



GEAR UP SOUTHERN
WEST VIRGINIA
CONCORD • NEW RIVER CTC

Press/News Release

For Immediate Release

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Contact

Jessica Lilly
304-384-5981 or 267-684-5427
gearup@concord.edu
www.concord.edu/gearup

Empowering Education: Regional Event Aims to Accelerate 9th Grade Algebra 1 Completion Amidst Post-Pandemic Challenges

Athens, W.Va. - Beaver, WV - Members of the GEAR UP Southern West Virginia (GEAR UP SWV) Regional Advisory Council (RAC) are planning ways to help students complete Algebra 1 by 9th grade. The GEAR UP SWV (RAC) will meet at New River Community and Technical College, 280 University Drive, Beaver, WV on Friday, January 26 from 10 am – 2pm. This event will provide educators in the region with practical tools to assist students in completing Algebra 1 by the end of 9th grade.

Importance of 9th Grade Algebra 1 Completion:

Completing Algebra 1 by the end of 9th grade is considered a significant milestone in a student's academic journey. It lays the foundation for success in more advanced mathematics and STEM fields, fostering critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. Additionally, early proficiency in Algebra 1 is linked to higher high school graduation rates and improved college readiness.

Addressing Post-Pandemic Challenges:

Helping students complete Algebra 1 by 9th grade is just one way GEAR UP SWV is helping teachers and students after the COVID-19 Pandemic. This workshop will provide tools for teachers and students that will help to address learning gaps in math resulting from extended periods of remote or hybrid learning.

Supporting Dedicated Educators:

The event recognizes the hard work and dedication of educators who have navigated the complexities of remote and hybrid teaching. By offering practical tools and best practices, the Regional Advisory Council Meeting/Training aims to empower teachers in their efforts to guide students through the challenges posed by the pandemic. It serves as a valuable resource for educators, providing strategies to enhance instructional effectiveness and student engagement.

Distinguished Presenters:

The event will feature distinguished presenters, including Tim Flatley, Coordinator Mathematics 6-12, WV Department of Education, Jennifer Wilson-Kearse, Executive Director, Vela Institute and Dan Howarth, Ex. Dir., Educational Partnerships, Princeton Review, tutor.com. They will share insights into Algebra 1 best practices and meeting GEAR UP SWV Algebra 1 goals, providing valuable guidance for educators. (Please see attached for full agenda.)

Collaborative Effort:

GEAR UP SWV is a collaborative effort. We are excited to have Dr. Lea Ann "Beez" Schell, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs to begin the event with a welcome. Concord University's Jacob Abrams, Chief Organizational Development and Success Officer will also help welcome visitors. GEAR UP SWV Director, Kristen O'Sullivan will serve as the host.

Others expected to be in attendance county superintendents, GEAR UP SWV liaisons, principals, teachers, counselors, students, and community partners will converge to collectively address the challenges faced by students in the region.

GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs and is part of a national grant program funded through the U.S. Department of Education. GEAR UP Southern West Virginia (GEAR UP SWV) is a Concord University program, in partnership with New River Community and Technical College, that helps students graduate from high school and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP SWV is helping the classes of 2028 and 2029 in Mercer, Monroe, Summers, Raleigh, and Wyoming Counties to ensure high school graduation. The program also informs students and families of ways to succeed in a postsecondary education and ways to help fund it. GEAR UP SWV supports teachers, administrators, students, and families on this educational journey.

GEAR UP SWV; securing a legacy of strength and resilience in Appalachia. Find more information on GEAR UP SWV social media pages and on our website, conord.edu/gearup.

****Media Information:** Members of the media are encouraged to attend and invited to arrive early and stay late for interviews as needed. Media can arrive as early as 9:15 AM. GEAR UP SWV staff will be available for interviews until approximately 2:30 PM, offering insights, recaps, interviews, photo opportunities and B-roll footage. Please refer to the attached map for parking information.

-GUSWV-

PRESENTERS

GEAR UP SWV Regional Advisory Council and Professional Development

January 26, 2024



Tim Flatley
Coordinator
Mathematics 6-12
Office of PK-12 Academic Support
Division of Academic Support and Educator
Development

Tim earned a BA in Mathematics and MA in Secondary Education/Mathematics at West Virginia University. Tim has 11 years of classroom experience teaching high school mathematics in grades 9 through 12, with experience teaching several courses. He is the lead of the WVDE's Unite with Numeracy initiative, elevating the goals established through WVDE's math4life, which includes enhancing teacher content knowledge, improving teacher pedagogy, and increasing student outcomes in West Virginia. He also collaborates with outside agencies/organizations and local education agencies to support advancing secondary mathematics experiences for students across West Virginia.



Jennifer Wilson-Kearse, Executive
Director,
Vela Institute

Jennifer brings a wealth of experience in grant management and program implementation. She is passionate about connecting evaluation results to practice. Jennifer holds a master's in education from Wheelock College, Boston, MA. She has worked at all levels of education including as the Executive Director of Watauga County's Smart Start Partnership providing support to children birth to 5 years and their families, starting two elementary charter schools, an instructor at Caldwell Community College and Appalachian State University, and directing the college access efforts at Appalachian State University. Jennifer has written for and been awarded roughly 268 million in grant funds including awards from Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, GEAR UP, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.



Dan Howarth, Executive Director
Educational Partnerships at Tutor.com/The
Princeton Review

Experienced education solutions professional responsible for school-based tutoring, test preparation, and college-readiness programs. With more than 15 years of education technology experience, Dan develops successful relationships with GEAR UP programs, districts, schools, and communities to implement programs that promote student achievement and institutional success. Dan earned a Bachelor of Science from Boston College and an MBA from North Carolina State University.



Shawn Bergman, Ph.D., Director of Research
Vela Institute, Kulynych/Cline Distinguished
Professor of Psychology and HR Science
Research Team Co-Director at Appalachian
State University

Dr. Bergman is the co-founder and Research Director at the Vela Institute, a non-profit organization that employs analytics to increase educational outcomes. Shawn's work reflects his dedication to use science, psychology, data, and technology to solve organizational problems, help individuals make positive changes, and improve peoples' lives. He has published 44 academic articles, co-authored over 120 professional and technical reports, and given over 100 keynote addresses, invited talks, workshops, and conference presentations. Shawn is a member of the Academy of Outstanding Teachers and Academy of Outstanding Graduate Mentors, has received multiple Psi Chi Excellence in Teaching Awards, and earned the Appalachian's Board of Governors Excellence in Teaching and Distinguished Graduate Faculty awards.



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Regional Advisory Council and Professional Development Agenda January 26, 2024

10:00 am – Welcome to New River	Dr. Lea Ann “Beez” Lea Ann Schell, VP for Academic and Student Affairs, New River Community and Technical College
10:05 am – GEAR UP SWV Welcome/Introductions	Kristen O’Sullivan, Director
10:10 am – Welcome from Concord	Jacob Abrams, Chief Organizational Development and Success Officer
10:15 am – WVDE: Algebra 1 Best Practices	Tim Flatley, Coordinator Mathematics 6-12, WV Department of Education
10:45 am - Table Discussions/Jam Board	All
11:00 am – Meeting GEAR UP SWV Algebra 1 Goals	Jennifer Wilson-Kearse, Ex. Dir. Vela Institute
11:30 am - Table Discussions/Jam Board	All
12:00 pm – Lunch	
12:30 pm – High Dosage Algebra 1 Tutoring	Dan Howarth, Ex. Dir., Educational Partnerships, Princeton Review, Tutor.Com
1:00 pm – Table Discussions/Jam Board	All
1:30 pm – Spring Teacher Professional Development	Dr. Shawn Bergman, Director of Research Vela Institute, Kulynych/Cline Distinguished Professor of Psychology and HR Science Research Team Co-Director at Appalachian State University
1:45 pm – Wrap Up/Survey	Kristen O’Sullivan

