

## GEAR UP ACTIVITY IDEA

# FAMILY NIGHTS



### Objective

To inform and prepare both middle and high school students and their families for future educational and career pathways, as well as navigate the high school experience itself.

Procedure			Themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Arrival and Family Engagement Facilitation:</b> The event begins with a focus on family engagement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dinner is provided to attendees. FBLA members cooked and provided salad, spaghetti, garlic bread, dessert, and water. This is explicitly mentioned as a "must-have" to encourage attendance ("If you feed them, they will come...").</li> <li>Childcare is available for younger siblings. FBLA members hosted an open gym for this purpose.</li> </ul> </li> <li> <b>Informational Sessions:</b> After the initial engagement, the core of the event involves various informational sessions, which are presented to different target audiences based on grade level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> <b>Programs and Opportunities Overview:</b> Two separate sessions are held, one for the 9-12 grade audience and another for the 6-8 grade audience, providing an overview of popular post-secondary programs and opportunities, including two-to-four-year transfers. </li> <li> <b>Financial Aid 101:</b> Two sessions targeting grades 6-12 cover the essentials of the FAFSA/WASFA, scholarship opportunities, grants, loans, and how to evaluate and compare award letters. </li> <li> <b>High School Roadmap:</b> Led by the MS/HS Counselor, this session targets grades 6-8. It covers graduation requirements, state assessments and alternatives, and advice from current high school ASB officers. </li> <li> <b>Get Involved! High School Club Representatives:</b> Current high school club officers and members share information about opportunities within the high school and highlights of their activities. This session targets grades 6-8. </li> <li> <b>How to High School High School Club Representatives:</b> Current high school students provide advice on choosing classes, balancing athletics and </li> </ul> </li> </ul>		Family Engagement
			Audience
			All GU students
			Grade Level(s)
			7-12
			Cost
			Dinner
			Required Materials
			Senior handbook, meals, designated space, family handouts.
			Prep Time
			Varies.
			Additional Notes
			Contributed by Davenport MS/HS.

	<p>activities, and making the most of the high school experience. This session targets grades 6-12.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Intro to Senior Projects:</b> Staff guide students through new Senior Project options and parameters, including the reveal of an updated Senior Project Handbook. This session is designed for students in grades 9-11.</li> <li>○ <b>College in the High School/Advanced Placement:</b> Staff provide an overview of these offerings, explaining their overlaps and differences. This session is designed for students in grades 6-12.</li> <li>• <b>Concluding Activities:</b> The event concludes with a final opportunity for questions and social engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dessert, Questions, Goodbyes...: Students and families are invited back to the commons area to enjoy ice cream bars.</li> <li>○ Attendees can ask any remaining questions of the presenters.</li> <li>○ Families are released in time to attend the elementary Spring Concert.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In summary, the procedure for attendees involves arriving, receiving food and childcare as needed, attending various targeted informational sessions tailored to their grade level and interests, and concluding with dessert and a final Q&amp;A opportunity before dismissal.</p>	
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### Objective

To enhance family and community engagement in the educational process by organizing four impactful Family Night events each academic year, with a focus on promoting the GEAR UP program's goals and objectives, fostering a supportive and collaborative environment, and increasing attendance rates to 80-90% among students and their families. Through tailored activities, diverse vendor participation, and interactive workshops, we aim to provide valuable resources that empower K-12 families and support students' academic success and college readiness.

Procedure	<b>1. Establish a Supportive Environment and Culture:</b>		<b>Themes</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Foster "GU Culture K-12" throughout the school, with district support for K-6.</li><li>Ensure 100% GU "buy-in" from all parties, including staff and the school board.</li><li>Cultivate a stable and caring staff and school board.</li><li>Maintain a safe, fun, and caring environment for all.</li><li>Integrate embedded GU curriculum &amp; mandatory classes.</li><li>Recognize if the school is "the only game in town," as this can aid in community engagement.</li></ul>		Family Engagement
	<b>2. Plan and Schedule the Events:</b>		<b>Audience</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Schedule four Family Nights per year.</li><li>Always schedule these events on Wednesday evenings.</li><li>Publish the dates on the master school calendar &amp; newsletter.</li><li>Send phone message reminders before each event.</li><li>Specific dates for a sample year were:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1st Open House &amp; Advisory Meeting #1: Second week of school</li><li>2nd Fall Conferences: Second week of October</li><li>3rd Fin. Aid Night &amp; Advisory Meeting #2: Third week of January</li><li>4th Spring Conferences: First week of March</li></ul></li></ul>		All GU students
	<b>3. Define the Target Audience and Ensure Broad Invitation:</b>		<b>Grade Level(s)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>These events are for all K-12 families &amp; community members.</li><li>Specifically, the Fin. Aid Night is also for all 7-12 students &amp; families.</li></ul>		7-12
	<b>4. Manage Logistics and Costs:</b>		<b>Cost</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The district should cover Non-GEAR-UP costs.</li><li>Dinner is provided for all attendees at every Family Night.</li><li>The events may also include raffles &amp; prizes.</li></ul>
			<b>Required Materials</b>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Food and dining supplies</li><li>Raffle and prize items</li><li>Communication tools</li><li>Display equipment</li><li>Conference and work session setup</li><li>Sign-up wall</li><li>General program materials</li></ul>
			<b>Prep Time</b>
			Varies. Requires lead time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dinner is provided for all attendees at every Family Night. Surveys indicate the food menu makes a difference in attendance.</li> <li>• The district should cover non-GU costs.</li> <li>• Consider providing raffles &amp; prizes, with one ticket per person per station, to encourage participation.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. Incorporate Core Program Elements for All Events:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always include a short GU Orientation program.</li> <li>• Stress the GU goals &amp; objectives consistently.</li> <li>• Emphasize the "Get them early and cover it a lot" K-12 concept, as K-12 focus helps students and parents understand GU goals before 7th grade.</li> <li>• Feature vendors &amp; activities.</li> <li>• Implement arena-style conferences (gym).</li> <li>• Encourage student-led parent/teacher conferences.</li> </ul> <p><b>6. Tailor Activities for Specific Family Nights:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Open House &amp; Advisory Meeting #1 (Early September):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on general orientation and initial advisory meeting.</li> <li>○ Include vendors and activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Fall Conferences (Early October):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student-led parent/teacher conferences.</li> <li>○ Arena-style conferences (gym).</li> <li>○ Stress GU goals and objectives.</li> <li>○ Include vendors and activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>FAFSA Night &amp; Advisory Meeting #2 (Late January):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This night specifically targets 7-12 students &amp; families.</li> <li>○ Conduct three different work sessions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 7th &amp; 8th grades: College Bound.</li> <li>▪ 9th &amp; 11th grades: FAFSA/WASFA predictor.</li> <li>▪ 12th grade: FAFSA/WASFA completion.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Emphasize GU goals and objectives.</li> <li>○ Include vendors and activities.</li> <li>○ Consider a Community Postsecondary Education Sign-Up Wall.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Spring Conferences (Early March):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student-led parent/teacher conferences.</li> <li>○ Arena-style conferences (gym).</li> <li>○ Stress GU goals and objectives.</li> <li>○ Include vendors and activities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>7. Include Diverse Vendors and Activities (General to All Events, or as Appropriate):</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Notes</b></p> <p>Contributed by Klickitat MS/HS.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STEM K-12 Student Demonstrations: Examples include Entomology, Robotics VEX/LEGOS, 3-D Printing, Wind Turbines, Drones, etc.</li> <li>• Display student artwork &amp; student projects.</li> <li>• Invite community groups: e.g., PTO, booster club, etc.</li> <li>• Involve youth groups: e.g., Girl Scouts, Little League, etc.</li> <li>• Have representatives from all military services.</li> <li>• Include various county services: e.g., sheriffs, health, &amp; officials.</li> <li>• Invite representatives from community colleges &amp; universities.</li> <li>• Include vocational trade schools.</li> </ul> <p><b>8. Monitor and Leverage Success Factors:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High attendance (average between 80% and 90% student and parent attendance) is achievable.</li> <li>• Ensure complete program support from all staff (certified &amp; classified).</li> <li>• Aim for better awareness of the program in the community, leading to a large community turnout for events.</li> <li>• Encourage high student participation in GU activities; for instance, 33 of 36 7-12th grade students participated in 20 or more GU activities in one year.</li> </ul>	
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