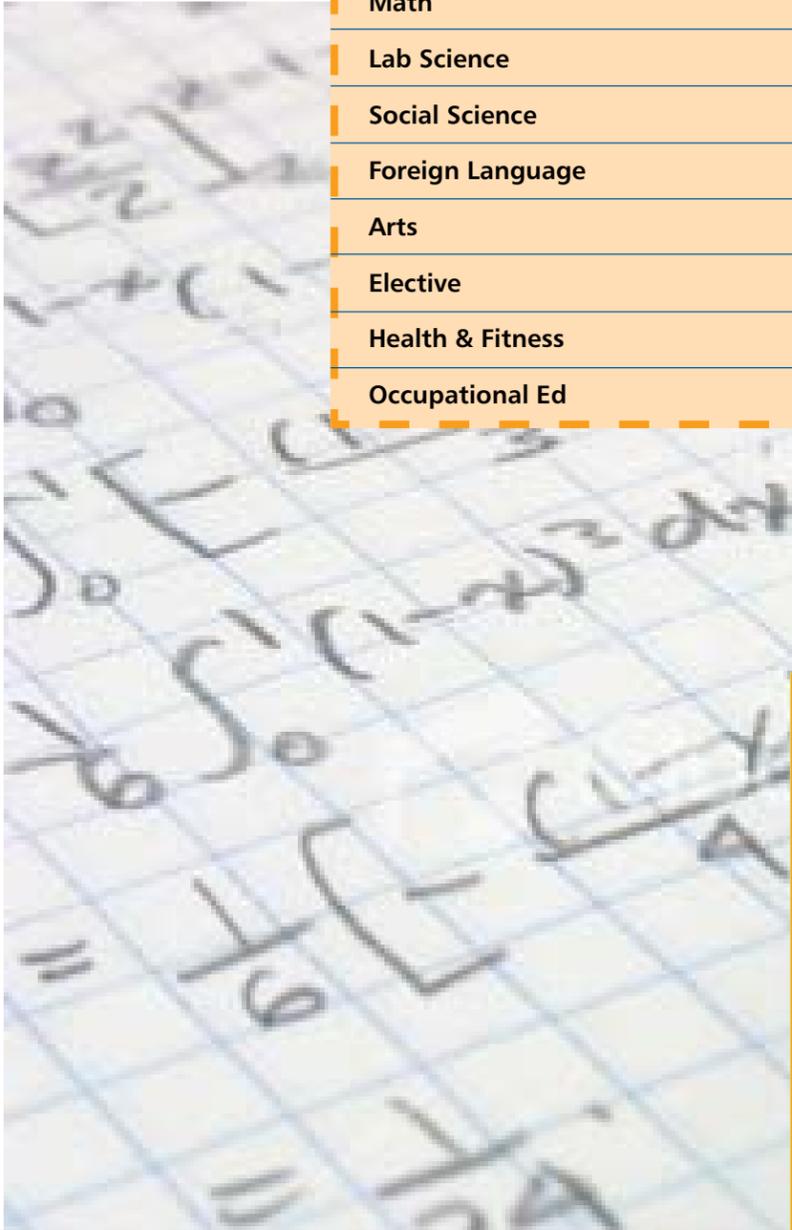
No matter what you do, it's important to do more than the minimum. That's true on the job – no matter what job you have. And it's definitely true in high school.

The State of Washington has a minimum set of requirements for graduation from high school. Your child's high school will also have a minimum set of requirements. (These requirements may be the same as the State's or they may be higher.)

But these minimum requirements may **not be enough** to qualify your student for college or for the career he or she wants.

- ▶ The State of Washington requires **only two years of math** in high school. But most colleges require **three or four years of math**.
- ▶ The State of Washington **does not require** students to take a foreign language. But most colleges require **at least two years**.
- ▶ The State of Washington requires **only three years of English** in high school. But most colleges require **four years of English**.

How does your high school compare? What are the requirements there? It's important to find out. But it's even more important to find out what your child will need to do to qualify for a dream career. You don't want to miss out because your child didn't take the right courses.



	State of Washington MINIMUM requirements (Do more than this!)	ENTER Your high school's MINIMUM requirements	Typical College Requirements	Highly Selective College Requirements	University of Washington Requirements
English	3		4	4	4
Math	2		3	4	3
Lab Science	2		2	3	2
Social Science	2.5		2	3	3
Foreign Language	0		2	2	2
Arts	1		1	1	0.5
Elective	5.5		1	1	0.5
Health & Fitness	2				
Occupational Ed	1				

3 high school requirements.

In addition to taking the right classes, your child will need to do three additional things to graduate from high school in Washington State.

- 1. High School & Beyond Plan.** Students must develop a plan for what they will do after high school. And they must show how they used their time in high school to prepare.
- 2. WASL Exam.** Students must pass the 10th grade reading and writing sections of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) exam. Students in the class of 2013 and beyond must also pass the math and science WASL exams.
- 3. Culminating Project.** The culminating project gives students the chance to apply their knowledge in a "real world" context. Most schools have students complete culminating projects during their senior year and set specific requirements for the projects.

What happens after high school?



No matter what your student dreams about doing, there is a way to get the education and training to meet this dream. Here are some options for education after high school.

APPRENTICESHIP. In an apprenticeship, your student will learn a highly skilled job (in manufacturing or high tech, health care, public safety, cooking, or construction) by working with a skilled expert. Apprenticeships usually last two to four years. They combine on-the-job training with classroom work. Apprentices earn a paycheck.

COMMUNITY OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE. Many students go to community or technical college to earn a certificate in a career or to get a two-year (Associate) degree. Students can then transfer to a four-year college or go straight into the workplace. Careers include Cosmetology, Computer-aided Drafting and Design, Diesel and Heavy Equipment Tech, Medical Office Clerk, or Culinary Arts.

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE. Students who need more education usually attend a four-year college or university to earn a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. Students can earn a degree in nearly any subject, from Asian Literature to Chemistry to Engineering.

MASTER'S DEGREE. A Master's degree lets a student move directly into a management-level career in a specialized field. It usually requires at least two years of study beyond a Bachelor's degree.

DOCTORATE DEGREE. A Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Medical Doctor (M.D.), Juris Doctor (lawyer, or J.D.) degree usually requires at least three years of school after college and sometimes many more.

MILITARY. Some students join the military right after high school or join the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in college. The military offers many different career and training opportunities... meaning students need to decide what to do before they join.

How do you know what kind of education your child needs?

There are a lot of choices for education after high school. How can you help your child decide which choice is best?

The type of education your child needs will be determined mainly by the career your child wants. Different careers require different amounts of education. In fact, even within the same "career ladder," different jobs often require different amounts of education: your child may be able to get an entry-level job with an Associate's degree, but may need a Bachelor's degree to move up.

Your school counselor or a high school career counselor will be able to help your child learn what education different careers require. You can also learn more on your own by visiting the College Board web site:

www.collegeboard.com

Postsecondary Milestones

11th GRADE

► Begin taking required entrance exams

For a four-year college:

- Take the **PSAT** in fall of junior year.
- Take the **SAT Reasoning Test** for practice in spring of junior year.
- Take AP tests for any **AP** classes.
- Consider taking **SAT Subject Tests**.

For a community college:

- Take the **ASSET** or **COMPASS** test in spring of junior year for practice.

For the military:

- Take the **ASVAB** in spring of junior year for practice.
- **Research colleges and programs**
- **Identify five to ten colleges with the programs you want**
- Get information about cost, programs and requirements for each.
- Visit local college campuses to see classes.

12th GRADE

► Finish required entrance exams

For a four-year college:

- Take the **SAT Reasoning Test**.
- Consider taking **SAT Subject Tests**. Take **AP tests** for any AP classes.
- For a community college: take the **ASSET** or **COMPASS** test.
- For the military: take the **ASVAB**.

► Apply to Colleges

- Guidance counselors recommend applying to **six to eight colleges**.
- Your student might want to consider a mix of community and four-year colleges.
- Most **application deadlines are in January** of senior year.
- Your student will need an application fee, recommendations from teachers, a personal essay, a transcript and an application form for each college.

► Apply for Financial Aid

- **FAFSA.** If you want financial aid, your family will need to complete a FAFSA form and request that it be sent to each college.
- **Decide on a College**
- Most colleges let students should know in April whether they've been admitted.
- You can then help your student decide which college to attend.

► Finish the School Year in Style

- Remind your student that even after making a college decision it's still important to keep working in high school. Final grades matter to colleges.

TESTS

What does it take to **get into college?**

College is just a few years away for your student... and now is the time to start planning. You and your student may wonder what it takes to get accepted to college. What do you have to do?

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS. No matter where your student is headed, he or she will have to take an entrance exam or two. Here are the major entrance exams your student will take during high school. Most of these tests charge a fee, but you may be able to get it waived.

To attend a four-year college or university, students need to take:	To attend a community or technical college, students need to take:	To join the military, students need to take:
<p>Preliminary SAT (PSAT) Students take the PSAT to prepare for the SAT. They usually take the PSAT in the fall of sophomore or junior year. The PSAT tests on reading, math problem-solving and writing. www.collegeboard.com</p> <p>SAT Reasoning Test The SAT is the most widely used college admissions test. It measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning and writing skills. Students usually take the SAT in junior or senior year. www.collegeboard.com</p>	<p>ASSET Placement Exam The ASSET tests basic skills in writing, reading and numerical reasoning. It also offers advanced tests in algebra and geometry. Most students take this test in junior or senior year. www.act.org/asset/</p> <p>COMPASS Exam The COMPASS helps colleges determine where to place students. It includes tests in writing, reading, pre-algebra, algebra, college algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. www.act.org/compass</p>	<p>ASVAB The ASVAB assesses new recruits' abilities and helps place them in positions. It includes eight test areas: general science, arithmetic reasoning, work knowledge, paragraph comprehension, mathematics knowledge, electronics information, auto and shop information and mechanical comprehension. www.asvabprogram.com</p>

College-bound students can also take these tests to help them increase their chances of being admitted or to receive college credit for work they've done while in high school.

<p>PLAN The PLAN is an optional practice test for the ACT that gives students feedback on their academic skills. Students take the PLAN during 10th grade. www.act.org/plan</p>	<p>ACT The ACT is another widely used admissions test. Students can take the ACT in addition to the SAT or instead of the SAT (for some colleges). The ACT measures English, mathematics, reading, and science. www.actstudent.org</p>	<p>SAT Subject Tests SAT Subject Tests help colleges decide where to place students. They are offered in many different subjects, including English, History, Mathematics, Science and Languages. www.collegeboard.com</p>	<p>AP Exams Students who take AP classes in high school can get college credit for their work if they score well on an AP exam. AP exams are offered in 22 different subject areas. Students take them in the spring of junior or senior year. www.collegeboard.com</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Paying for College

College can be expensive. But don't let money stop your child from going to college. No matter what your child wants to do, there's probably financial aid available to help.

Saving

Saving money ahead of time can help with college tuition. You can save a little or a lot, and middle school is a good time to start saving. The Washington State Guaranteed Education Tuition Program (GET) lets you pre-pay the tuition for any public college or university in Washington State. Learn more at www.get.wa.gov

Need-based Financial Aid

Many colleges will help students pay for tuition, fees, and living expenses they can't afford. There are several kinds of need-based financial aid:

- ▶ **Need-based grants and scholarships:** Grants and scholarships don't have to be repaid. They're applied directly to a student's college costs.
- ▶ **Student loans:** Loans do need to be repaid – after the student graduates. Student loans usually have low interest rates.
- ▶ **Work-study:** Many colleges have part-time jobs available on campus for students who qualify.

Every college has different need-based financial aid. But most of them have one thing in common: they require the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be completed. You can learn about the FAFSA at www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov

Merit-based Grants And Scholarships

Not all grants and scholarships are based on financial need. Students can also get help with college tuition because of high test scores, athletics, being in the military or ROTC, or even because of their background, parent's employer, or career interests. You can learn more about scholarships at www.hecb.wa.gov/Paying/index.asp

Don't Worry – You Can Pay For College!

Yes, college is expensive. But it's well worth it. Research shows that a college graduate earns almost \$1 million more over the course of a lifetime than someone who didn't go to college.



What do I want to do?

The first several years of high school are an important time. These years are when your student starts thinking seriously about what the future will hold... and what he or she dreams about doing.

And that means you're more important than ever.

Your student needs you to learn how to navigate a larger, more demanding school. Your student needs you to help research career and college ideas. And your student needs you to show how important it is to do well in school – and to do more than the minimum.

So, what can you do as the parent of a high school student?

Explore your student's interests. During the first several years of high school, students learn who they are and what they are interested in doing. Help your student get involved in activities at school. Help your student register for elective courses – in music or computers or other subjects – that sound interesting.

Help your student make the most of high school. Make sure your student attends class and turns in homework. And encourage your student to enroll in advanced and honors classes to have more options available after graduation.

Research college and careers. What careers sound interesting to your student? What education do these careers require? Work with your student's advisor or a counselor at school to learn more about college and careers and the steps your student must take to be ready to succeed.

Enjoy the beginning of high school! The first several years of high school are years of enormous growth for students, both academically and physically. Your student will become more independent and better able to navigate the world. Enjoy these years as you help your student prepare to grow even more before graduation.



For more information about the Washington State GEAR UP Project contact:

Washington State GEAR UP
Higher Education Coordinating Board
917 Lakeridge Way
P.O. Box 43430
Olympia, WA 98504-3430
(360) 753-7834
TDD (360) 753-7809
www.gearup.wa.gov

For information on any Washington GEAR UP Partnership, please contact the program directly:

Central Washington University GEAR UP Hertz
Hall, Room 110
400 E. University Way
Ellensburg, WA 98926-7543
(509) 963-1250

GEAR UP for Yakima
104 N. 4th Ave.
Yakima, WA 98902
(509) 574-6800

Eastern Washington University GEAR UP
213 Martin Hall
Cheney, WA 99004
(509) 359-4658

Wenatchee School District GEAR UP
235 Sunset Avenue
P.O. Box 1767
Wenatchee, WA 98801
(509)662-7745 ext. 514

CWU Okanogan Valley GEAR UP Project
CWU - Wenatchee
1300 5th Street
Wenatchee, WA 98809
(509) 963-3962

University of Washington State GEAR UP Project
Lewis Annex 2, Box 353765
University of Washington
Seattle, WA 98195
(206) 616-6245

The Evergreen State College GEAR UP
Serving Clover Park, Lakes and Oakville Schools
2700 The Evergreen Parkway
Olympia, Washington 98505
(360) 867-5136

WSU's One Vision Partnership GEAR UP Program
2710 University Drive
Richland, WA 99354
(509) 372-7308

WSU's Harvest of Hope GEAR UP Program
2710 University Drive
Richland, WA 99354
(509) 372-7308

