

DATE: January 26, 2006

SUBJECT: GEAR UP Status Report

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Information

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The GEAR UP initiative is a federal discretionary grant program designed to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. GEAR UP provides five-year grants to states to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools. GEAR UP grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning no later than the seventh grade and follow the cohort through high school. GEAR UP funds are also used to provide college scholarships to low-income students.

Staff will provide an update on progress made toward implementing Tennessee's 2005-2010 GEAR UP initiative. Tennessee GEAR UP is designed to promote student achievement and enhance awareness of the need to expand access to post-secondary education statewide, especially in those areas of the state that are traditionally underserved. Additionally, staff will provide an update on progress made toward the implementation of the associated collegefortn.com program. This program will directly support the state GEAR UP initiative and serves as a web-based portal through which students can learn about, apply, and pay for college.