



Summer 2010

# GEAR UP MISSISSIPPI NEWS

## GEAR UP Schools

Bailey Magnet High School  
Biloxi High School  
Blue Mountain High School  
Callaway High School  
Carthage High School  
Cleveland High School  
Coldwater High School  
D'Iberville High School  
Eastside High School  
Forest Hill High School  
Gautier High School  
George County High School  
Greenwood High School  
Grenada High School  
Harrison Central 9th School  
Independence High School  
Jim Hill High School  
Lake Attendance Center  
Lanier High School  
Magee High School  
Mendenhall High School  
Meridian High School  
Merritt Middle School  
Morton High School  
Moss Point High School  
Murrah High School  
Pascagoula High School  
Pine Grove High School  
Provine High School  
Ripley High School  
Ruleville High School  
Scott Central Attendance Center  
Sebastopol Attendance Center  
South Leake High School  
South Panola High School  
Strayhorn High School  
Thomastown Attendance Center  
Tupelo High School  
West Harrison High School

GEAR UP Mississippi operates as part of the Institutions of Higher Learning Office of Academic and Student Affairs in collaboration with the Mississippi Department of Education, State Board of Community and Junior Colleges, and community partners.



## *From the Director*

Nira Coleman-Johnson  
State Director, GEAR UP Mississippi

August will begin a new chapter in the lives GEAR UP of Mississippi students as they transition from middle school to high school.

High school presents new opportunities and challenges for students. For one thing, high schools are usually larger in size than middle schools and students often find the coursework more rigorous. Your child will also discover that he or she is expected to be more independent, more focused and more responsible.

For the first time in their academic life, students will be earning credits toward graduation. The grades they earn in high school are more important because they help determine the college they can get into or the kinds of jobs they can expect when they graduate.

This is nothing new. For generations, students have gone through the growing pains of moving to high school. Students are usually excited and sometimes apprehensive about moving from middle to high school. Your children may wonder about fitting in with new classmates. They may wonder if they'll like their teachers and if they will be able to succeed in the courses they will be taking.

As parent, it is important for you to keep the lines of communication open during these high school years. Talk to your children and listen to what they say. Offer encouragement and let them know you will be there to help them make the transition as smooth as possible.

This will not only be a transition time for your children—it will be a transition time for you as a parent. You will see your children becoming more self-sufficient and independent. You will see your role as parent changing along with your child. It's important for you to continue to be

involved in your child's life during these high school years. You need to make sure they are making the grade in school and that they are continuing to make good choices and decisions. Also make sure your child understands that with increased independence comes increased responsibility.

One thing you will probably find of use to you is a school handbook. Most high schools have one. It will provide you with information on their policies, procedures, code of conduct, rules and regulations. You can ask the school your child will be attending for one. Read through the handbook and keep it for reference. If you have any questions call the school office for more information. Set up an appointment to visit the school.

GEAR UP Mississippi wants you to know we will be there for your children just as we have been during middle school. We are shifting our emphasis from the needs of middle school students to those of high school students.

Preparations for this transition have been under way for months as we have worked with College Coaches, school administrators and teachers to prepare them for the direction we will all be moving. Our main goal for our students is for them to be successful in high school, graduate, attend college and graduate. This is a goal that can be accomplished if we all work together.

GEAR UP has lots of programs and tools to make the high school experience one of opportunity and accomplishment. We will do our best to ensure we do our best to make dreams and aspirations come true for all students in GEAR UP.

GEAR UP Mississippi will be there for you and your child.

# Five Summer Academies Offer Opportunities

GEAR UP MS will fund five academic and enrichment focused summer academies during the summer of 2010. The academies will promote early awareness about the need to plan for college both academically and financially. The summer academies will include 8 to 10 days of stimulating and rigorous learning opportunities for participants. All academies are residential and free for all *rising 9<sup>th</sup> Grade GEAR UP MS students*.

Each academy will include both cultural enrichment activities and college admission components. Participants will be exposed to day long activities as well as supervised nightly social activities. The summer academies will provide participants with activities that will focus on areas such as team building exercises, scavenger hunts, nature trail walks, and athletic contests. Field trips, cultural excursions, and extra-curricula activities are just few of the features of the following academies.

Contact Person	Academy	Date
<p><b>Alcorn State University</b></p> <p>Contact Person: Dr. Edward Vaughn 601-877-6226 <a href="mailto:elvaughn@alcorn.edu">elvaughn@alcorn.edu</a></p>	<p>The College of Excellence at Alcorn State University will host the <b>S.T.A.R.S. (Scientific Tools and Analytics Research Skills Academy)</b>. This academy will introduce participants to scientific investigations, problem solving and inquiry based processes commonly employed in Biology. The participants will develop and strengthen their leadership skills. They will have an opportunity to gain an early awareness of the requirements for obtaining a degree in the Sciences.</p>	<p><b><u>Two Sessions:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Session One:</u></b> June 6-June 18 <b><u>Session Two:</u></b> June 20-July 2 * Participants will be selected to attend either session 1 or session 2 <b><u>ONLY</u></b>.</p>
<p><b>University of Mississippi</b></p> <p>Contact Persons: Mr. Jason Wilkins or Mr. Justin Phillips 662-915-1535 <a href="mailto:umsummer@olemiss.edu">umsummer@olemiss.edu</a></p>	<p>The Division of Outreach and Continuing Education at the University of Mississippi presents the <b>GEAR UP MS Summer College Exploration and Math Academy</b>. This academy has two primary goals. The first goal is to provide supplemental instruction in mathematics in an effort to improve basic math skills. The second goal is to provide participants an opportunity to prepare for post secondary education. The participants will also attend on campus events such as a Shakespeare Festival and the Summer Concert Series. Participants will also use the campus recreational facilities such as the natatorium and intramural fields along with the opportunity to visit off campus sites in Oxford.</p>	<p><b><u>Two Sessions:</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Session One:</u></b> May 30-June 12 <b><u>Session Two:</u></b> June 13-June 26 * Participants will be selected to attend either session 1 or session 2 <b><u>ONLY</u></b>.</p>
<p><b>Mississippi Museum of Natural Science University of Southern Mississippi</b></p> <p>Contact Persons: Ms. Christie Baker 601-270-2740 <a href="mailto:Crystie1@gmail.com">Crystie1@gmail.com</a> or Ms. Angel Rohnke 601-354-7303</p>	<p>The Mississippi Museum of Natural Science and the University of Southern Mississippi will host <b>Discover Mississippi</b>. This academy will focus on encouraging participants to enjoy science and to inspire participants to attend college. It will provide participants an opportunity to enjoy Mississippi's incredible diversity of wildlife and habitats. Campus participants will gain an understanding of the realistic expectations for being successful in college. Participants will engage in various hands on activities and hopefully leave the academy with an appreciation for Mississippi's wildlife and career opportunities.</p>	<p><b><u>One Session:</u></b></p> <p>June 19-26</p>
<p><b>Mississippi Valley State University</b></p> <p>Contact Person: Dr. Louis J. Hall 662-254-3654 <a href="mailto:ljhall@mvsu.edu">ljhall@mvsu.edu</a></p>	<p>The Office of Sponsored programs at Mississippi Valley State University presents the <b>Green Academy</b>. This academy will focus on promoting environmentally friendly habits and enhancing participants' academic performance in the sciences and on state assessments. Participants will be exposed to the university's own green fuels lab. The academy will also feature lectures by green energy leaders from Mississippi and campus staffers involved in the university's own <i>Go Green</i> campaign. Participants will also design and enact a student-led recycling project in which they will collect recyclable goods.</p>	<p><b><u>One Session:</u></b></p> <p>June 14-23</p>
<p><b>University of Southern Mississippi</b></p> <p>Contact Person: Ms. Cynthia Littlejohn 601-266-5796 <a href="mailto:Cynthia.Littlejohn@usm.edu">Cynthia.Littlejohn@usm.edu</a></p>	<p>The University of Southern Mississippi will host the <b>Survivor: Biology Academy</b>. This academy will focus on preparing participants for Mississippi's Biology I Subject Area Test. The academic program will feature highly interactive indoor and outdoor lab-based activities tailored toward participants who have a keen interest in biology. This academy is based on features from the reality hit show <i>Survivor</i>. Participants will work in teams with each activity culminating in a friendly competition.</p>	<p><b><u>One Session:</u></b></p> <p>June 13-20</p>

# High School Administrators Attend Orientation Meeting

As the GEAR UP Mississippi cohort prepares to enter high school this fall, there is much to be done to make the transition from middle school as smooth as possible. One important issue was hosting a meeting with administrators from the high schools in Jackson in March of this year.

Nira Coleman-Johnson, State Director of GEAR UP Mississippi, welcomed those attending to the “GEAR UP family.” “I say congratulations on being selected to participate in this national initiative for a third year. Over the next four years, I will make every effort to assist you and your district with the task of educating students and their families about the opportunities that are available to all Mississippi students for life beyond high school,” she told those attending.

Representatives from 42 schools and 20 school districts attended the orientation during which they were provided information on GEAR UP and its programs. Each attendee received an orientation handbook with all of the pertinent information they need to make GEAR UP a success in their school.

“Although some of those attending the orientation have been a part of GEAR UP before, some are new to the program. We thought it important for those new to the program to hear what educators who have been a part of GEAR UP now or in the past think of the program,” Coleman-Johnson said.

Lashanda Colbert, Special Projects Director, led a Super Panel of these educators. In their discussions, all were positive about their association with GEAR UP and encouraged the attendees to accept the program with open arms. All said GEAR UP is one of the best programs available to help students graduate from high school, attend college and be successful after graduating.

Members of the panel were Frank Campbell, Superintendent of South Tippah School District; Dr. Cassie Connor, Assistant Superintendent of Harrison County Schools; Dr. Sharon Dungan, Assistant Superintendent of Simpson County Schools; Lorita Harris, Principal of Greenwood Middle School; Sonia Hudson, Central Office Administrator of George County Schools; Dr. George Noflin, Assistant Superintendent of Tupelo Public Schools; Dr. Margie Pulley, Superintendent of Greenwood Public Schools; Dr. Greta Terry, Assistant Superintendent of Jackson Public Schools; and Dr. Carole White, Assistant Superintendent of the Grenada School District.

Other presentations during the day included “Preparing Students for College Admissions” by Pearl Strickland Pennington, Director Student Affairs, Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning; “Utilizing State Performance Measures to Guide College Preparation-A District’s

Story” by Robin Miles, Assistant Superintendent of the West Point School District; “Were Are We Now?—A review of GEAR UP Mississippi’s 2009-2010 ACT Explore Data” by Gennine Brewer, Consultant P16 Assessment Services, ACT; and an overview of the JBHM Partnership by consultants Sylvia Adcock and Dana Lyle.

One of the most important parts of the orientation was a presentation by Dr. Mary Grant-Lee, Evaluation and Compliance Director of GEAR UP Mississippi. She led the administrators through the 2010-2011 Continuation Action Plan. Completion of the plan is a requirement for all participating schools. It outlines the activities for the ninth grade cohort for each school. It is the gatekeeper to ensure a successful GEAR UP program at the school and district level.



*Calvin Melton, Principal of Thomastown Attendance Center, over some of the information he received.*



*Dr. Sharon Dungan, left, Assistant Superintendent of Simpson County Schools talks to an Bp Huffman, principal of Magee High school.*

# College Tours Give GEAR UP Students Look at Various Campus Environments

What is one of the best ways for students to become motivated to attend college? And, what is one of the best ways for students to determine if they would like to attend a specific community college or university?

College Tours provides students with an opportunity to increase their awareness of post secondary education opportunities. Students are afforded an opportunity to visit a college campus to explore various schools of study. They are able to gain information about admission and financial requirements. They also learn about career paths they can follow at Mississippi's universities and community colleges.

Each year all GEAR UP Mississippi students are taken on tours of Mississippi colleges and universities. Dr. Mary, Evaluation and Compliance Director for GEAR UP, NOTED THAT College Tours expose GEAR UP MS students to the benefits and opportunities available on a college campus.

The tours are designed to familiarize students with a variety of colleges and illustrate the various types of academic majors and campus environments offered by Mississippi's institutions of higher learning. Tours are conducted throughout the school year.

On the tours students are exposed to the kinds of degrees offered by the schools such as a Bachelor's degree in Arts or Science obtained in four years, an Associate Degree obtained in two years, or a Certificate Program which generally takes less than a year and is relative to a specific occupation.

Students also learn about special opportunities on

campus such as honors programs, special services for students with disabilities, athletics, student organizations and clubs as well as fraternities and sororities.

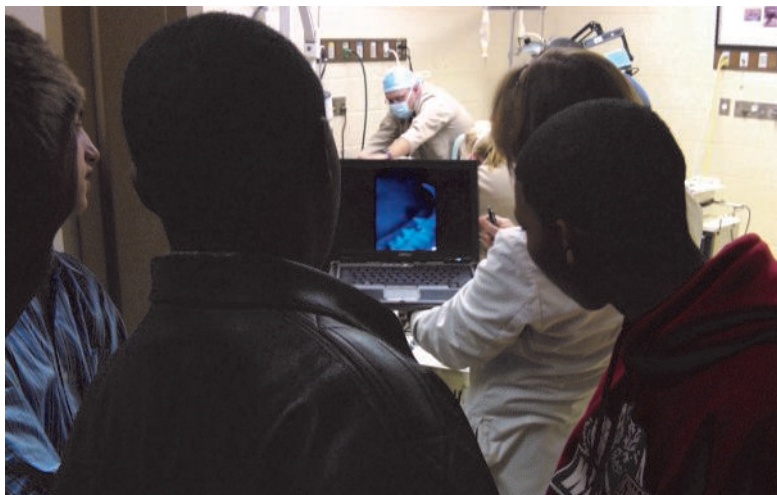
College tours are also major recruiting tools that can be used to increase enrollment in Mississippi's institutions of higher learning. The goal of GEAR UP MS is to raise the bar so students realize college is not an option but a necessity and privilege.

"Last fall we conducted a workshop for college recruiters to explain GEAR UP MS and our College Tour Program. The recruiters are an integral part of the program as they are usually the primary contact for our schools to set up the tours," Dr. Lee commented.

Dr. Lee said, "The response from the recruiters to the program at the meeting has been outstanding. They have been extremely cooperative in making the tours a success for our students this year."

In order to ensure the program is a success with the students and to make adjustments, campus tour surveys are completed by students after they complete a tour. Zack E. of Lake Middle school said he received good information from his tour of Meridian Community College and would consider attending the school after he graduates from high school.

Surpriya M., also a student at Lake Middle School and on the same tour, was so impressed that she would like to study nursing at the community college. She said, "It was really important to me to visit this college and it was great."



*YAC GEAR UP students from Independence Middle School visit the Veterinary School at Mississippi State University during their College Tour. Some of the students were able to observe a holding room where an animal was being treated.*



*GEAR UP students from Coldwater Middle School made a College Tour to Northwest Mississippi Community College in Senatobia.*



*Students from Woolmarket Middle School made a College Tour to the Tradition Campus of William Carey University. The students were all members of the YAC at Woolmarket Middle School. As part of their tour, some of the students were able to go into the science lab and observe some of the teaching techniques and laboratories used in science courses at the university.*



*GEAR UP students from Gautier Middle School made a College Tour to Mississippi State University in Starkville. They posed for a group photo after the tour.*



*Meridian Community College was one campus visited by students from Scott Central Attendance Center in Forest. The Child Care Center was part of the tour.*

# GEAR UP Students in Photos



*These are some of the 8th grade students at Lake Middle School who were honored for scoring proficient and advanced on the MCT2 test. They were presented medallions by their principal. YAC students sponsored a MCT2 Pep Rally for the presentations and gave away door prizes.*



*YAC members at North Woolmarket Middle School participated in the Mississippi Heart Association Walk-A-Thon April 17. It took place at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College. Many people participated and even brought their pets to walk for the Heart Association. The students made a heart shaped banner to use in the walk.*



*Student members of YAC at Independence Middle School in Tate County sold Love Lines to be delivered at school for Valentine's Day. Some of the proceeds were given to a class member's family to defray cost of travel to and from Memphis for visits to LeBonheur Children's Hospital. It was a great community service Project and ,of course, spread a little love. Pictured holding the envelope on left is Adriene C. and holding a completed love line on the right is Alyssia K.*



Students from Sebastopol Middle School in Scott County took a field trip in March to the Stennis Center in south Mississippi. Pictured from the left are Danielle W., Gabby T. and Donna E. They toured the facility and then enjoyed the displays in the Visitor's Center.



Students at Lake Middle School in Scott County participated in a Reality Fair. During the fair they were given a real view of jobs and life beyond school. Three students are with Teresa Lyle, Family Resource Management Area Agent for MSU Extension Service. The service hosted the event. The students are, from left,



YAC members at Betty Mae Jack Middle School from Morton in Scott County enjoyed a field trip to Camp Shelby near Hattiesburg. During the trip they were given a tour of the camp and learned how the National Guard trains soldiers. One of the highlights was visiting the Armed Forces Museum at the Camp.



Mrs. Linda Clifton, Principal of Tupelo Middle School in the Tupelo School District, with GEAR UP Student Montrez B. preparing to go to Washington, D.C. to accept one of four START awards presented in the nation for service and technology .



Dr. Mankia Kemp, left, principal of Bolivar High School in Rosedale in Bolivar County presented Travis T. with a \$500 scholarship on College Goal Sunday.



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This newsletter is made possible by  
a grant from the United States  
Department of Education.

**For more information, please visit our website [www.gearupms.org](http://www.gearupms.org).**

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## Summer Activities Can Increase Success Chances



Whew! School is finally ending for the summer, and those free months seem to stretch out forever in front of you. But, before you know it, you'll be back at school, facing new challenges and new heights. You can take several routes this summer to make sure you have given yourself the best chance for success, in school and in life. Here are some suggestions on how to spend your summer wisely.

### **READ, READ, READ!**

*NOT* just TV listings or cereal boxes. Challenge yourself with more difficult books so that you'll be ready next year. But how do you decide what to read? Ask your current teachers what books they would recommend you have under your belt by summer's end. Or ask the local librarian for help in finding books which will challenge you and help you prepare for higher level work in school. Also, many great reading lists are available online which will suggest books that would help you prepare better for ninth grade and beyond.

### **Make some money for college**

Make some money for college Get a part-time job, because it's never too early to begin saving for college expenses. You can find a job by asking your friends, family, teachers, and counselors if they know of anyone who might hire you for the summer.

### **Get valuable experience**

You can begin to see what careers might interest you later by "test-driving" them during the summer. Look for a part-time job at a business that interests you. If they can't afford to hire you, offer to work for free to gain experience. Then, if the employer does decide to hire, you'll be at the top of the list.

### **Volunteer**

Many opportunities to volunteer for community service are available right in your hometown. College admission officers see volunteering in the community as a good indication of your willingness to make and honor commitments. And, you'll be helping someone close to home.