



CSULB & NLM  
**GEAR UP**  
GAINING EARLY AWARENESS & READINESS  
FOR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS

## PRESS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Please Contact Dominica Scibetta

Email: [Dominica.Scibetta@csulb.edu](mailto:Dominica.Scibetta@csulb.edu)

### ***Long Beach GEAR UP awarded \$8.7 million federal grant to support Norwalk La Mirada Unified School District classes of 2027 and 2028.***

**Long Beach (CA)** – The U.S. Department of Education awarded a seven-year grant to CSU Long Beach GEAR UP to support 1,550 students (and their parents) attending Corvallis Middle School, Waite Middle School and Los Alisos Middle School. Currently, Long Beach GEAR UP is funded for \$1.24 million for 7 years under the U.S. Department of Education; additionally, the program requires a 1:1 match from educational partners, bringing total funding to \$3 million per year. Currently, the program is 1 of 27 awarded in the nation and 1 of 9 in California.

Long Beach GEAR UP works directly with middle schools in the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District to help students graduate high school while also increasing the students' access to post-secondary education; additionally, Long Beach GEAR UP looks to increase educational expectations and college knowledge of students and families. In keeping with these goals, the program works with students and their families, offering academic advising services, college and career workshops, college affordability workshops, field trips, and more.

Program director Dominica Scibetta had the following to say about GEAR UP's methods and approach: "By integrating the voices of administrators, teachers, counselors, parents, students, and the greater community throughout development, implementation, and evaluation, GEAR UP builds the infrastructure for replicable and long-lasting programs and services. The GEAR UP partnership model aligns with my philosophy that education should be community-based, innovative, sustainable, and interdisciplinary." Dominica co-authored the grant with Ryan Cummins, the Director of Alternative Education Programs for the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District with support from Heath Alexander, Grants Director for Study Smart Tutors.

The program's primary outcomes are as follows:

- Over 90% passing rate in 8th grade math
- Over 90% student attendance rate
- Over 90% to complete financial aid applications
- 98% high school graduation rate
- More than half to enroll into college the fall after high school graduation
- Boost college knowledge for parents and students

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) was established in the 1998 amendment to the Higher Education Act of 1965, which awarded financial assistance to students and colleges from the federal government. GEAR UP is a federal grant program designed to increase the number of low-income middle and high school students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. Long Beach GEAR UP, working under the U.S. Department of Education, provides students in the Norwalk La Mirada Unified School district the support, services, and interventions needed to earn a high school diploma and enroll into college.

<https://www.csulb.edu/gearup>

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