



Press/News Release

For Immediate Release

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GEAR UP SWV Schools and Districts Celebrate National GEAR UP Week 2024

Athens, W.Va. – Thirty-one schools in five school districts are gearing up to celebrate National GEAR UP Week from September 23 through September 27, 2024. This week-long celebration commemorates the ongoing success of Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP), a national initiative designed to provide students and their families with the support, resources, and tools needed for education after high school access and success.

GEAR UP Southern West Virginia (GEAR UP SWV), which currently serves over 3,800 students across Mercer, Raleigh, Summers, Wyoming, and Monroe Counties, has planned various activities to engage students, parents, and the community. This year, National GEAR UP Week kicked off early with the distribution of yard signs that read “I HEART GEAR UP SWV,” proudly displayed at participating schools and supporting locations. To make this year’s celebration even more impactful, GEAR UP SWV has introduced a National GEAR UP Week Road Map for schools to help unify efforts across all participating schools. The 2024 roadmap includes milestones such as poster contests, school events, and themed dress up days that encourage students to think about their future college and career paths. (A partial schedule of events is attached.)

For more information about GEAR UP at any of the participating schools, email gearup@concord.edu. Find more information about GEAR UP SWV and this year’s National GEAR UP Week celebrations online in the [National GEAR UP Week Toolkit](#) or contact Kristen O’Sullivan at kosullivan@concord.edu.

About GEAR UP SWV: 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. Find more information on GEAR UP SWV social media pages and on our website, concord.edu/gearup.

GEAR UP SWV; securing a legacy of strength and resilience in Appalachia.

Some events planned to celebrate National GEAR UP Week in southern West Virginia include:

- **Monday, Sept. 23:**

- Pikeview Middle School will host “Future’s So Bright, Ya Gotta Wear Shades” dress up during the school day by wearing sunglasses. Contact Gail Webb, Mercer County Local Coordinator for more information.
- Summers County Comprehensive High School students will host “Future’s So Bright, Ya Gotta Wear Shades” dress up during the school day by wearing sunglasses. Contact Summers County Local Coordinator, Sammantha Jones for more information.
- All About GEAR UP SWV at Shady Middle School at 7:30 a.m. - 7:55 a.m. Contact Kasara Stover, Raleigh County Local Coordinator for more information.
- Professional Presentations at Road Branch Elementary and Middle School. Contact Stephanie Meadows, Local Coordinator at Road Branch Middle School for more information.

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- **Tuesday, Sept. 24:**

- Bluefield High School Parent Night at 6pm, contact Gail Webb, Mercer County Local Coordinator for more information.
- All About GEAR UP SWV at Shady Middle School at 7:30 a.m. - 7:55 a.m. Contact Kasara Stover, Raleigh County Local Coordinator for more information.
- Summers County Comprehensive High School students will celebrate math/Algebra 1 by participating in “Mathlete vs Athlete” Day. Contact Summers County Local Coordinator, Sammantha Jones for more information.

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- **Wednesday, Sept. 25:**

- Virtual Career Center at Road Branch Middle School in Wyoming County including VR goggles. Contact Stephanie Meadows, Local Coordinator at Road Branch Middle School for more information.
- Summers County Comprehensive High School students will wear an outfit with that supports their favorite college for “Future College Day.” Contact Summers County Local Coordinator, Sammantha Jones for more information.

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- **Thursday, Sept. 26:**

- Algebra 1 Virtual Think Tank, help for math/Algebra 1 teachers at 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Summers County Comprehensive High School students will “Show their School Pride” and wear an outfit with their school colors. Contact Summers County Local Coordinator, Sammantha Jones for more information.

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- **Friday, Sept. 27:**

- Summers County Comprehensive High School students will “Dress for Success” and wear an outfit to their favorite career or first job interview. Contact Summers County Local Coordinator, Sammantha Jones for more information.

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