The multi-year Middle Grade Initiative (MGI) is a partnership between NAU GEAR UP and Arizona middle schools in select rural communities that is premised on using data to drive a sustainable, high-expectations, college-going culture in middle grade schools. GEAR UP services focus on a variety of curricular and instructional activities to improve academic readiness as well as students’ early awareness and motivation for a full range of post-secondary options.

- Partnering with 8 school districts (16 middle schools) across Arizona.
- MGI schools serve approximately 6,000 middle-grade students.

**College and Career Advising in the Middle Grades: College Access Professional (CAP) Training**

- CAP Middle Grade Module offered three times since 2014
- 33 course completers
  - From 16 participating schools
  - Within 8 participating districts

“Participating in the CAP class has provided me the opportunity to grow through collaboration, sharing ideas, gaining creativity and providing needed focus about adequately providing programs that support college and career readiness goals.”

—Principal, MGI School

**CAP Training has helped educators feel more confident in abilities to...**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before CAP</th>
<th>After CAP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help promote a college-going culture within my school</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guide students to identify courses needed to prepare for college</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide evidence to students that challenges cultural, social, and gender career stereotypes</td>
<td>3.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help students to identify career interests</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>Use state resources to promote career exploration</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use career interest inventories to re-engage disengaged students</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<td>Identify and use strategies to help students set and accomplish goals</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<td>Apply data-driven best practices to address student barriers</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify barriers to students’ success</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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College & Career Readiness & Awareness
Program-Level Findings from the CCRA Rubric

• The CCRA Rubric is a tool designed by the AZ GEAR UP MGI Team to gain insight into how members of school communities perceive the college-going culture in their schools.
• The Rubric consists of 28 indicators of a college-going culture and asks respondents to rate the extent to which they believe each indicator is promoted within their school.
• 16 MGI Schools participated in the CCRA Rubric survey.
• 307 school members responded to the Rubric between February and April of 2016.

Across all indicators of a college-going culture identified on the CCRA Rubric, more than 98% of responses indicated that schools were at minimum making some efforts to promote a college-going culture. Meanwhile, less than 2% of responses showed that schools were not making any efforts.

The only items that yielded responses of “we are not doing this in our school” are those related to Visibility and Student Resources...
1. “The Importance of pursuing college is communicated throughout the school”: 4.7%
2. “College pennants, banners, and posters are visible in most classrooms and common areas”: 4.7%
3. “College-related information and resources are regularly updated and available”: 20.5%
4. “Teachers include visual cues to encourage discussions about their college experience”: 9.8%

Three items related to Academics yielded more than half of responses of “we do this well in our school."
1. “Academic support is available to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed”: 57.1%
2. “Academics are recognized as the number one priority in our school”: 55.9%
3. “All students are encouraged to challenge themselves academically and take rigorous course work”: 51.9%

Two items related to Inclusiveness yielded more than half of responses of “we do this well in our school."
1. “Students are guided in completing Pre-ECAPs...”: 52.2%
2. “School members encourage and counsel all students about the importance of college”: 51.9%