



IDAHO STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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TRANSMITTAL # 8

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 31, 2006
TO: Workforce Development Council
FROM: Dwight A. Johnson, Executive Director
Idaho State Board Of Education
RE: GEAR UP Grant
ACTION REQUESTED: Informational Only

BACKGROUND:

The State of Idaho is the recipient of a six year, \$17.8 million federal GEAR UP grant (approximately \$3 million a year) aimed at helping low income students become better prepared for higher education. Half of the federal funds will go directly to student scholarships. More than 600 Idaho students in participating schools will receive four year, renewable college scholarships up to \$16,000. Priority for the scholarships is based on financial need and academic preparation.

The Board applied for the U.S. Department of Education grant by partnering with several educational agencies including the State Department of Education, Career Information Systems and the Division of Professional Technical Education. There is no direct cost to school districts. Forty-seven other states throughout the country have successfully modeled individual programs using GEAR UP funds.

The GEAR UP IDAHO grant allows schools with 50 percent of their students who qualify for free and reduced lunch to apply to become GEAR UP schools. Students in these schools will be eligible for greater career and academic counseling and post-secondary scholarships.

The GEAR UP program will begin with students starting this school year. The program focuses on talking with students beginning in middle school about the importance of post-secondary education. Close to 90 middle and high schools throughout the state are eligible. The grant funds additional counseling staff and sets up regional counseling centers throughout the state. The regional centers will also include creation of a community advisory committee to develop programs and strategies to best fit the needs of the local community. Using grant funds and partnering with Idaho's colleges and universities, the state will also begin a marketing campaign to help parents and students understand how education can benefit them as an individual as well as their community.

A one page executive summary is attached for your information.

Contact: Primary: Dwight Johnson (208) 332-1565
 Secondary: Luci Willits (208) 332-1591

Attachment

GEAR UP IDAHO

Overview: GEAR UP Idaho is a six year, \$18 million grant (roughly \$3 million a year) from the US Department of Education for students in low-income schools who receive greater post-secondary counseling and scholarships for higher education.

Criteria: Middle and High Schools with over 50 percent free and reduced lunch. A cohort program will begin with 6th graders and students must engage in a rigorous course of study. Grant begins this fiscal year.

Priority on college awareness for parents and students through media and personal visits:

- Magazines
- Websites
- College visits
- Meetings with parents

Greater academic and career planning by utilizing:

- Dependable strengths
- Career Information Systems
- Interest and Aptitude Assessments

More funding for schools:

- Creation of an advisory committee to work with regional counselor to design programs in a way that works for that particular community
- Each school will receive a grant

Personnel:

- Limited impact on existing personnel
- Creation of regional counselors through regional centers
- State Marketing Director
- State Director

Funding:

- No cost to the state – state match is utilizing existing programs (and those will not be affected in terms of dollars)

Scholarships:

- 50 percent of grant funds are set aside for scholarships for students
- Scholarships are up to four years, renewable
- Requires Applications-students who met requirements of program and have financial need are given priority

Computers:

- Computers for all cohort students meeting requirements at the end of 8th grade
- This will address barrier for low income students –access to technology