

Carlotta: I put my changes in bold. I struck-through anything that I think should be deleted. I took Campus Link out of the list in the mentoring section since they are really going to be doing tutoring. I inserted a sentence about the parental permission and capitalized “GEAR UP.” I think it looks pretty good. As to details on the process, I think we cover the bases enough. If you will send me a finished version (after you speak to Susan), I’ll be happy to look at it again.

Mississippi’s GEAR UP project will channel resources to the state’s most impoverished areas as a demonstration to state policy makers, educators, and communities that low-income students can and will succeed in college if early academic intervention and financial assistance is provided. The significance of GEAR UP in Mississippi is enormous and will result in long-lasting results in three major areas: mentoring, outreach, and partnerships.

Mentoring

Preparing a child for the opportunities and challenges the future holds is a big job, and it is a job best begun early. Ensuring the sustained presence of a caring adult in a youth’s life is especially critical during adolescence. The transition from elementary school to middle school can be very challenging for youth, but it is also a time at which youth must begin to make important choices that limit or expand their range of choices for the rest of their lives. Students face serious decisions about which courses to take, what activities to engage in, and how seriously to take their schoolwork. Despite the importance of these decisions, it is common for middle school guidance counselors to be responsible for more than 500 students (Carnegie, 1989). For at-risk youth, the presence of an adult mentor can reinforce the importance of school, foster good work habits and study skills, and provide youth with the support and information to make the right choices.

Research has consistently shown that when youth have a positive relationship with caring adults their risk factors decrease significantly. Programs and money cannot take the place of a positive, one-on-one relationship between a child and an adult. As discussed in previous sections, the GEAR UP middle-school target audience is severely economically distressed and socially disadvantaged. GEAR UP will provide at least 750 young people with mentors. These mentors will be a living vehicle for higher education outreach and a dependable role model, often to a child who does not have this kind of relationship with anyone else. Building positive relationships with youth, one child at time, will build the necessary foundation for young people to be receptive to college outreach and to help ensure that the youngsters involved truly believe that they too can succeed academically and attend college someday. The bottom line is that youth must believe it to achieve it, and mentoring can help build this belief.

Mississippi's GEAR UP mentoring services will be provided to students during the critical years of ages 12 to 14. This period is an optimal time for intervention to foster effective education, prevent destructive behavior, and promote enduring health practices. **GEAR UP will obtain parental permission for a child to participate in the mentoring**

program prior to a child being assigned a mentor. GEAR UP will partner with a variety of mentoring services that have built up years of successful programming. ~~Mentoring: These partners will~~ Partners include the MS Mentoring Network, ~~Campus Link~~, and CSY, Inc.

Paragraph about MS Mentoring Network.

The MS Mentoring network plans to expand their existing program during the 2000-2001 program year. 2000 individuals will be recruited and trained to serve as mentors. Upon serving 381 hours of service, these individuals will receive a scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 funded by the Corporation for National Service. **Mississippi GEAR UP** will assist the Mississippi Mentoring Network with recruitment, training and placement of mentors. Mentors will be required to attend an initial training and provided ongoing training opportunities during the program year. **GEAR UP** staff will consult with CSY and work closely with participating schools to develop a database that contains biographical information about each mentor and gear up student that will assist with the pairing of mentors to students.

Paragraph about CSY.

This model will be used and expanded to offer mentors from a variety of discipline who will have the opportunity to share their life experiences that will reinforce the importance of school, foster good work habits and study skills and provide youth with information they need to make the right choices as they prepare for college. CSY will assist the gear up staff in expanding the database to provide virtual mentoring opportunities to gear up students. This option will allow **GEAR UP** students the opportunity to communicate online with mentors of their choice. Mentors will be recruited from local communities that consist of faculty and staff from the colleges and universities, employees from local businesses and students from neighboring high schools. **Mississippi GEAR UP** will build upon existing community resources and provide opportunities for agencies to share their experiences and knowledge that will assist in creating meaningful and positive experiences for youth.

Tutoring

Mississippi GEAR UP will seek to increase students' academic performance and prepare them for success in college by offering tutorial services to each participant. **GEAR UP** will partner with a variety of tutoring services that have built up years of successful programming. These partners include Campus Link, America Reads – Mississippi and other programs sponsored by the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service. **GEAR UP** school partners will offer tutoring services to students that will improve their academic performance and prepare them for success in college. These services can and will be offered during school, after school, on the weekends and during the summer. **As with the mentoring program, GEAR UP will obtain parental permission for a child to participate in the tutoring.**

Schools will select programs that best fit the needs of their students. However, each tutoring model selected should be designed to do the following a) provide a structured yet

flexible format that reinforces classroom instruction; b) provide training and supervision for tutors; c) track students' progress and conduct periodic evaluations to determine program effectiveness; d) encourage parental involvement; and e) provide opportunities for tutors and students to reflect on their experiences. **GEAR UP** staff will work closely with lead teachers to help them create a system that works for their students. They will also provide technical assistance in the areas of recruitment and training of volunteers, volunteer management, resource development, and evaluation. A list of recommended tutoring programs will be developed by the **GEAR UP** staff and advisory board and distributed to each partnering school. Schools that don't have existing tutoring programs can select a program from the recommend list. Campus Link and America Reads Mississippi will assist with recruitment of volunteers.

PARAGRAPH ABOUT CAMPUS LINK AND AMERICA READS –MISSISSIPPI.

Campus Link is a statewide National Service program whose participants are placed in teams of 2-4 on 18 college and university campuses throughout Mississippi. The mission of Campus Link is to improve lives by connecting campuses and communities and engaging students and other citizens in service that addresses important social concerns. Campus Link's cornerstone project is *Mississippi Reads*, a tutorial program that pairs college student volunteers with underachieving elementary students in a one-to-one relationship. During the last three years, Campus Link participants recruited and trained over 3,000 volunteers to serve as reading tutors. Additionally, Campus Link participants manage volunteer centers by partnering with local community agencies and referring students to those agencies.

During the 1999-2000 program year, Campus Link participants and volunteers will aim to increase knowledge about access to college among the elementary school students they tutor. Therefore, expanding the current services provided to include mentoring activities for GEAR UP participants is a natural extension of Campus Link. Campus Link participants will recruit college students to serve as tutors to help youth recognize the importance of continuing their education beyond high school, and help them understand—and accomplish—the steps needed to do so. Campus Link tutors can also play a vital role in helping students maintain interest in school and see the link between their studies and their future. Campus Link participants will recruit college students to serve as tutors and mentors to help students who are struggling in a particular subject area. **These tutors and mentors will also help youth recognize the importance of continuing their education beyond high school, as well as helping them to understand and accomplish the steps needed to do so.** Campus Link tutors and mentors can play a vital role in helping students maintain interest in school and see the link between their studies and their future.

To help schools provide effective tutoring and mentoring services to students, **Mississippi GEAR UP** staff will develop a mentor/tutor manual based on best practices and distribute it to each lead teacher. It will provide schools with helpful tips on how to build solid tutoring and mentoring programs while still allowing each program the flexibility to adapt it to fit the needs of their school. Additionally, tutors and mentors will be given a handbook that will serve as a basic reference guide, enabling them to function

fairly autonomously, however they will receive ongoing training and supervision. **These manuals will also assist to ensure consistency of programs throughout the state.**