



# Vermont State GEAR UP

## VSAC's Vermont State GEAR UP (VSGU) grant application summary

- Budget awarded: \$4,448,890 annually for seven years.
- Proposed grant period: 2018–2025
- Students to be served: 2,500 in grades 7–12, plus 300 in first year of postsecondary education or training
- Number of schools to be served: 37

## Eligible Students

Eligible students are either:

- from modest income backgrounds (eligible for FRL),
- first in their family to attend postsecondary education/training,
- experiencing foster care (DCF),
- English language learners,
- experiencing homelessness (as designated by the school Homeless Coordinator),
- and/or have an incarcerated parent

## GEAR UP and U.S. Department of Education objectives

- To increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of participating students.
- To increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education or training of participating students.
- To increase educational expectations for participating students and increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education or training options, preparation, and financing.

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## VSGU benefit to schools

First and foremost, VSGU assigns a dedicated and highly trained outreach counselor to each GEAR UP school. Our counselors provide group and individual information, support, and counseling on career and postsecondary readiness. Each counselor works closely with school personnel to provide access and opportunities to students.

- The opportunity to offer the new EMC<sup>2</sup> math class (see page 3) to boost the math competency of students so they can enroll in college at the Vermont State Colleges without the need for remediation.
- Access to VSGU's academic support coordinator who has extensive experience teaching and supporting math and other academic areas at all educational grade levels.



- Increased access to online courses through our partnership with VTVC, including upper-level math and science courses that may not currently be offered in the schools and Introduction to Online Learning for middle school students.
- Access to the College and Careers class and Middle School Access Days through our partnership with the Community College of Vermont.
- Support for work-based learning opportunities and access to the TIPS curriculum through our partnership with Careers CLiC.
- The opportunity to participate in VSGU organized college and career readiness events including Vermont Career Connect, STEM Fairs, and College & Career Pathways, plus VSGU's annual professional development event, the Transition & Career Planning Conference.

### **Support provided directly to schools**

**Through VSGU's Partnership Agreement process**, schools can apply for funds annually to be spent in ways that benefit students, faculty, and staff, and align with GU objectives. The process is designed to be completed in partnership with the school principal, counseling staff, and faculty to best utilize the funding and address VSGU objectives.

Examples of funded initiatives that benefit students include:

- college visits
- career exploration and exposure
- academic enrichment programs (out of school tutoring/homework clubs and math interventionists)
- financial literacy and financial knowledge

Examples of funded initiatives that benefit faculty and staff include:

- professional development, including conference attendance that builds capacity for student success
- equipment needed in classrooms to support teaching
  - computer software for assessment and support of STEM learning
  - materials such as robots, life science kits, electronics kits, digital microscopes, maker space materials, etc.

VSGU has created a lending library of STEM manipulatives to provide access for students to robots, tangrams, spirograph kits, 3D puzzles, and neuroscience kits.

### **Additional VSGU support to Vermont students**

VSGU students pursuing education after high school will receive a scholarship if they attend an institution or training program that accepts federal financial aid. Students are also eligible to receive financial assistance with the purchase of their textbooks during their post-secondary education or training.

## GUIDE – GEAR UP after high school

<https://www.vsac.org/guide>

GUIDE supports students during their senior year of high school, the summer before post-secondary enrollment, and through their first year of college. GUIDE staff provides one-on-one support from counselors in person, via email, video calls, and phone, and through a two-way text messaging system to support students in overcoming the barriers associated with getting from high school graduation through first year of post-secondary education or training.

VSAC's own research has demonstrated that GUIDE produces results. VSGU students who graduated from high school and enrolled in postsecondary education in 2013 were the first to be provided support through VSGU's GUIDE program.

- Of these students, 44% completed a two- or four-year degree, and another 25% were still enrolled in college four years after graduating from high school.
- Comparatively, 29% of low-income Vermonters earned degrees within four years.

GUIDE's texting platform includes not only first-year postsecondary education/training students and their parents, but also high school seniors and their parents. Students and parents receive texts with helpful reminders and resources throughout senior year, summer transition, and through their first year after high school. The texting network also allows our students and parents to text a VSGU counselor questions about getting ready for and attending college. Postsecondary education/training students currently reach out for resources to navigate costs, complete the FAFSA, pay their bill, connect to campus supports, brainstorm issues, and find on-campus work.

## Essential Math for College and Career (EMC2)

<https://www.vsac.org/emc2>

- A high school math course that has been collaboratively designed by VSGU with high school teachers, postsecondary faculty from the VSC system, and educators from the Vermont Agency of Education.
- The Vermont State College System (VSCS) has agreed that successful completion of this course will qualify students to enroll in credit bearing college math at any VSCS school without the need for remediation.
- Schools who pilot the course receive free professional development for two math teachers and mentor support throughout the year.
- Two-thirds of students who took the course during its pilot year said they would recommend the course to other students.
- Students who have not signed up for VTVLC courses before will need to start here:  
<https://vtvlc.geniussis.com/PublicWelcome.aspx>
- Here's the link to register for EMC2 at VTVLC:  
<https://vtvlc.geniussis.com/Registration.aspx>



# Vermont schools & their designated outreach counselors

School	Outreach Counselor(s)
Albany Community School	Matt Mitchell
Barton Elementary	Dylan Bertolini
Blue Mountain Union	Kassidy Moore
Brighton Elementary	Jesse Cote
Brownington Central School	Jesse Cote
Cabot School	Patricia Turner
Canaan School	Jesse Cote
Charleston Elementary	Jesse Cote
Colchester MS/HS	Stevya Mukuzo
Coventry Village School	Jimmy Clark
Craftsbury Academy	Matt Mitchell
Danville MS/HS	Patricia Turner
Fair Haven Union MS/HS	Rachel Casey
Glover Community School	Dylan Bertolini
Green Mountain UHS	Jessi Krause Herron
Irasburg Village School	TBD
Lake Region UHS	Dylan Bertolini
Lowell Village School	Matt Mitchell
Mill River MS/HS	Nathan Hickey
North Country UHS (shared by 2 OCs)	Jimmy Clark
North Country UHS (shared by 2 OCs)	Matt Mitchell
North Country Jr HS	Jesse Cote
Orleans Elementary	Dylan Bertolini
Oxbow MS/HS	Kassidy Moore
Poultney HS	Nathan Hickey
Proctor Jr/Sr HS	Nathan Hickey
Richford MS/HS	TBD
Rivendell Academy	Kassidy Moore
Riverside Middle School	Jessi Krause Herron
Springfield HS	Jessi Krause Herron
St. Johnsbury Academy	Patricia Turner
St. Johnsbury Middle School	Patricia Turner
West Rutland School	Nathan Hickey
Winooski MS/HS	Stevya Mukuzo
Troy Elementary	Matt Mitchell



## GEAR UP administrative team (at VSAC)

**Kirstin Boehm**[boehm@vsac.org](mailto:boehm@vsac.org)*VSAC Career and Education Outreach Director*

Directs VSAC's Career and Education Outreach department, which oversees the following grants: Talent Search, GEAR UP, EOC (Adult Outreach), and the Aspirations Project.

**Dr. Kristin Hubert**[hubert@vsac.org](mailto:hubert@vsac.org)*Director, Vermont GEAR UP*

Manages statewide grant program overseeing GEAR UP initiatives and exploring innovative pathways to achieve grant objectives.

**Dr. Anna Prescott**[prescott@vsac.org](mailto:prescott@vsac.org)*Senior Evaluator and Research Analyst*

Designs and facilitates evaluation and research projects for VSGU and the Aspirations Project. Outcomes from this research guide and inform our work.

**Sara Vargo**[vargo@vsac.org](mailto:vargo@vsac.org)*Assistant Director Vermont GEAR UP*

Supervises 11 statewide outreach counselors. Meets with school personnel and outreach counselors to ensure that VSGU services are fully implemented in each school community.

**Cathy Printon**[printon@vsac.org](mailto:printon@vsac.org)*School Partnership and Parent Coordinator*

Manages school partnership programs, agreements, and support for schools. Develops, implements, and consults on parent engagement strategies and initiatives.

**Anna Telensky**[telensky@vsac.org](mailto:telensky@vsac.org)*Special Events Coordinator*

Produces and supports events including College & Career Pathways, Vermont Career Connect, STEM Fairs, GEAR UP Week, and the SEEDS Summer Program.

**Jessica Smith**[smithj@vsac.org](mailto:smithj@vsac.org)*GUIDE Program Coordinator*

Coordinates retention programs and services for VSGU students in their first year after high school.

**Tia Stillman**[stillman@vsac.org](mailto:stillman@vsac.org)*GUIDE Program Specialist*

Supports VSGU students in their transition to after high school plans.



**Colin Martin**

[martinco@vsac.org](mailto:martinco@vsac.org)

*Outreach Database Specialist*

Serves as the lead administrator and project manager for the Outreach database system. Provides data retrieval and support for the GEAR UP data and evaluation team.

**Adriana Eldred**

[eldred@vsac.org](mailto:eldred@vsac.org)

*Communications and Outreach Specialist*

Designs and implements a communications plan to engage VSGU participants, schools, state partners, event attendees, and VSGU alumni. Supports the planning, marketing, and day-of support for VSGU's statewide college and career readiness events.

**Chris Barry**

[barry@vsac.org](mailto:barry@vsac.org)

*Outreach Operations and Special Project Manager*

Provides school, state, and GUIDE partner contact for reimbursements, partnership agreement paperwork, and activity reports. Supports the management of the overall GEAR UP budget.

**Crystal Simmons**

[via VSAC-GEARUP@vsac.org](mailto:via VSAC-GEARUP@vsac.org)

*Outreach Program Associate*

Coordinates and processes school partnership paperwork and reimbursements and provides data input and research assistance.

## VSGU state partners

Partner	Programming/Intervention
VT Agency of Education	EMC2 course and state initiatives and policies that align with VSGU objectives
University of Vermont	Professional development for VSGU teachers, primarily in math and science
Community College of Vermont	EMC2 course, Intro to College & Careers course, exposure to postsecondary education for middle and high school students, and teacher professional development
Vermont Principals' Association	Professional development and leadership support for VSGU school administrators
Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative	Increase access to rigorous on-line coursework for VSGU schools and students
Careers CLiC (Connecting Learning in the Community)	School support and training for work-based learning programs and student curriculum (workplace information and skills)