

Todd County Central High School

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To all college access professionals; you owe it to yourself and to the young people you work with to arrange a visit from Mr. Grant Baldwin!

I recently had Grant come and speak to my GEAR UP class. We discussed the needs of my program prior to and again upon his arrival. I asked him to prepare for three different groups. I asked him to give his Reality Check presentation to my GEAR UP class. Grant mixed his deep commitment to helping youth with honesty and humor. The gist of his message is 'no more excuses' and 'our past doesn't have to determine our future'. In the communities typically served by GEAR UP grants that message is at the heart of our effort to change the mindset to one that values, prepares for and expects postsecondary education.

Grant followed up with a workshop for a smaller group of my upper class teen mentors and GEAR UP ambassadors. For this group we focused on a personal inventory of postsecondary preparedness. We finished the day with Grant conducting a professional development workshop for our entire high school staff. Grant dealt with the common frustrations that most teachers faced and specifically worked through assessing time and commitment management. Each session was energetic, audience appropriate and well received. Despite continual interruptions of or school calendar every week since Grant's visit, due mainly to weather, students that attended the assembly and the workshop and teachers from the staff workshop still approach me and remind me what a good laugh they had and how Grant's message was just what they needed to hear.

While we use so many of our resources on academics, the intangibles of creating a college going culture are often more harder to quantify and effectively address. This is where Grant Baldwin fits GEAR UP so well. Grant is as genuinely concerned and effective a speaker as anyone I have encountered. Check him out! You and your students will not be disappointed.

Sincerely,

Ray Wheeler, Site Coordinator
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