



Williamsburg County School District

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Dr. Kelvin Wymbs, Superintendent

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 19, 2025

GEAR UP SC KICK-OFF

Imagine Williamsburg County School District being at the forefront of a federal grant which will provide in-depth college and career readiness support, interventions, and experiences for students. Think of students being given opportunities that would not have been afforded to them without the multi-million-dollar funds that will be overseen by one of the major educational institutions in the state of South Carolina.

Williamsburg County School District has been granted a large portion of a federal grant that will promote college and career readiness. GEAR UP in partnership with the University of South Carolina College of Education presented its **GEAR UP SC Kickoff** on Thursday, January 16, 2025 at the Capstone House at USC. The event was informational and transformative and outlined the scope of the services that will be offered over a 7-year period to WCS D and other selected districts.

The grant will follow the district's current 6th and 7th graders until each class graduates from high school. Beginning with the current senior class, each senior class in this 7-year period will be provided stellar opportunities and experiences.

Dr. Kelvin Wymbs stated, "Over a 7-year period, every senior class will be provided additional SAT/ACT support, a senior conference day where they will get to meet and network with institutional leaders and professionals from varying fields of study, college tours to some of the best institutions in the country, and ongoing support to ensure their academic success beyond high school. I am thoroughly excited!"

GEAR UP SC will work with WCS D to provide supports for district students over a seven-year period with goals to:

1. Increase academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education
2. Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education
3. Increase education expectations and knowledge of postsecondary options, preparation and financing
4. Increase preparation of teachers and staff to teach and serve GEAR UP SC students

This grant is one of the largest in the University of South Carolina's history, and it is the largest received in USC's College of Education.

After attending the kick-off where some of the best student support organizations were onsite, such as Cambridge Education, Mrs. Genia Smith, Assistant Superintendent for the Office of Teaching, Learning, and Leadership Support stated, "We are thrilled to partner with USC to empower students and families by promoting awareness, engagement, and preparation for postsecondary success. Together, we are building a strong foundation for brighter futures and boundless opportunities."

The grant aligns with WCSD's strategic plan and goals for increasing student success as outlined in the grant's pillars for success:

- The Profile of the South Carolina Graduate
- Conley's Dimension of College Readiness
- Six Elements of Placed-Based Education