



# High School Student Kickoff



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## Essential Question(s)

- What are the benefits of earning a postsecondary degree?
- How do I get there?

## Summary

The High School GEAR UP Kickoff activity will focus on postsecondary benefits, options, and terminology. This activity will also explain how the GEAR UP grant will help students reach their college and career goals. Students will create a goal for what they can do in high school to increase their preparedness for postsecondary education (PSE).

## Learning Goals

- Explore postsecondary benefits, options, and terminology
- Create a goal that serves to increase preparedness for postsecondary education during their high school career

## Attachments

- [Career-Cluster-Puzzle.docx](#)
- [Career-Cluster-Puzzle.pdf](#)
- [Goal-Sheet.docx](#)
- [Goal-Sheet.pdf](#)
- [High-School-Checklist-Folder.docx](#)
- [High-School-Checklist-Folder.pdf](#)
- [Mascot-Matching-Key.pdf](#)
- [Mascot-Matching.pdf](#)
- [Postsecondary-Bingo-Cards.pdf](#)
- [Postsecondary-Bingo-Definitions.docx](#)
- [Postsecondary-Bingo-Definitions.pdf](#)
- [Presenter-Script.pdf](#)
- [Station-set-up.png](#)
- [Student-Station-Signs.pdf](#)
- [To-Ten-Benefits.pdf](#)

## Materials

- Banners
- Career Cluster Puzzle (attached)
- Goal sheet (attached)
- High School Checklist Folder (attached)
- Mascot matching game (attached)
- Mascot matching answer key (attached)
- Pennants ([linked](#))
- Presenter Script (attached)
- Postsecondary Bingo cards (attached)
- Postsecondary Bingo Definitions (attached)
- Station set up (attached; optional)
- Student Station Signs (attached)
- Top 10 Benefits Posters (attached)
- Writing utensils
- Permanent markers
- Cameras

# Snapshot

## **Engage**

Students participate in a postsecondary education (PSE) preparedness bingo activity.

## **Explore**

Students further explore the meaning of postsecondary education with a beach ball toss discussion activity.

## **Explain**

Students identify the top ten benefits of continuing their education and review the goals of the GEAR UP grant.

## **Extend**

Students rotate between five stations where they further their awareness of PSE and career options as well as how to prepare for PSE.

## **Evaluate**

The Rapid Feedback form serves as the assessment for this lesson. The teacher might also wish to review each student's goal statements and use that as a formative assessment.

# Preparation

Once a day is scheduled for your kickoff event, ask staff members to wear a t-shirt or other college gear from their alma mater on the day of.

It would be helpful for the beach ball toss activity to have access to music and a sound system during the assembly.

Before you begin the assembly, set up five stations with enough materials for the number of students you plan to have in each group. Have rapid feedback forms ready at each station for the close of the assembly. A suggested layout for the learning stations is attached.

Prior to the assembly, be sure to create the banner for Station Two! This banner should include information like the graduation year of students participating or an enthusiastic, encouraging phrase about their commitment to postsecondary education!

It is recommended that no more than 100 students participate per assembly.

**Adults needed for assembly:** One adult to emcee or lead assembly, at least five adults for supervision of student stations, and adults for supervision of audience, as needed.

# Engage

Presenter or presenters welcome students to the assembly. Open the assembly saying, "Today we are here to talk about the future—your future. We will start with an introduction of key terms regarding college and careers, and then move on to things you can do in high school to get started on the right foot towards your college/career. We will get familiar with these key terms by playing a game of bingo with a winning prize!"

As the Emcee introduces the purpose of the assembly, have volunteers hand out a bingo card to each student present.

Once all students have a bingo card and pen, the presenter should begin by sharing the instructions with all students:

1. "I will call out key terms from the list of definitions. I will say the word three times."
2. "If you have that term on your bingo card, mark an X over it."
3. "When you get 5 terms in a row, yell "Bingo!" A row can be horizontal, diagonal, or vertical."

## Explore

One of the keywords on our bingo cards was “postsecondary education.” Sometimes we refer to this as “PSE.” What does PSE mean? Our definitions list reads, “This term refers to education that takes place after high school. This might include college, career tech/vocational centers, trade schools, and military institutions.” We want to be clear that any kind of education beyond high school is included in this term, postsecondary education or PSE.

We are going to explore this definition and others with a game of beach ball toss. I'll ask a question and then toss out the ball. The ball will be tossed across the room while the music is playing. The ball stops when the music stops. If you have the ball when the music stops, you will give an answer to the question. It's okay if your answer is just your best guess. The goal is to learn what these words mean, not to already know it all. We will discuss each question before moving on to the next.

Go for a few rounds until you've covered all the questions.

1. Why would you go to career tech or college?
2. Can you name a career tech or college you've heard of?
3. What is something you can do to prepare for postsecondary education?
4. Does anyone here already have ideas about where you think you want to go for PSE?
5. Who wants to share about someone in their life who has a degree or certificate from PSE? What do they do and what kind of degree did they get?

# Explain

Countdown to TOP 10 benefits for continuing your education: The presenter opens this section saying, "we will compare what you just shared with what the researchers suggest are the TOP 10 Benefits for continuing your education after high school. Research suggests that if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to have these things. We will count them down from ten to one."

"First, I need 11 volunteers."

The presenter chooses 11 students at the assembly to hold a poster. As they are chosen, the presenter passes out a poster to each student but tells them NOT to reveal the poster to the audience. Students should be lined up as a countdown 10 to 0 with their backs to the audience so that the audience does not see the poster information. (*NOTE: Numbers are on the backs of posters.*)

The presenter says, "We will announce the top ten benefits of continuing your education and compare them with what you discussed earlier in the Think, Pair, Share."

As the presenter calls out number 10, he or she asks the audience to call out 10. The volunteer with the number 10 poster then turns around. The presenter says:

- Number 10 (*Audience calls out '10'*) "Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to have a more satisfying family life.
- Number 9 (*Audience calls out '9'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to live longer and healthier.
- Number 8 (*Audience calls out '8'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to be prepared for success in a technology-driven world.
- Number 7 (*Audience calls out '7'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to have no limit to your career choices.
- Number 6 (*Audience calls out '6'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to feel a sense of accomplishment.
- Number 5 (*Audience calls out '5'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to develop your creativity and problem-solving skills.
- Number 4 (*Audience calls out '4'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to make a difference in your community
- Number 3 (*Audience calls out '3'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to connect with peers and mentors.
- Number 2 (*Audience calls out '2'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to be happier in your job.
- Number 1 (*Audience calls out '1'*) Research suggests if you have a postsecondary degree, you are more likely to earn \$1 million more over your lifetime.

One last poster remains to be turned around by the 11th volunteer.

The presenter says: "All students today CAN have all 10 benefits of continuing their education because THIS school has been awarded a GEAR UP GRANT!"

The presenter asks the last student to turn around and discusses the GEAR UP GRANT benefits.

The presenter says: "This 7-year grant supports your postsecondary goals, increases families' college and career awareness, provides campus visits, and prepares you for success after high school."

**Optional Classroom Activity**

If you are doing this activity in a classroom rather than an assembly, pass out two sticky notes to each student. Then ask students to write their name on each one and label the sticky notes 1 and 2 respectively. Students should place sticky notes beside the two posters that they feel are their first and second most important benefits for earning a post-secondary degree. Once all students have placed their sticky notes, ask for volunteers to explain why they chose the posters that they did.



## Extend

The presenter says: "The GEAR UP Grant is committed to giving all students the opportunity to attend a postsecondary school of their choice. As students, you need to be committed too!"

"We are offering several opportunities today to learn more about continuing your education as an active participant in our GEAR UP Grant. We will number you one through five. Each number will go to an assigned student station. When I (the presenter) ask you to change stations, please go with your group to the next station. We will rotate clockwise." Student stations are:

- Ones, Mascot Matching - You will have two sets of cards. One set has school names and the other has school mascot images. Match the mascot to the school name. You can ask the station facilitator to share the answer key once you think you've got them all matched up.
- Twos, Sign the GEAR UP Banner - Your signature says that you are "IN" with us on a path after high school to continue your education! You can add your graduating class to your signature (Banner and markers at this station). Don't leave this station without your **High School checklist folder**. This is a gift from us to you. Use the checklist to keep on track of what you can do each year of high school to be ready for a PSE program. You can keep any documents you may need to apply to reference as you explore college and prepare applications.
- Threes, Strike a Pose - Stop by the photo booth with your friends or class members to take a photo with one of the college pennants and/or one of the top ten benefit posters.
- Fours, Career Clusters Puzzle - Work in groups of 3-5 to complete the puzzle. When it is completed, you should see represented the many career cluster options to choose from as you explore what kind of work you might want to do beyond high school. Snap a photo of the QR code to visit our career cluster infographic and learn more about each of these career clusters.
- Fives, - Write yourself a goal about how you will work this year and beyond to be college and career ready.
  - What can I do now?
  - What can I do next year?
  - By the time I graduate I will \_\_\_\_\_
  - Why is this so important to me?

## Evaluate

After the last station rotation has been completed, the presenter should invite all students to return to the whole group to complete a rapid feedback form. Time should be provided for the completion of the form, and it is recommended that forms be available at each station to be given to students easily. Teachers may also use the student goals as a formative evaluation.

# Research Rationale

There are several advantages to higher education and gaining a college degree that can bring benefits to students throughout their lives. Some of the benefits are financial, while others are social or personal. One way to categorize the benefits is to use a four-quadrant framework for measuring college outcomes proposed by researchers at the University of California (Sutton, 2017). The four quadrants are personal economic good, public economic good, personal social capital, and public social capital. The literature identifies numerous benefits of college that we can classify using these four quadrants.

## Resources

- Hutton, H. (2017). Learn to articulate the value of college beyond dollar signs. *Recruiting and retaining adult learners*, 19(7), 6-7.
- Jeter, G., Baber, J.E., Heddy, B., Wilson, S., Williams, L. Atkinson, L., Garn, G. (2018) (Submitted). Insights and implications of authentic, 5E instruction in high school English language arts. *Research in the teaching of English*, manuscript under review.