



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Sept. 7, 2023

**What:** GEAR UP SWV

Regional Advisory Council Workshop

**Where:** Concord University

1000 Vermillion St.

Athens, WV 24712

**Building:** Jean and Jerry Beasley Student Center - State Room

**When:** Wed., Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

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## **Regional Education Leaders Will Meet to Plan Ways to Help Students in Southern WV Graduate from High School**

**Athens, W.Va.** - Members of the GEAR UP Southern West Virginia (GEAR UP SWV) Regional Advisory Council (RAC) are planning ways to help students graduate from high school and continue their education. The GEAR UP SWV (RAC) will meet at Concord University in Athens, WV on Wednesday, Sept. 13 to finalize plans for the 23-24 school year. The strategies will help students graduate from high school and continue their postsecondary education training or college.

Kristen O’Sullivan, GEAR UP SWV Director stated, “The RAC brings together representation from various stakeholders in an atmosphere of mutual collaboration. This sharing of ideas and planning between families, educators, communities, and administrators allows our school districts to learn from each other and work together to increase the college going culture in southern West Virginia.

The special guest speaker is Kathy Hawks, Ed. D., Distinguished Professor of Education and Director of Clinical Experience at Concord University.

GEAR UP SWV has already launched two summer camps, organized college visits across the state, and escorted rising 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to an Adventure Camp in North Carolina. The workshop will provide additional training to GEAR UP SWV central staff, Local Coordinators, educators, students, and family members in attendance.

Educators from five counties in southern West Virginia will be at the workshop. The counties represented will be from the 22 Middle Schools in Mercer, Monroe, Summers, Raleigh, and Wyoming Counties.

The GEAR UP SWV RAC will also plan ways to celebrate National GEAR UP Week, September 25 – Sept. 29 in their communities.

GEAR UP Southern West Virginia (SWV), helps students graduate from high school and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP stands for Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs and is part of a national grant program funded through the [U.S. Department of Education](#). GEAR UP SWV works with two grade levels in Mercer, Monroe, Summers, Raleigh, and Wyoming Counties to ensure high school graduation. The program also informs students and families of ways to succeed in a postsecondary education and ways to help fund it. GEAR UP SWV supports teachers, administrators, students, and families on this educational journey.

GEAR UP SWV; securing a legacy of strength and resilience in Appalachia.

Find more information on GEAR UP SWV social media pages and on our website, [conord.edu/gearup](http://conord.edu/gearup).

**-GUSWV-**

**NOTE:** Members of the media will be asked to sign in upon arrival. News crews may begin setting up as early as 9:30 am. GEAR UP SWV staff will remain in the State Room until about 2:30pm to assist the media with interviews, b-roll, etc. Reserved parking will be on your right on Vermillion St. across from the main entrance to campus.