

GEAR UP STUDENT SURVEY

INSTRUCTIONS & TIPS



OVERVIEW

The purpose of the GEAR UP Student Survey is to gauge students' knowledge, attitudes, and experiences in order to measure and increase the effectiveness of GEAR UP at your school and around the state. **We strongly encourage surveying students online, in a supervised setting.** However, paper surveys remain an option. Please emphasize to the students and administration the importance of this survey data. For any questions about its use, please contact sgaretson@montana.edu. **NOTE: Parents must complete a consent form in advance of their student being surveyed.**

Try to survey all students within the shortest survey window possible. **All student surveys (grades 7-12) must be completed between February 15th and April 15th.** The more students you are able to reach in the shortest amount of time, the more representative and informative your survey results will be. **The target minimum response rate, set by DOE, for student surveys is 85%.** **NOTE: If Montana GEAR UP meets its target response rate, the survey will not be required the following year.**

INSTRUCTIONS

GEAR UP Liaisons will receive all survey materials needed to administer paper and/or online surveys available on our website mus.edu/gearup/liaisons.html. These include:

- Online link to Student Survey
- PDF versions of surveys for printing
- Tips & strategies for maximizing response rate (see below)
- If you are administering paper surveys, please mail completed paper surveys to Education Northwest (the external evaluator)

Before Survey Administration

Online surveys: Establish a computer or tech room to host the survey. Test the technology to make sure it is equipped with the appropriate software.

Paper surveys: Establish a location at each school to return completed paper surveys and tell applicable school staff. Make sure there is both a secure location and receptacle so that no one is able to view completed surveys. Print paper surveys well in advance. GEAR UP funds can pay for printing, but it must be part of the current year's approved budget. Alternatively, district funds may be used, which may then be counted as in-kind match.

During Survey Administration

Administer surveys only to students whose parents have given consent. Explain surveys to students and teachers: The purpose of the Student Survey is to gauge the knowledge, attitudes, and experiences of students so that their schools are equipped with this information for planning and when making programmatic decisions.

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Remind students that their answers are anonymous and encourage them to answer thoughtfully and honestly to all questions on the survey. **Please remind school staff to not look at, read through, or make any copies of completed student surveys.** Results will be available following the survey administration window and can be accessed or distributed by the school's GEAR UP Liaison upon request. Liaisons may request a list of completed surveys from Education Northwest at anytime, delivered via a secure drop account.

Abstaining from questions: The only required question on the online survey is School Name. If a student skips any question(s), they will be asked but not required to respond before continuing to the next page of the survey.

For paper surveys, advise students to follow all instructions, particularly only selecting one response when it asks for just one response, and filling out "No" bubbles rather than leaving them blank.

After Survey Administration

As soon as possible after administering paper surveys, please mail the completed surveys to Education Northwest using their pre-paid return UPS envelopes.

STRATEGIES FOR MAXIMIZING RESPONSE RATES

- **Administer the survey during designated class periods or advisories:** This could be in homeroom, advisory period, a GEAR UP class, or a class required for the whole grade. The entire class could use the computer lab during a designated period if there is not technology throughout the school. Another option is to include the survey as part of regular testing schedules, preferably before the testing.
- **Make the survey an assignment,** part of an assignment, a requirement for a homeroom class or advisory, or administer in combination with other college or career awareness activities.
- **Make surveying a school-wide contest!** Or offer an incentive for completing the survey: Reward students with a small treat when they are done, such as a favorite snack or entry into a raffle. Alternatively, reward each class with a party if everyone in the class returns their surveys. Have a raffle with prizes for turning in a survey, or a competition at the school for whichever grade level or group of students/teachers gets the most surveys. (GEAR UP funds may not be used for this purpose).
- **Explain to students the importance** of these surveys. Share results with students.
- **Follow up:** Use a school roster or attendance list to make sure each student has had a chance to complete the survey - remind or follow up with students who have not. For those students who missed the survey, schedule time during lunch.