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To Whom It May Concern:

The University of Michigan-Dearborn Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (GEAR UP) is a national college access program started in 1999, now in 47 states. The purpose of GEAR UP is to significantly increase the number of students who stay in school and are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) awards six-year grants to States and to Partnerships between universities and schools. Grantees serve an entire cohort of students beginning in grade seven, and follow the cohort through high school.

I would like to express how pleased we are with the great work SBCG continues to provide for the University of Michigan-Dearborn. In a summer program recently conducted, the GEAR UP program had nearly 200 students participate in a program led by engaging leaders from SBCG. The students ranged in grade level from 6 - 8 from underperforming schools in the Metro-Detroit Area. The assessment scores showed that students internalized some of the concepts and an informal post work shop subjectively indicated that the students were applying the concepts.

During each class session, students were reminded that the goal of the daily discussions was to equip them with tools to effectively brainstorm and implement plans for competing in the 21st century. Discussions were centered on preparing them to focus during their final years in middle school to propel them to a bright future. Classes were designed to help students:

- Understand the correlation between positive attitudes and positive outcomes.
- Have well-developed problem solving skills including the ability to analyze uncertain situations, utilize facts and evidence in drawing conclusions, apply decision making theories, and adapt and innovate in new settings.
- Be able to effectively communicate and resolve conflicts through use of active listening, positive constructive criticism, and accurate body language.
- Possess leadership skills, understand group and individual dynamics and be able to work in teams.

SBCG believes that by achieving balance, students will improve math scores, and demonstrate leadership traits. We are pleased that our students were led down a path whereby they were encouraged to internally make choices that will positively affect their mental and physical well-being.

On behalf of the UMD-GEAR UP program, we thank SBCG for their contribution to the lives of children and highly recommend their leadership to other organizations.

Sincerely,



Perry Boyd II, Program Manager