

# GEAR UP Newsletter

Program Goals:

- To increase academic performance and college readiness
- To increase high school graduation rates and college going rates
- To build and enrich a college-going culture in the schools and communities we serve



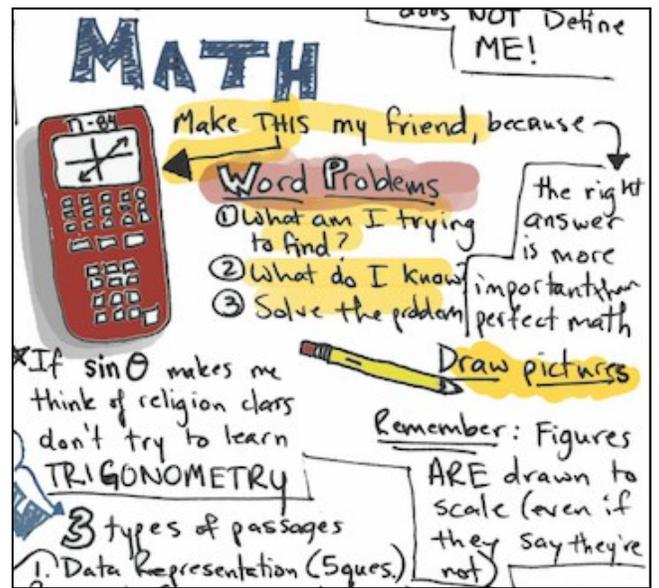
## Partners For Education

GEAR UP Appalachia

GEAR UP Promise Neighborhood

GEAR UP Promise Zone

### High Expectations for Bell County High School Juniors taking ACT



PINEVILLE, Ky.--Bell County High School (BCHS) juniors expect to raise the bar on the school's ACT score on March 1 when they take the statewide administration of the ACT, a test that measures college readiness in English, math, science and reading. Through a partnership with Berea College Partners for Education and a national GEAR-UP grant (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), junior students at BCHS took advantage of opportunities to receive additional training to improve their ACT scores.

Skilled trainers from TorchPrep, a northern Kentucky company dedicated to ACT strategy and achievement, spent 13 hours with juniors since last fall--testing, training, and preparing students for the ACT in a boot camp-like setting. According to TorchPrep, the company offers an innovative test training program that motivates students through rapport, relationships, and high expectations. The TorchPrep website claims, "Build with the student in mind, and you'll create change." According to Cammie Brock, a junior at BCHS, "This course took the anxiety out of the ACT and put this terrible test on ground level, so we can overcome it and ace this ACT to make a better life for ourselves."

Time will reveal the true success of these efforts. Students should begin receiving their ACT scores electronically within two to three weeks of the March 1 ACT.



## Southwestern High School students busy “Stuffing the Eggs”



What have the Southwestern High School GEAR UP Leadership students have been doing during the past few days? These students have stuffed more than half of the 5000 eggs sent to them to work on. The students would gladly do the other 15,000 or more eggs sent to them before the community Easter egg hunt’s deadline!

We’re helping the Burnside Tourism Commission ready for its annual community egg hunt, slated for Saturday, March 26 at Cole Park in Burnside. We’ve been asked to help prepare 20,000 eggs for hiding on that date. Several of our students have volunteered to help with the egg hunt that day as well. GEAR UP has invited other service organizations to get in on the action, and many have organized their own egg stuffing parties. Donations of candy, eggs, and baskets are currently being accepted. Outstanding Job Southwestern!

## Wallins Elementary School (Harlan Co.) Wins First Place in Regional Mathcounts



The above students are from Wallins Elementary School in Harlan County. The team won first place in Mathcounts in regionals and go on to Louisville to compete. **Taylor Spurlock, an eighth grader from Wallins, won first place in the individual competition. He won a 4 year full tuition scholarship to UK. The scholarship is valued at 40,000.00 plus. Congratulations Taylor and the Wallins Elementary Mathcounts team, you make us proud.**



## Changes to FAFSA



Significant changes lie ahead for new and returning students who will file a FAFSA for the 2017-18 award year.

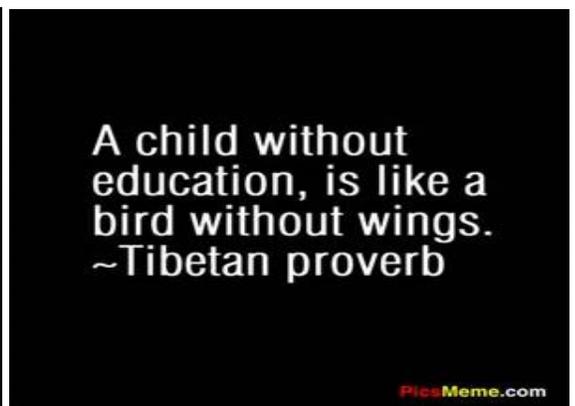
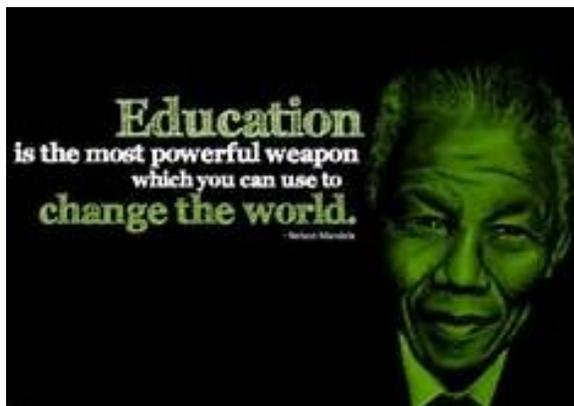
In December, the College Board announced that families may file applications in October instead of January using prior-prior year (PPY) tax data.

For example, a high school student planning to enroll in college in fall 2017 will file the FAFSA using the 2015 tax return.

The current FAFSA becomes available Jan. 1, well before families file their tax returns. The new deadline will allow filers to use the IRS Data Retrieval tool to import verified tax returns from the prior-prior year, reducing the need to later amend FAFSA forms.

This will simplify the application process and gives families more time to plan.

### FAFSA Alert

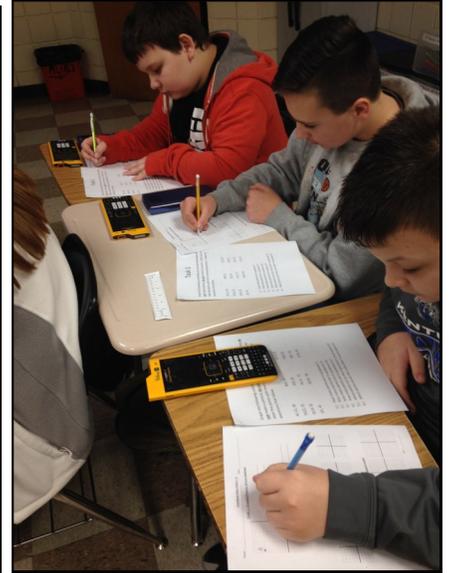
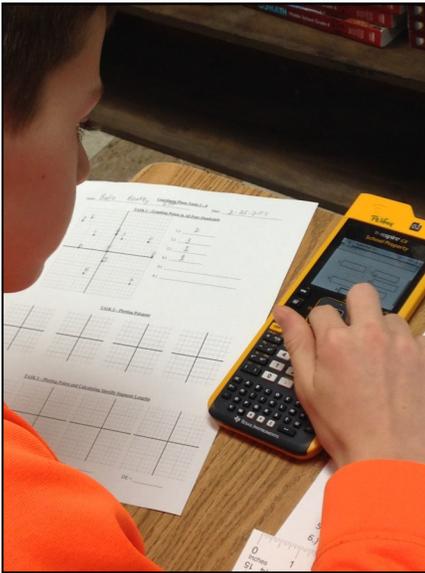


## Jackson County High School GEAR UP students get special tour of EKU campus



Jackson County H.S. GEAR UP students had a great campus visit to Eastern Kentucky University. The tour was made even more special by their tour guide, EKU Librarian and Jackson County High School graduate Misty Allen. Misty gave the cohort insight into her college experience and the challenges of college life and to on how to avoid any opposing obstacles that they could face.

## Whitesburg Middle School GEAR UP students utilize TI Calculators



Mr. Doug Coots, GEAR UP Promise Zone Service Coordinator, had the opportunity to observe Ms. Jamala Pelfrey's math class at Whitesburg Middle School on February 25. She was doing a wonderful job of using the Texas Instruments calculators. During the lesson the 18 students were involved with a coordinate grid activity. It was evident through the observation of the routines within the classroom that the students were using the calculators on a regular basis. They were placed in groups of 2-3 students, then given worksheet activities as a review of coordinate grids. The students were to place points on the grids corresponding to ordered pairs. During the seat work Ms. Pelfrey assigned a "Quick Poll" for the students to complete on their calculators related to counting segments on a coordinate plane.

Ms. Pelfrey sat with 2 students who needed extra assistance until they were comfortable with the assignment. During the latter part of the period an "Exit Slip" activity was assigned on the calculators which was to be counted as a grade. The students were well behaved and were totally involved in the activities. Great lesson!

### Choosing a College:

### "TIP OF THE MONTH"

**"Ask yourself what you absolutely need at a particular college. Be aware that not all programs are available at all campuses. There is a lot of information to process when you're deciding which college is the best fit."**

Making Kentucky  
the best place  
in America to be a kid



**At the end of the day it's not about what you have or even what you've accomplished.....it's about who you've lifted up. Who you've made better. It's about what you've given back.** *Denzel Washington*

## ANNOUNCEMENT: GEAR UP SUMMER EXPERIENCE AT BERA COLLEGE

**WHAT:** Twenty-four rising 11<sup>th</sup> OR 12<sup>th</sup> graders from the GEAR UP projects will be selected to spend 6-weeks at Berea in a college preparatory program.

**WHY:** A Pre-college summer program allows high school students to get a taste of college life, preview regional applications It may be tempting to sleep the entire summer away or lounge by the pool (and you certainly should do a little of that!), but why not use some of your free time to learn something new and make yourself a more attractive candidate for admission?

**HOW:** Parents will drop students of at Berea College and meet the staff on Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup> and students will complete the program on Friday, July 22. GEAR UP will cover the mileage costs for the families on these two dates. Students will live in a single-gender residence hall at Berea College with other high school students from the region. Daily Academies and a wide range of afternoon and evening courses happen Monday – Thursday and occasionally on Friday. Most Friday’s will be spent traveling to visit other colleges in Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. (*Visits not yet finalized.*) We have fun and safe weekend activities planned. Therefore, we will only cover the cost of transportation home for the 4-day break July 1st – July 5<sup>th</sup>—return to campus on the 5<sup>th</sup>. *Note: Students must go home for this period.*

**WHEN:** Applications are due to your Academic Specialist by Monday, March 28<sup>th</sup> and students will be notified by Friday, April 15<sup>th</sup> of their acceptance.

**OTHER DETAILS:** *This project is designed to offer high achieving low-income students an opportunity to experience college life in an effort to promote success as a college freshman. To that fact, GEAR UP is making a considerable investment and asks that this **6 week commitment** is made with careful thought. While there will be no credit-grades, this experience will require students to attend classes daily and participate in nontraditional learning. The proposed **Summer Academies** are listed below (not finalized.) Selected students will have an opportunity to rank order their choices.*

*Health Careers: Investigation and Practice*

*Leadership: Pathways that Lead to College Success*

*The Science Behind Food, The Art Behind Science*

**All students will be placed in a single-gender residence hall room with a roommate. If you are selected for the summer, you will have an opportunity to select a roommate. However, EVERYONE coming is great so, if you don't have someone in mind, trust us you will have a new BFF within 24 hours of your arrival!**

**Please turn the page**





# GEAR UP Newsletter



## Children's Advocacy Day

Blog by : **Cole Raines** (Bell County High School)

On January 14th I attended Children's Advocacy Day in Frankfort. This was a very educational day for me because it was the first time I had been to the capital. I learned what exactly goes on and met many of the politicians that make our laws.

The day started with us arriving in the capital. Shortly thereafter, the day's events began. I enjoyed getting to listen to everyone's speeches, especially Katie's. Next, we got to meet one of the first lady's staff. She then told us both the governor's and the first lady's story of how they got to where they are today. I liked this part because I got to learn about the governor and his wife, but I wish that the first lady could have made it.

The next thing we did was meet Senator Smith and Senate President Stivers. I greatly enjoyed this part because we got to chat with our legislatures and hear what they had to say. After this, we ate lunch, which was excellent. Lunch was probably the least busy time throughout the day other than the ride back.

After lunch it was right back into the busy schedule. We had the Kids Count reception which gave us another chance to talk to legislatures and other children advocates. I, and a few others, got to talk with a man from northern Kentucky that worked with a non-profit organization. We learned what he does and what all the non-profit does. The non-profit is called Kentucky's Voice for Early Childhood. They send out emails to people informing subscribers informing them on the topic of a certain bill. This helps people know what is going on in their government and what exactly is happening. I really like getting to talk to this man and learn more about this awesome non-profit.

Next, we watched the Senate in session, which was my favorite part of the trip. I enjoyed seeing how the senate operates and what all goes on in the chamber. For some people, this part was boring, but I really appreciated getting to observe the legislatures in action. This experience has got me interested in politics and now I try to keep up with the bills that go through the senate and house. I have even considered majoring in political science after having such a great experience.

All in all, I had a great time at Children's Advocacy day and can't wait until I get to go next year.

Cole Raines



Several Berea GEAR UP students were invited to a luncheon by First Lady Glenda Bevin while at the Kentucky State Capitol during the Kentucky Youth Advocates celebration of Children's Advocacy Day.