

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Governor Terry E. Branstad ★ Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds

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Gov. Branstad Declares GEAR UP Week in Iowa

Governor recognizes program that improves college access for low-income students

(DES MOINES) – Today, Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad declared the week of September 19-23 as GEAR UP Week in Iowa, recognizing the college access and career readiness program that provides low-income students and their families with planning resources. Branstad made the announcement at his weekly press conference with Karen Misjak, Executive Director at the Iowa College Student Aid Commission and GEAR UP Iowa student, Jaqueline Guardado, a 9th grader at Perry High School.

GEAR UP, which stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, is a federally funded program that is administered in Iowa by Iowa College Aid. GEAR UP Iowa currently serves more than 7,000 students in 12 districts including Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Columbus Junction, Davenport, Denison, Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Marshalltown, Ottumwa, Perry, Sioux City and Storm Lake. Every current high school freshman in all 26 public high schools in those districts became a part of GEAR UP Iowa this year.

“Iowa has an ambitious Future Ready Iowa goal to see that 70 percent of our population has education or training beyond high school by the year 2025,” Branstad said. “Programs like GEAR UP Iowa that put more students on the path to college or a rewarding career are crucial to achieving that goal while helping to minimize student debt.”

With a \$22 million grant and another \$22 million in in-kind matches from partners, GEAR UP Iowa provides services to help students and families prepare to enroll and succeed in college and careers: campus visits, job shadowing and career fairs, financial aid advice, tutoring and mentoring. GEAR UP Iowa also offers professional development for educators.

“These students might be the first in their families to go to college or plan their career path,” said Karen Misjak, executive director of Iowa College Aid. “GEAR UP Iowa helps them achieve education or training beyond high school by providing knowledge and resources to the entire family.”

For more about GEAR UP Iowa, visit GEARUPIowa.gov. For information about how Iowa College Aid can help families plan and pay for college, visit IowaCollegeAid.gov.

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