



Mead said that ensuring students were ready to take the ACT their junior year helped them prepare for all potential postsecondary options as seniors. She explained that this timing was key: "It really gives our students an advantage," she said.

This advantage has had significant impact in the lives of GEAR UP students. The program led to a participation rate of 69% in ACT testing statewide, versus roughly 49% when the ACT is offered through district testing without GEAR UP support. It also led to a major increase in the number of families filling out FAFSAs--a great indicator that they're planning for college, according to Mead.

For GEAR UP students who don't currently have plans for college, Mead used ACT WorkKeys

