

***Dear Superintendent Atkins and Members of the Newport Independent School Board,***

I am writing to provide you with an update on the status of the GEAR UP Kentucky grant proposal that includes Newport Independent as one of the selected partner districts.

At this time, we are awaiting notification from the U.S. Department of Education regarding whether our proposal has been selected for funding. **The required notification date is September 30, 2025.**

For Fiscal Year 2025, Congress has allocated \$388 million to the national GEAR UP program, with \$36.5 million designated for new state grant awards and we are optimistic that our proposal will be funded.

It is important to note, however, that unlike in previous cycles, funds have not yet been allocated for future years. Congress is still in the process of determining GEAR UP funding allocations for Fiscal Year 2026. Traditionally, once a GEAR UP grant is selected for funding, it is supported for its entire 6-7 year cycle. However, with the proposed federal budget cuts and discussions around the elimination of the U.S. Department of Education, we are unsure if the current approach of annual reallocation will continue or if we will see a return to funding of full grant cycles in the future.

We remain optimistic and will keep you updated on all developments. On September 30, once we receive notification of whether our proposal has been selected for funding, we will notify our selected partner districts immediately and provide details on next steps and implementation timelines.

Thank you for your continued commitment to expanding postsecondary opportunities for your students.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

**Beth Lawson (she/her/hers)**

Associate Director District Implementation  
GEAR UP Kentucky  
Council on Postsecondary Education