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Looking At The ISSUES

GEAR UP: *A Programmatic Partnership that Supports Student Success in Canton City Schools*

Of the 63,000 Ohio high school graduates enrolling in Ohio colleges and universities in the Fall of 2003, less than 5,000 were from high poverty inner city districts such as Canton¹. Both students and parents in the inner city often see huge financial, academic, and social barriers standing in their way. For the last six years, an extensive local partnership has sought to change these conditions.

GEAR UP stands for *Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for college*. Now in its sixth and final year, this federal grant partners the Canton City Schools, Kent State University, and the Stark Education Partnership. Additional community partners are the YMCA, Youth Development, Project Wheelbarrow, and Heartbeats to the City. The Canton grant award was over \$3, 200,000 and matched by an equal amount by community partners through in-kind services or dollars.

The purpose of GEAR UP was to follow a cohort of 6th and 7th grade Canton students through graduation, providing additional tools, counseling, mentoring and academic assistance to ready both students and their parents for making college choices. The original 7th grade class graduates this year.

The Stark Education Partnership has supported this project by creating a fund for students successfully passing portions of state proficiency tests. The funds can reach a maximum of \$250 and can be used to take the ACT test, pay for college application, admissions fees, deposits, or books.

Results: *Current results as reported by Canton City Schools students indicate a 2006 high school to college going rate of 66%. Ohio Board of Regents reported a college going rate of 36% for the Canton City Schools in 2003.*

Canton City Schools Honor GEAR-UP Partners at the Board of Education Meeting on Monday, June 12, 2006

The partners are as follows:

- Kent State University, GEAR UP partner 2000-06
- Heartbeats to the City, GEAR UP partner 2000-06
- Project Wheelbarrow, GEAR UP partner 2000-06
- Stark Education Partnership, GEAR UP partner 2000-06
- YMCA of Central Stark County, GEAR UP partner 2000-06
- Youth Development “Peel” Coleman Center, GEAR UP partner 2000-06
- Ironrock Capital, Inc., Minnie Hopkins Scholarship Founded 1993
- Fishers Foods, Minnie Hopkins Scholarship Founded 1993

¹Class of 2003 figures are the latest available from the Ohio Board of Regents.

Looking At The Week

The newly organized P-16 Council in Fulton County invited Adrienne O’Neill to speak on June 16, 2006 about the “virtue of partnerships in the P-16 process.”

The McKinley Small Schools Retreat held at Sawmill on June 11 and 12 was attended by both Dr. O’Neill and Adele Gelb. The Stark Education Partnership has served as the Center of Strength for this project. Adrienne O’Neill made a presentation at the retreat entitled “Laser-like Focus on Mission; Core Curriculum; New Post-Secondary Options; and the Future for McKinley High School.”

Aubrey Upshaw – an Alliance High School senior who participated in the OCAN Post Secondary Access Advisory program of the Stark Education Partnership – has been awarded a one-time scholarship of \$2,000 by the Nelnet College Access Scholarship through the National College Access Network. Aubrey will attend The Ohio State University.