



GEAR UP South Dakota Year 6 Evaluation Report

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Submitted to:
South Dakota Department of
Education

Submitted by:
ICF Evaluation Team

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Executive Summary

The U.S. Department of Education awarded the South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) a seven-year federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant in federal fiscal year 2011. The broad purpose of GEAR UP is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education through state and local partnership grants. In South Dakota, the program targets low-income and Native American students from Grade 6 through the first year of postsecondary education. Similar to GEAR UP programs nationally, GEAR UP South Dakota (GUSD) developed activities in support of three core objectives, which are to:

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

To meet the federal purposes of the grant, SDDOE developed 26 sub-objectives on topics such as school attendance, student success on standardized tests and key math courses, high school graduation, and college enrollment. To help students generate momentum toward postsecondary education, SDDOE set other sub-objectives such as parental engagement and greater student/parent knowledge about college options, admission requirements, and financial aid. The program operates under a priority service model, meaning that it can enroll any low-income or homeless student in middle or high school within its service areas.

Through a competitive bidding process, ICF was selected as the external evaluator for GUSD and began work on evaluation of the program in fall 2017. Based in Fairfax, VA, near the nation's capital, ICF is recognized for the excellence of the research and evaluation it conducts throughout the United States in settings that range from K-12 education to postsecondary education and workforce development. ICF currently evaluates statewide GEAR UP grants in Texas and West Virginia and is external evaluator of the South Dakota Jump Start program funded through a federal grant led by South Dakota State University.

The chief goal of this evaluation was to examine GUSD progress on its 26 sub-objectives in Year 6 of the program—with some comparisons to baseline data collected at the start of the grant. After initial consultations, ICF and SDDOE established a data collection plan that relied on SDDOE to provide academic performance data for participating public and tribal/Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools as applicable. As tribal/BIE schools are not required to report data to SDDOE, ICF developed data collection templates for tribal/BIE schools to report information. Because many sub-objectives focus on knowledge about college, ICF developed student and parent surveys for administration at the local level. In addition to assessing progress on objectives, ICF developed a data collection plan for the remainder of the grant, including any no-cost extension period, to support final data collection and assessment of progress toward grant objectives. The evaluation team did not conduct any site visits to schools as this was not part of ICF's scope of work. As a result, this report does not contain a detailed look at program implementation.

Summary of Findings

After collecting data from most GUSD schools, ICF provides the following assessment of progress toward grant objectives at the end of the 2016–17 academic year:

- GUSD met stated goals for five sub-objectives in the 2016–17 school year. These include the percentage of students promoted to next grade on time, the percentage of 11th graders with high grade point averages, and the percentage of students aspiring to go to college. In addition, GUSD high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary education were able to meet targets regarding starting college without the need for remediation in math and English during the 2016–17 school year.
- GUSD failed to meet the targets on eight sub-objectives for the 2016–17 school year, such as increased rates of students completing pre-Algebra by Grade 8 and Algebra I by Grade 9. The program also did not achieve desired progress on goals for taking college entrance exams, high school completion, college enrollment, and the percentage of students scoring proficient on state math and reading assessments.
- It is not yet possible to determine progress on 10 sub-objectives. Eight of these focus on increased student/parent knowledge about college and require initial and follow-up surveys to determine growth over time. For this report, ICF developed surveys to collect initial baseline data, and this report has a detailed look at this information. SDDOE would need to conduct a follow-up survey to determine any growth in student/parent knowledge. Also, two other sub-objectives related to student success in college have certain targets to achieve by 2019, making it too early to assess progress.
- Efforts to measure the other three sub-objectives are incomplete due to insufficient data. For example, as written in 2011, an attendance goal requires the state to assess GUSD student progress against students at comparable schools not in the program. So far, it is not possible to locate similar schools with significant Native American populations that have not participated in this grant at some point in the last seven years. In addition, no data were available for this report to assess goals on credit accumulation by students in college.

Challenges

Four major challenges have emerged in the Year 6 evaluation of this program:

- **Data Collection:** Many GUSD sites are tribal/BIE schools that are not required to report certain information to SDDOE. As a result, obtaining data from these schools often proved difficult as only six of 15 tribal/BIE schools provided complete forms for analysis in this report. Another challenge was obtaining required information on GUSD students in postsecondary education. While basic information on enrollment was available, data on sub-objectives related to credits earned and students' ability to start in college-level courses were not available.
- **Identifying Comparison Schools:** Comparing the high school graduation and college enrollment of GUSD students to similar students at non-GUSD schools would represent a true test of the program's impact, and at least one sub-objective requires such a comparison. However, this work proved challenging as schools with significant Native American enrollment generally have participated in this grant at some point. While some had

left the program by fall 2017, these schools do not present a viable comparison due to their earlier participation.

- **Decline in Schools Served**: While 38 schools across South Dakota participated in this program during year 1, this number declined to 23 by Year 7. Even at remaining schools, program buy-in appeared uneven as indicated by the 60% of tribal/BIE schools that did not fully complete data templates used to assess progress for this evaluation report.
- **Survey Response Rates**: Student and parent surveys are a critical factor in assessing progress on many sub-objectives set out by GUSD. On student surveys, ICF received a response rate of 40.1%, or less than half of all students, despite extensive outreach. In addition, only 65 adults completed the parent/guardian survey, or just 2.1% of those eligible. Eleven schools had no parent/guardian responses at all. As a result, conclusions from parent/guardian data should be viewed with extreme caution.

Areas for Improvement and Recommendations

Given the need to increase response rates on data requests and surveys, SDDOE may want to employ a new strategy to show schools how they might gain from participation in the GUSD evaluation. SDDOE could consider adding items to surveys that have particular value for schools, such as questions about what services should be high priorities for the school. SDDOE also could provide a small stipend for a “school data coordinator” to facilitate data collection. Allowing more time for data collection and actively engaging GUSD Regional Coordinators in this process from the beginning are other strategies that may enhance reporting.

It also is important to redouble efforts to compare GUSD students to those attending non-GUSD schools. Such quasi-experimental studies are increasingly important to GEAR UP and other federal education programs. In addition, a data-sharing agreement between SDDOE and South Dakota Board of Regents institutions could help facilitate the exchange of more detailed data regarding student performance while enrolled in postsecondary education.

Additional data on *how often* and *in what ways* students participate in GUSD would lead to a richer analysis of program implementation. Only limited information on student activities was available for this report, and more student-level data could yield insights on program operation at individual sites. Site visits by the evaluator also could provide ground-level feedback from the program’s major stakeholders.

Chapter I: Historical Background

1.1 Need for GEAR UP in South Dakota

Nationally and in South Dakota, Native American students face significant hurdles to complete high school and succeed in college. Across the nation, Native American/Alaska Native high school-age youth had a 13.2% status dropout rate in 2015, nearly three times the 4.5% rate for white students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). The same report noted that less than a quarter of Native American/Alaska Natives ages 18 to 24 enroll in a college or university, trailing the rates for White, Asian, African American and Hispanic young adults. In addition, from 2010 to 2015, this data show that their enrollment in postsecondary education declined by 23%, to 132,000 students.

Poverty adds a particularly significant challenge in South Dakota, where Native Americans—primarily Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people—represent nearly 9% of the state’s population. Nine reservations are located wholly or partially within the predominantly rural state. Across South Dakota, nearly half of all Native Americans lived in poverty from 2010 to 2014, a trend that has remained unchanged since at least 1999 (Black Hills Knowledge Network, 2016). Citing similar data, the U.S. Census Bureau identified South Dakota as the state with the highest Native American poverty rate in the nation (Macartney, Bishaw, & Fontenot, 2013). As a result of these factors, the long-term goal of college is a challenging dream for many youths. In *Like Two Different Worlds: American Indian Perspectives on College-Going in South Dakota*, the South Dakota Board of Regents (BoR) (2013) concluded that the higher education pipeline in the state “tends to be a brittle, tangled, and severely fractured one for young American Indians.” A significant need also exists to help many of these students complete high school. In 2015, Native Americans in South Dakota posted a cohort graduation rate of only 49%, the second lowest rate in the nation and far behind the national graduation rates of 87.6% for all students and 71.6% for all Native American students nationwide (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

One strategy to address these challenges is the GEAR UP South Dakota (GUSD) program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Nationally, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a competitive grant program open to states and localities with a goal of preparing middle and high school youth for college through services that include academic support, college awareness, academic and financial aid counseling, parent outreach, and other services to help at-risk students generate momentum toward high school completion and college enrollment. All GEAR UP programs focus on three core objectives, to:

- Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of GEAR UP students
- Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students
- Increase the educational expectations of GEAR UP students and increase student/family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing.

1.2 Overview of the Grant

South Dakota was among 19 states to receive federal grants in 2011 under GEAR UP. The grant provided funding for a seven-year program targeting low-income and Native American students. Since that time, the program has served students from Grade 6 through the first year of higher education. The program operates under a priority service model, meaning that it can enroll any low-income or homeless student in middle or high school within its service areas. At the time of grant award, the state committed to serve 6,600 students annually, beginning in Grade 6, and offer six key services (U.S. Department of Education, 2011):

- Foundational services at all grade levels;
- Middle school enhancements;
- Middle school to high school transition services;
- High school enhancements;
- High school to postsecondary transition services; and
- Other services such as professional development and parent services.

The grant outlined 26 specific grant objectives covering issues such as attendance, academic achievement, increased college knowledge, high school completion, and college enrollment. These include objectives required by the U.S. Department of Education as well as those designed by South Dakota to promote student success. Some of these objectives are:

- 85% or more of GUSD students will gain on-time promotion to the next grade;
- More students will score at or above the proficiency rate on state standardized tests;
- GUSD students will have a higher attendance rate than non-GUSD students;
- GUSD students will show increased high school graduation rates; and
- 50% of GUSD students will be enrolled in a postsecondary institution by 2018.

The primary goal of this report is to analyze the most recent data available to determine GUSD's progress in meeting these objectives.

1.3 Structure and Staffing of the Grant

The South Dakota Department of Education (SDDOE) has served as the federal GEAR UP grantee since grant receipt in 2011. In the early years of the grant, SDDOE awarded a subcontract to Mid-Central Educational Cooperative at Platte to provide day-to-day grant oversight and to coordinate evaluation of the program. However, an external audit found significant problems with Mid-Central's finances dating back to 2013, and the state later published findings detailing extensive financial irregularities. The SDDOE terminated its agreement with Mid-Central in September of 2015. The cooperative has since closed.

Beginning in 2015, SDDOE entered into a subcontract with Black Hills State University (BHSU) to manage most GUSD programming. Based in Spearfish, S.D., BHSU is one of six public universities in the state BoR higher education system, and it has the highest proportion of Native American students of any BoR institution (BoR, n.d.). It also houses a Center for Indian

Studies, established as an act of the South Dakota state legislature.¹ All other BoR public colleges and universities also were asked to play a role in providing regional assistance to the GUSD program.

A review of GUSD's 2017 Annual Performance Report (APR) shows that, since its 2011 award, the project has enlisted the involvement of 43 public, tribal, and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools along with all of the state's public higher education institutions and several non-profit and/or community organizations. Not all past participating sites are currently part of the grant, however. For the 2017–18 school year, GUSD reports that the project serves 23 schools on seven Indian reservations. Each school is assigned a GUSD Regional Coordinator who visits schools at least once a week to coordinate programming. Seven sites also have local GUSD coordinators who design and implement services to students and their families. Students primarily participate in activities in their communities, although BHSU hosts an annual GUSD Summer Honors program, a three-week residential enrichment program to increase college awareness and commitment among GUSD students.

Data from SDDOE also show that 1,805 students participated in the program during 2016–17 and logged more than 12,000 hours of services, for an average of 6.8 hours per student. The category of tutoring/homework assistance/academic enrichment was the most popular activity undertaken by schools, followed by mentoring/cultural activities and financial aid counseling/advising. Further details regarding program implementation are described in Section 3.4.

1.4 Role and Background of ICF

As part of a competitive bidding process, ICF was selected as the external evaluator for GUSD and began work on a summative evaluation of the program in fall 2017. Based in Fairfax, V.A., near the nation's capital, ICF is recognized for the excellence of the research and evaluation it conducts throughout the United States, in settings that range from K-12 education to postsecondary education and workforce development. Research and evaluation conducted by ICF not only meets the highest standards for validity and reliability, but also yields findings that empower educators and other clients to fine-tune programs and enhance their capacity to achieve the outcomes they seek. Since its inception more than 40 years ago, ICF has served government at all levels, non-profit organizations, and major corporations. The company has a large and well-established group of education evaluators who understand the issues faced by education policymakers, administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The solutions ICF has provided clients have helped improve K-12 and postsecondary educational policies and practices at the federal, state, and local levels.

In addition to South Dakota, ICF currently is the external evaluator for GEAR UP state grants in Texas and West Virginia, giving the company considerable knowledge of the evaluative approaches and performance metrics used in these programs. ICF also is conducting quasi-experimental studies in both states examining the impact of GEAR UP for participating students. ICF researchers have presented on this innovative work at national conferences of the

¹ For more information about BHSU's Center for Indian Studies, please visit <http://www.bhsu.edu/Research/Centers/American-Indian-Studies>.

American Evaluation Association (AEA) and National Council for Community and Education Partnerships (NCCEP).

In South Dakota specifically, ICF since 2014 has served as external evaluator for the South Dakota Jump Start program, a four-year, \$3.6-million grant under the U.S. Department of Education's First in the World program. Based at South Dakota State University (SDSU), this project targets graduating high school seniors who are low income or Native American and provides a variety of services early in their college careers. Students participate in a Summer Bridge activity, have access to a laptop/textbook lending library, and receive case management from a retention advisor during their first two years of college. While based at SDSU, the project features involvement from all six BoR universities as well as Oglala Lakota College, a tribal institution on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in the state's western region. ICF provides an annual formative evaluation report on Jump Start implementation, and it is conducting a quasi-experimental study using Propensity Score Matching techniques to study the impact on Jump Start students against a comparable population of students not in the program. Through its Jump Start work, ICF is familiar with many of the schools in GUSD as they also have served as Jump Start recruitment sites.

For the GUSD project, ICF has worked with program administrators in the design of student and parent/guardian surveys to assess knowledge and changes in attitudes, particularly among students. The chapter on Objectives and Methods examines in more detail the techniques used by ICF to gather and analyze data by major project task. The Summary of Findings chapter outlines progress on all grant objectives; as outlined under the evaluation contract. It also contains a blueprint for future data collection and evaluation. ICF summarizes additional findings in chapters on Challenges and Areas for Improvement, while the final chapter outlines recommendations for the project as it enters its final stages under the current grant.

Chapter II: Objectives and Methods

This chapter provides an overview of the objectives of the GUSD grant as well as ICF's methodology for evaluating those objectives.

The purpose of the GUSD evaluation was to measure the extent to which the following program objectives (see Table 1 for full list of objectives and sub-objectives) were achieved:

- Objective 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of GEAR UP students
- Objective 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students
- Objective 3: Increase the educational expectation of GEAR UP students, and increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing

After consulting with SDDOE during the project kickoff meeting on September 26, 2017, as well as via subsequent phone meetings and email communications, ICF and SDDOE made a comprehensive assessment of the availability of data for inclusion in the evaluation. The following was determined: 1) SDDOE would provide academic performance data measuring Objective 1 for all public schools—and possibly some tribal/BIE schools; 2) SDDOE would establish a statewide contract with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) to obtain postsecondary data measuring Objective 2 and provide this information to ICF for analysis; 3) ICF would develop data collection templates to collect extant data from tribal/BIE schools measuring Objective 1; and 3) ICF and SDDOE would collaboratively develop student and parent/guardian surveys to measure Objective 3. SDDOE further clarified that GUSD program implementation data were limited, and that data collected as part of previous evaluation studies were not available for secondary analysis (i.e., ICF would need to rely on data reported in federal APRs for previous years in order to measure progress over time).

Furthermore, SDDOE and ICF determined that, because nearly all of the public schools in the state with large Native American populations and all but a very small number of tribal/BIE schools in the state were either currently participating in GUSD or had previously participated in the program, it would not be feasible to identify an equivalent comparison group of non-GUSD students. This ruled out the possibility of conducting a quasi-experimental design (QED) evaluation as initially proposed by ICF.

Given these determinations, it was collectively decided by ICF and SDDOE that ICF's evaluation would be designed to address a single principal evaluation question: *To what extent is the program meeting its objectives?* Data collection and analysis methods were designed accordingly and are described in further detail in Sections 2.1 and 2.2.

In addition to addressing the evaluation question stated above, ICF was also charged with developing a sustainable data collection plan based on our team's experiences collecting and analyzing data in the evaluation. In this way, the evaluation served as a blueprint for future evaluation activities. ICF's recommendations for future evaluation activities are presented in Chapter 5 of this report.

2.1 Data Collection

After the data availability assessment described above, the ICF evaluation team began work to collect two categories of data necessary to evaluate progress toward meeting the GUSD program objectives: extant data and survey data.

2.1.1 Extant Data

ICF worked with SDDOE to obtain all relevant extant data that were available for GUSD schools. With some exceptions, SDDOE had data for all six public schools participating in the program for sub-objectives 1.1–1.10, regarding academic performance and preparation in middle school and high school, and 2.1, regarding graduation rates. SDDOE does not collect data on student participation in PLAN or PSAT, and therefore did not have data for any schools for sub-objective 1.5. In addition to having data for all public schools, SDDOE also had data for at least some of the participating tribal/BIE schools for some of the sub-objectives, including 1.1, regarding grade promotion; 1.6, regarding ACT participation; 1.9, regarding performance at or above proficiency in math; and 1.10, regarding performance at or above proficiency in reading. SDDOE transmitted those data to ICF between September 2017 and February 2018.

In September 2017, SDDOE notified ICF that they were in the process of obtaining data from the NSC database and such data would be able to inform sub-objectives 2.2–2.7, related to postsecondary education. SDDOE transmitted the data obtained from NSC to ICF in March 2018. Upon review, it was determined the NSC data would only be able to measure sub-objective 2.2 (though future transmissions of NSC data would be able to measure sub-objective 2.5, which is concerned with 2019). At that time, ICF and SDDOE sought to identify alternative data sources for measuring sub-objectives 2.3, 2.4, 2.6 and 2.7. Ultimately, it was decided that aggregate ACT performance data could serve as a suitable proxy measure for sub-objectives 2.3 and 2.4, but that no data were currently available to measure sub-objectives 2.6 and 2.7. Table 1 provides an overview of various data sources that were used to measure each sub-objective.

In addition to extant data provided by the SDDOE, ICF also had to obtain extant data directly from tribal/BIE schools as these schools are not required to report many data elements to the state. To simplify the process for obtaining data from the tribal/BIE schools, ICF developed a Tribal/BIE Data Collection Template. This template, built as a Microsoft Excel form, provided step-by-step instructions for school-based representatives to follow in entering data for each required sub-objective. A draft of this form was provided to SDDOE for review in October 2017. SDDOE expressed concern that, as currently developed, the form would be too burdensome for schools. In response, ICF reduced the number of school years for which it sought to obtain data and then pre-populated customized forms for each school with data provided by the state to the extent that it was possible to do so. Forms were further customized so that middle schools were not asked about indicators only available at the high school level, and vice versa.

In January 2018, SDDOE staff sent an introductory letter and customized Tribal/BIE Data Collection Templates to the principals at all 15 participating tribal/BIE schools. The letter requested school principals work directly with their assigned GUSD Regional Coordinators and ICF staff to complete the templates in a timely manner. GUSD Regional Coordinators then collected the completed templates from schools and submitted them to ICF through March

2018. ICF provided direct technical assistance to GUSD Regional Coordinators as needed throughout the collection process.

Table 1: Overview of Data Sources for Measuring Sub-Objectives

Objective 1: Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of GEAR UP students		Data Source(s)
1.1	The average daily attendance of GEAR UP South Dakota (GUSD) will exceed that of non-GUSD students each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for public schools Extant data provided by BIE Data Collection Tool for tribal/BIE schools
1.2	85% of GUSD students will be promoted to the next grade level on time each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for both public and tribal/BIE schools
1.3	The percentage of GUSD students who pass Pre-algebra by the end of the 8 th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for public schools Extant data provided by BIE Data Collection Tool for tribal/BIE schools
1.4	The percentage of GUSD students who pass Algebra I by the end of the 9 th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for public schools Extant data provided by BIE Data Collection Tool for tribal/BIE schools
1.5	The percentage of GUSD student who complete the PLAN or Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) by the end of the 10 th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.	No data available from SDDOE
1.6	The percentage of GUSD students who complete the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT) by the end of 11 th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for both public and tribal/BIE schools
1.7	The percentage of GUSD students who have an unweighted Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale by the end of 11 th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for public schools Extant data provided by BIE Data Collection Tool for tribal/BIE schools
1.8	The percentage of GUSD students who take two years of mathematics beyond Algebra I by 12 th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for public schools Extant data provided by BIE Data Collection Tool for tribal/BIE schools
1.9	The percentage of GUSD students in grades 6, 7, 8 & 11 performing at or above proficiency in math on the state assessment test will increase by 10% each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for both public and tribal/BIE schools
1.10	The percentage of GUSD students in grade 6, 7, 8, & 11 performing at or above proficiency in reading on the state assessment test will increase by 10% each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extant data provided by SDDOE for both public and tribal/BIE schools
1.11	The percentage of GUSD parents who actively engage in activities associated with assisting students in their academic preparation for college will increase by 10% each year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent/guardian survey

Objective 2: Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students		Data Source(s)
2.1	Increase the percentage of GUSD students who graduate high school, compared to the state average, by 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extant data provided by SDDOE for public schools • Extant data provided by BIE Data Collection Tool for tribal/BIE schools
2.2	50% of GUSD students will be enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution by 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extant data provided by SDDOE via the National Student Clearinghouse
2.3	50% of GUSD students who enroll in postsecondary education will place into college-level math without need for remediation by 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extant data provided by SDDOE regarding ACT score cut-offs
2.4	50% of GUSD students who enroll in postsecondary education will place into college-level English without need for remediation by 2018.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extant data provided by SDDOE regarding ACT score cut-offs
2.5	50% of former GUSD will be enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution by 2019.	No data available from SDDOE at this time; future data available via the National Student Clearinghouse
2.6	55% of GUSD students will have accumulated the expected number of credit hours for their chosen degree in their first year attending a postsecondary education institution.	No data available from SDDOE
2.7	55% of former GUSD students will have accumulated the expected number of credit hours for their chosen degree each year starting in 2019.	No data available from SDDOE
Objective 3: Increase the educational expectation of GEAR UP students, and increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing.		Data Source(s)
3.1	The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge on the benefits of pursuing a postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.	Student survey
3.2	The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge of the academic preparation necessary for postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.	Student survey
3.3	The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge on the cost of pursuing postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.	Student survey
3.4	The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge on the availability of financial aid will increase by 10% each year (this includes Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion).	Student survey
3.5	65% of GUSD students will aspire to continue their education after high school.	Student survey
3.6	The percentage of GUSD parents who demonstrate knowledge on the benefits of pursuing a postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year starting in 2016.	Parent/guardian survey
3.7	The percentage of GUSD parents who demonstrate knowledge on the costs of pursuing postsecondary	Parent/guardian survey

	education will increase by 10% each year starting in 2016.	
3.8	The percentage of GUSD parents who demonstrate knowledge on the availability of financial aid will increase by 10% each year starting in 2016.	Parent/guardian survey

2.1.2 Survey Data

ICF and SDDOE developed surveys in order to measure the progress of GUSD in meeting sub-objective 1.11 and Objective 3, which are concerned with students' educational expectations and family knowledge of postsecondary education. ICF drafted the surveys in fall 2017 based on the relevant program objectives and offered SDDOE and program staff at BHSU the opportunity to provide comments and add any additional questions regarding perceptions of GUSD and program activities. SDDOE and program staff at BHSU determined that it was best to streamline the surveys as much as possible to minimize burden on GUSD schools, students, and parents/guardians. ICF revised the surveys accordingly and submitted the instruments through ICF's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for review. ICF's IRB approved the surveys on October 20 and the surveys were finalized. Final copies of each survey are located in Appendix A.

To maximize response rates, ICF developed both online and paper and pencil surveys. Specifically, ICF used Survey Monkey to host an online version of the student survey and created flyers for each GUSD school with Quick Response (QR) codes that linked to the survey. This would enable students with mobile devices to scan the code and take the surveys online. Using an online format was intended to reduce the time and burden for respondents, while also decreasing the resources needed for data entry.

ICF formatted and printed a single copy of the paper and pencil surveys for each student (and one parent/guardian per student) at each participating GUSD school. Finally, ICF developed opt-out permission forms for the student survey enabling parents/guardians to opt their child or children out of the survey. ICF packaged all paper surveys, opt-out forms, and survey flyers and shipped the packages to SDDOE.

At the suggestion of the SDDOE, ICF asked the GUSD Regional Coordinators to distribute the surveys to each GUSD school. SDDOE facilitated the transfer of the paper surveys to the GUSD Regional Coordinators on Friday, November 3. GUSD Regional Coordinators were instructed to distribute survey opt-out forms the following week, allow for a one week opt-out window, and then distribute the surveys. The survey administration period was planned to extend through January, however to maximize response rates, ICF allowed GUSD Regional Coordinators to continue to obtain completed surveys through late February 2018.

Throughout the survey administration period, ICF offered the GUSD Regional Coordinators technical assistance on administering the surveys and improving survey response rates. This assistance was initially provided in an orientation meeting on November 3 and then offered regularly through weekly emails to check in about survey administration progress. With some limited exceptions, GUSD Regional Coordinators did not seek additional technical assistance from ICF for the survey administration process.

At the conclusion of survey administration, the GUSD Regional Coordinators and SDDOE staff used prepaid shipping labels provided by ICF to return completed paper surveys to the

evaluation team for processing. Once received, ICF staff scanned completed surveys to secure PDF files and used optical mark recognition software to automatically enter data and conduct validation checks. No surveys were completed using the online survey administration tool, so no further steps were taken to import online survey data. Paper surveys were destroyed once data were successfully entered.

2.2 Data Analysis

Upon receipt of all data, the ICF team's analytic staff examined all data for missing values, outliers, and response patterns. In cases in which ICF identified outliers, ICF worked with SDDOE to understand whether there were explanations for the outliers or whether alternative data sources were available and then prepared a clean set of data to use in analysis.

ICF analysts relied exclusively on basic descriptive statistics—including frequency counts (percentages) and mean values—to analyze data regarding the program objectives. ICF analysts additionally conducted subgroup analysis based on grade levels and school type (public or tribal/BIE). Once these metrics were calculated, ICF staff conducted a binary evaluation of whether or not the program achieved the thresholds of success specified in each objective.

Chapter III: Summary of Findings

This chapter examines the progress of GUSD on the three objectives and 26 sub-objectives outlined in the state's 2011 grant application. All GEAR UP grantees must develop sub-objectives around the program's three core objectives, as outlined below:

- **Objective 1:** Increase the academic performance and preparation for postsecondary education of GEAR UP students
- **Objective 2:** Increase the rate of high school graduation and participation in postsecondary education for GEAR UP students
- **Objective 3:** Increase the educational expectations of GEAR UP students and increase student/family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation and financing.

The sub-objectives focus on a variety of topics including: academic achievement, primarily in mathematics; engagement in common pre-college behaviors such as taking the SAT or ACT; completion of high school; enrollment in postsecondary education; and student and parent/guardian knowledge and awareness of postsecondary options, college admission requirements, and financial aid. Some of these sub-objectives are required by the U.S. Department of Education, while grantees are free to propose other sub-objectives based on their goals and the unique characteristics of their schools and students.

3.1 Progress on Objective 1

As described in Chapter 2, ICF primarily made use of extant data provided directly by SDDOE or by schools using Tribal/BIE Data Templates to measure Objective 1. For these extant data, the ICF team focused on the two most recently completed academic years. This approach was chosen after consultation with SDDOE to reduce burden on participating schools (i.e., 2015–16 and 2016–17) while still allowing for the calculation of at least one year of change statistics for each outcome. Because we focused our extant data request on the two most recently completed academic years, data were compiled for only 21 of the 23 schools participating in GUSD for the 2017–18 school year.²

Ultimately, the evaluation team received extant data on 2,793 students for the 2015–16 school year and 2,769 for the 2016–17 school year (Table 2). One limitation of these data is that the evaluation team only received fully completed templates from six of the 15 tribal/BIE schools, despite extensive outreach and technical assistance efforts.

² Lower Brule Middle School and Lower Brule High School (both tribal/BIE schools) participated in GUSD for the first time in 2017-18, and thus were not asked to participate in extant data collection.

Table 2: Schools and Enrollments for the 2015–16 and 2016–17 Analyses

School Name	School Type	Enrollment 2015–16	Enrollment 2016–17
American Horse Elem. School	Tribal/BIE	77	79
Crazy Horse High School	Tribal/BIE	90	66
Crazy Horse Middle School	Tribal/BIE	50	45
Crow Creek High School	Tribal/BIE	133	151
Crow Creek Middle School	Tribal/BIE	104	113
Enemy Swim Day School	Tribal/BIE	49	60
Marty High School	Tribal/BIE	104	83
Marty Middle School	Tribal/BIE	72	58
McIntosh High School	Public School	43	44
McIntosh Jr. High	Public School	40	27
Pine Ridge High School	Tribal/BIE	378	381
Pine Ridge Elementary	Tribal/BIE	133	132
Rock Creek Elementary	Tribal/BIE	18	18
St. Francis High School	Tribal/BIE	223	256
St. Francis Jr. High	Tribal/BIE	111	109
Tiospa Zina High School	Tribal/BIE	166	153
Tiospa Zina Middle School	Tribal/BIE	100	114
Todd County High School	Public School	407	422
Todd County Middle School	Public School	417	369
Wakpala High School	Public School	38	45
Wakpala Middle School	Public School	40	44
Total	-	2,793	2,769

Note: Lower Brule Middle School and Lower Brule High School (both tribal/BIE schools) participated in GUSD for the first time in 2017–18, and thus were not asked to participate in extant data collection. Rapid City High School, North Middle School and Central High School (all in Rapid City) were new to the program in 2016–17 but did not continue thereafter. Their data were not included due to the lack of a comparison year. Takini Elementary and High School, Red Cloud High School, Red Cloud Elementary and Our Lady of Lourdes ended participation in 2016–17 and were not asked to complete data after they had discontinued participation in the program.

3.1.1 Attendance, Promotion and Academic Achievement

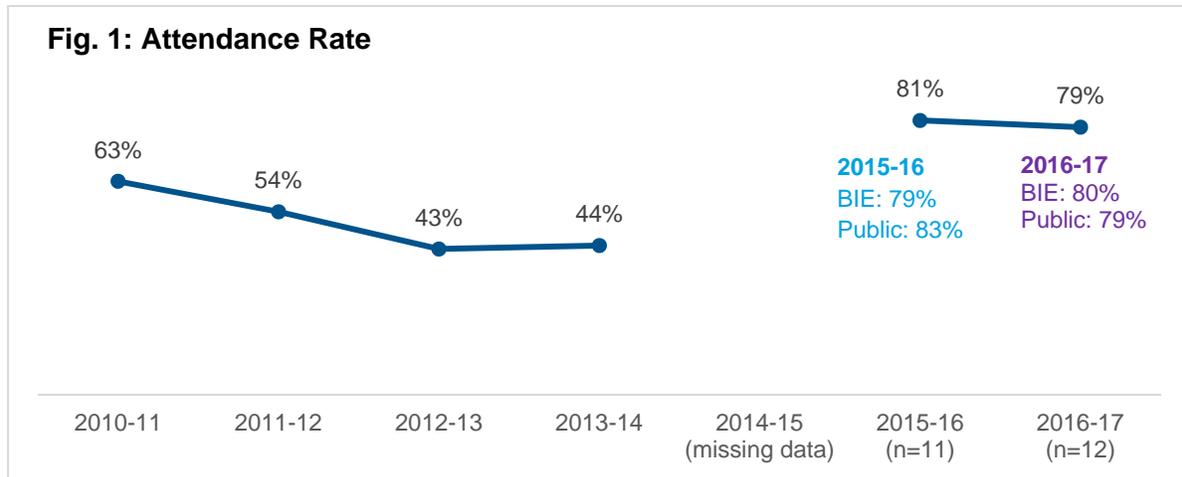
Sub-Objective 1.1: The average daily attendance of GEAR UP South Dakota (GUSD) will exceed that of non-GUSD schools each year.

Status: Incomplete

Analysis: Attendance rates have increased for GUSD students since they were first reported in GUSD's APR during the 2010–11 year (Fig. 1). For the 2016–17 school year, GUSD students had an attendance rate of 79%, with nearly identical figures for GUSD's public and BIE schools. This is above the 63% attendance rate for GUSD students recorded during the first year of the grant and substantially higher than the attendance rates reported in performance reports from 2013 through 2015. However, work remains to be done on this sub-objective, which calls for a comparison to non-GUSD schools with similar populations. Within the time frame of this project, the evaluation team was not able to conduct a rigorous comparison to appropriate non-GUSD schools due to challenges in identifying schools with similar demographics that had not participated in the grant since 2011.

There are also important caveats to keep in mind when interpreting these trends. For example, while 38 schools participated in GUSD in 2011–12, only 23 were in the program during school year 2017–18. Moreover, only 12 of these 23 schools (52%) reported attendance data to ICF for

2016–17. As a result, attendance outcomes for school years 2015–16 and 2016–17 should be viewed cautiously. If similar schools that have never participated in GUSD cannot be found in the future, it may be possible to compare the GUSD average attendance to the state average for low-income students and Native American students. However, those rates are unlikely to include students in tribal/BIE schools.



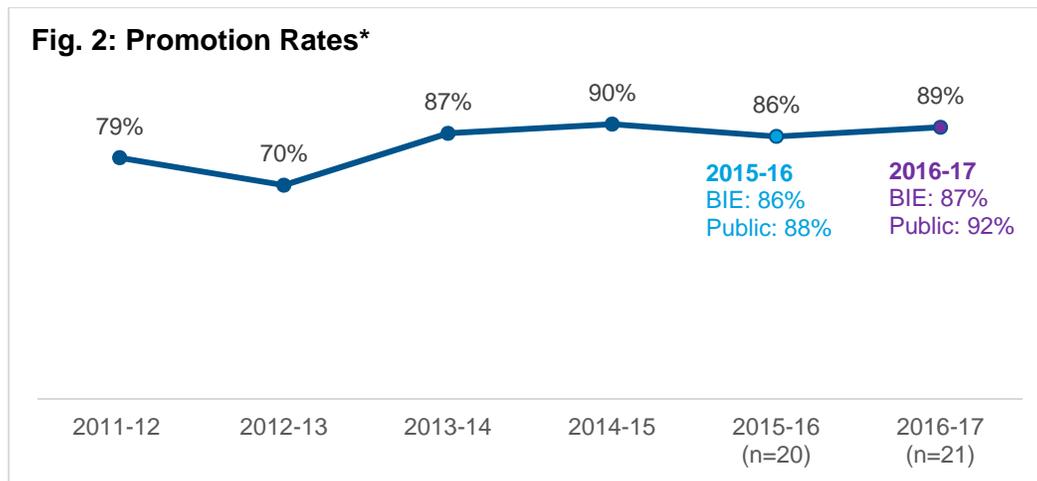
n=Number of schools reporting

Sub-Objective 1.2: 85% of GUSD students will be promoted to the next grade level on time each year.

Status: Met for 2015–16 and 2016–17

Analysis: On-time promotion is a critical indicator of student progression toward high school graduation and postsecondary study. During 2016–17 (Fig. 2), 89% of GUSD students gained promotion to the next grade, with public schools (92%) posting a slightly higher rate than tribal/BIE schools (87%). All of these figures exceed the 85% target. In addition, all schools in GUSD provided this data to the evaluation team for school year 2016–17 (though only 20 of 21 schools provided these data for school year 2015–16). GUSD also met the target in 2015–16, as 86% of students progressed to the next grade level on time. Students in public schools again had somewhat higher rates of on-time promotion than those from BIE schools. GUSD appeared to meet the standard in 2014–15 but fell short in the previous two years.

It should be noted that the promotion rates for 2011–12 through 2014–15 that are presented in Fig. 2 come from previous APRs, while the data for 2015–16 and 2016–17 were calculated by ICF using extant data from SDDOE and Tribal/BIE Data Templates completed by school districts.



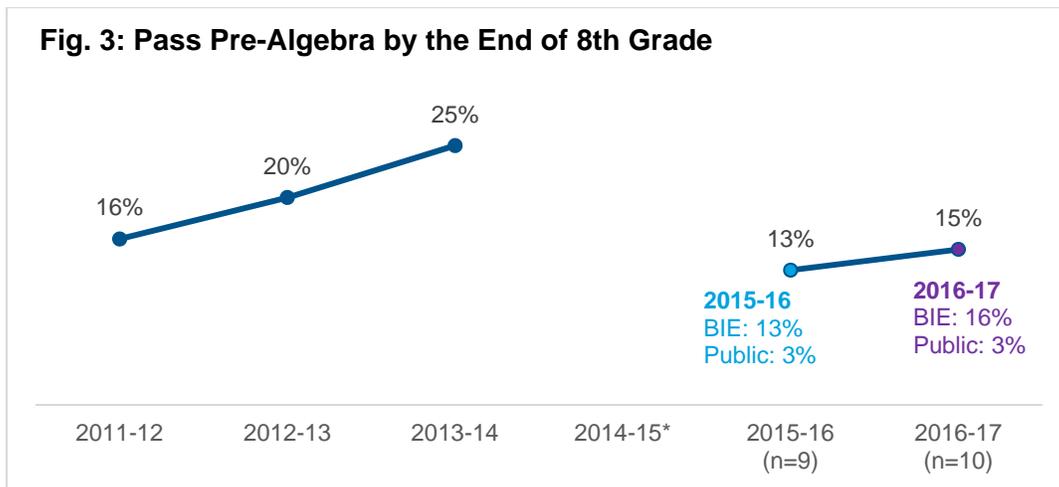
n=Number of schools reporting

*The baseline year for promotion rates was 2011–12.

Sub-objective 1.3: The percentage of GUSD students who pass Pre-Algebra by the end of the 8th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.

Status: Not met for 2016–17

Analysis: Using data from past APRs as a baseline, GUSD so far has not met its objective to increase pass rates in Pre-Algebra by 8th grade (Fig. 3). For 2012–13, 16% of students had completed this course by 8th grade. In the most recent data collection for 2016–17, 15% of students finished this course successfully by that time. The 2016–17 data indicate a small increase from the previous year, when only 13% of students had completed Pre-Algebra. In this case, tribal/BIE schools were much more likely than public schools to have students attain this benchmark. For 2016–17, 16% of tribal/BIE students had completed Pre-Algebra compared with only 3% of public school students. This finding may warrant further review to determine if public middle schools participating in GUSD offer Pre-Algebra in the curriculum or if they lack a certified teacher to provide the course. The most recent data also should be viewed with some caution as only about half of participating GUSD schools provided this data for the past two school years. In addition, data for 2011–12 through 2014–15 came from previous APRs, while the data for 2015–16 and 2016–17 were calculated by ICF using extant data from SDDOE and Tribal/BIE Data Templates completed by school districts.



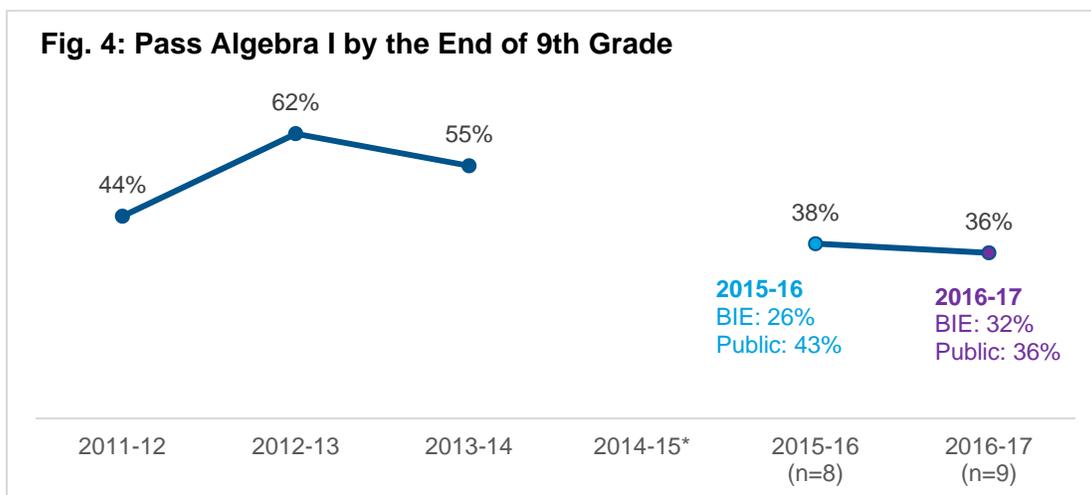
n=Number of schools reporting

*There were 90 students who passed Pre-Algebra by the end of 8th grade in 2014–15. No percentage was reported.

Sub-objective 1.4: The percentage of GUSD students who pass Algebra I by the end of the 9th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.

Status: Not met for 2016–17

Analysis: Fewer than half of GUSD schools provided this information for 2015–16 and 2016–17. In schools that did provide data, we found 36% of students had passed Algebra I by the end of Grade 9 for school year 2016–17 (Fig. 4). Public schools had a slight advantage as 36% of students completed the course compared with 32% at tribal/BIE schools. Overall, the rate was slightly higher in 2015–16, when 38% of students had completed the course. Both of these rates are lower than pass rates reported in earlier APRs. However, it again bears mentioning that data from 2011–12 through 2014–15 come from GUSD APRs, while data for 2015–16 and 2016–17 were calculated by ICF using extant data from SDDOE and Tribal/BIE Data Templates completed by school districts.



n=Number of schools reporting

*There were 190 students who passed Algebra I by the end of 9th grade in 2014–15. No percentage was reported.

3.1.2 Academic Preparation for College

Sub-objective 1.5: The percentage of GUSD students who complete the PLAN or Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) by the end of the 10th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.

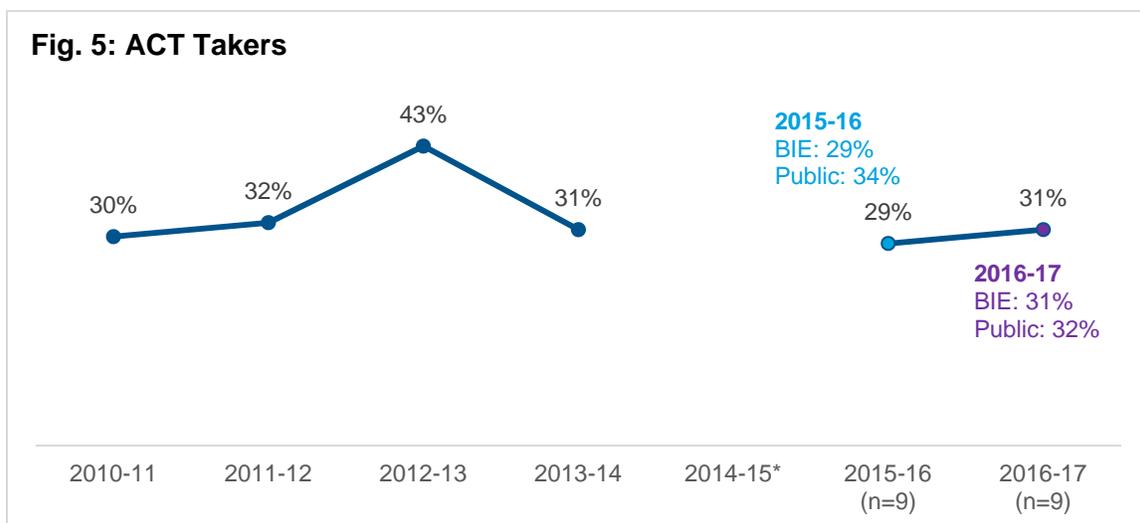
Status: Not measurable and data not available

Analysis: GUSD sites may have worked on this issue; however, neither PLAN nor PSAT are required by the state of South Dakota, and schools must fund it themselves. SDDOE has no involvement on this issue.

Sub-objective 1.6: The percentage of GUSD students who complete the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT) by the end of 11th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.

Status: Not met

Analysis: ACT is the primary college assessment taken by South Dakota students. Most South Dakota students take the ACT in 11th and 12th grade. Although an exact measurement for sub-objective 1.6 requires an analysis of GUSD students who completed the ACT by the end of 11th grade, data received by SDDOE on ACT test completion was not broken out by grade level. At the direction of SDDOE, analysis for this sub-objective in 2015–16 and 2016–17 included all test takers at participating GUSD schools divided by the total number of 11th and 12 grade students at those GUSD schools. In 2016–17, 31% of GUSD students had taken the ACT (Fig. 5). Students at public schools had an ACT completion rate of 32%, while the rate for those at tribal/BIE schools was 31%. While representing a slight increase from the prior year, the overall percentage for 2016–17 was only one percentage point higher than the baseline (as reported in the federal APR) meaning that the sub-objective was not met. While only nine schools provided data for this sub-objective during the past two academic years, these schools represent nearly all of the high schools currently participating in the program.



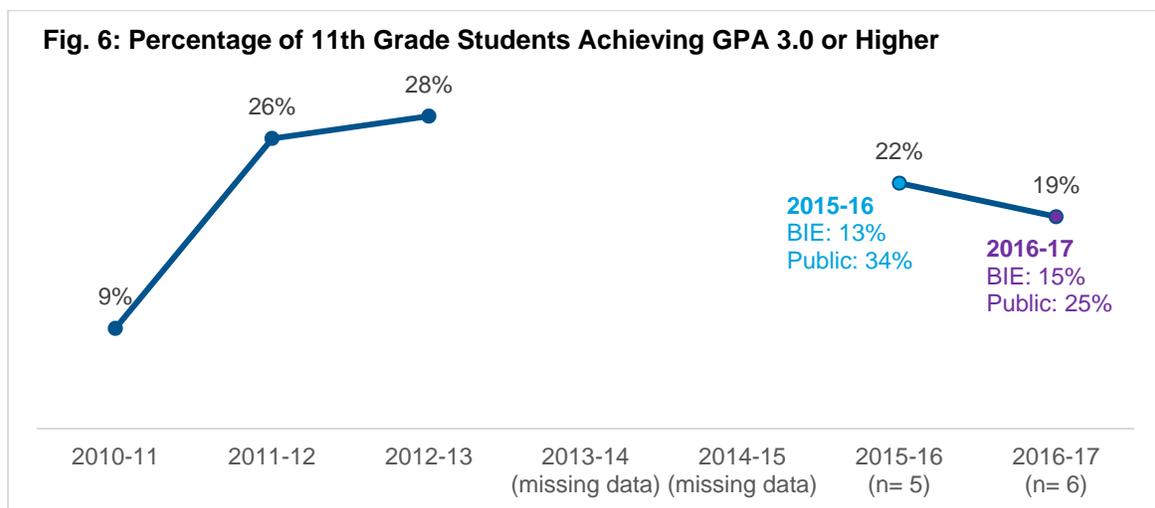
n=Number of schools reporting

*There were 328 ACT takers in 2014–15. No percentage was reported.

Sub-objective 1.7: The percentage of GUSD students who have an unweighted Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4-point scale by the end of 11th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.

Status: Met with reservations, for 2016–17

Analysis: Data received from schools indicated that 19% of GUSD students had a GPA of 3.0 or above in 11th grade last year, more than double the rate of 9% first recorded by GUSD in 2011–12 (Fig. 6). The rate for 2015–16 was even higher at 22% based on data recently reported by schools to ICF. This finding should be viewed with some caution, however. GPA scales were different across some tribal/BIE schools, and one tribal/BIE school used competency-based assessment, which could not be converted into a GPA scale. For the past two school years, public schools were more likely to report than tribal/BIE schools. In addition, data for 2010–11 through 2013–14 came from past APRs and could not be validated. No data were reported on this sub-objective for 2013–14 and 2014–15.

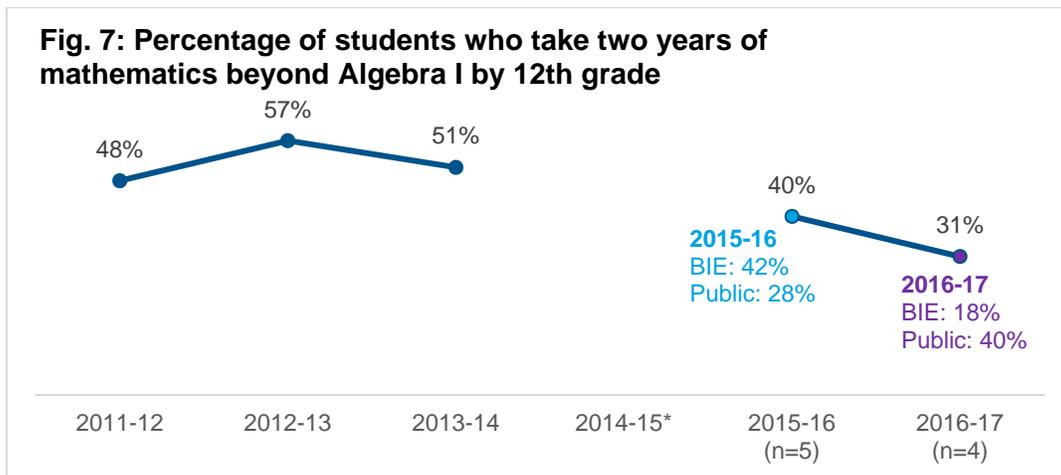


n=Number of schools reporting

Sub-objective 1.8: The percentage of GUSD students who take two years of mathematics beyond Algebra I by 12th grade will increase by 10% over the baseline.

Status: Not met for 2016–17.

Analysis: Students can increase their college readiness in math through higher-level classes beyond Algebra I. ICF obtained information on this metric from only half of all participating high schools for 2015–16 and 2016–17. As a result, the data should be viewed with caution. Among schools reporting in 2016–17, 31% of students had enrolled in two or more years of mathematics beyond Algebra I, compared with 40% the previous year (Fig. 7). Data from 2011–12 through 2014–15 showed much higher rates, but comparisons should be made with caution since these data come from past APRs.



n=Number of schools reporting

*There were 233 students who took two years of mathematics beyond Algebra I by 12th grade in 2014–15. No percentage was reported.

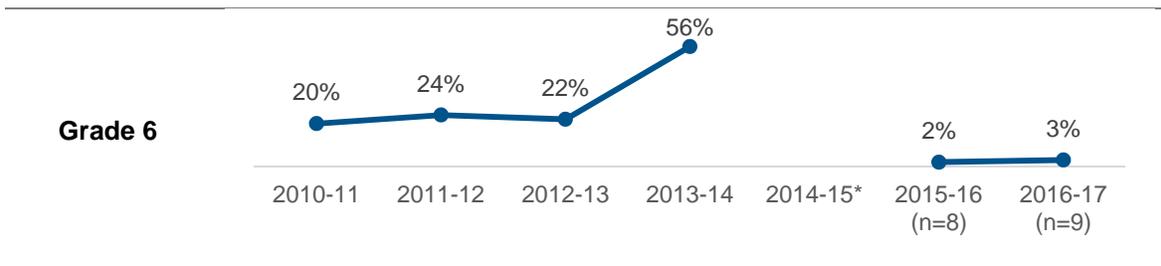
Sub-objective 1.9: The percentage of GUSD students in grades 6, 7, 8 & 11 performing at or above proficiency in math on the state assessment test will increase by 10% each year.

Status: Not met

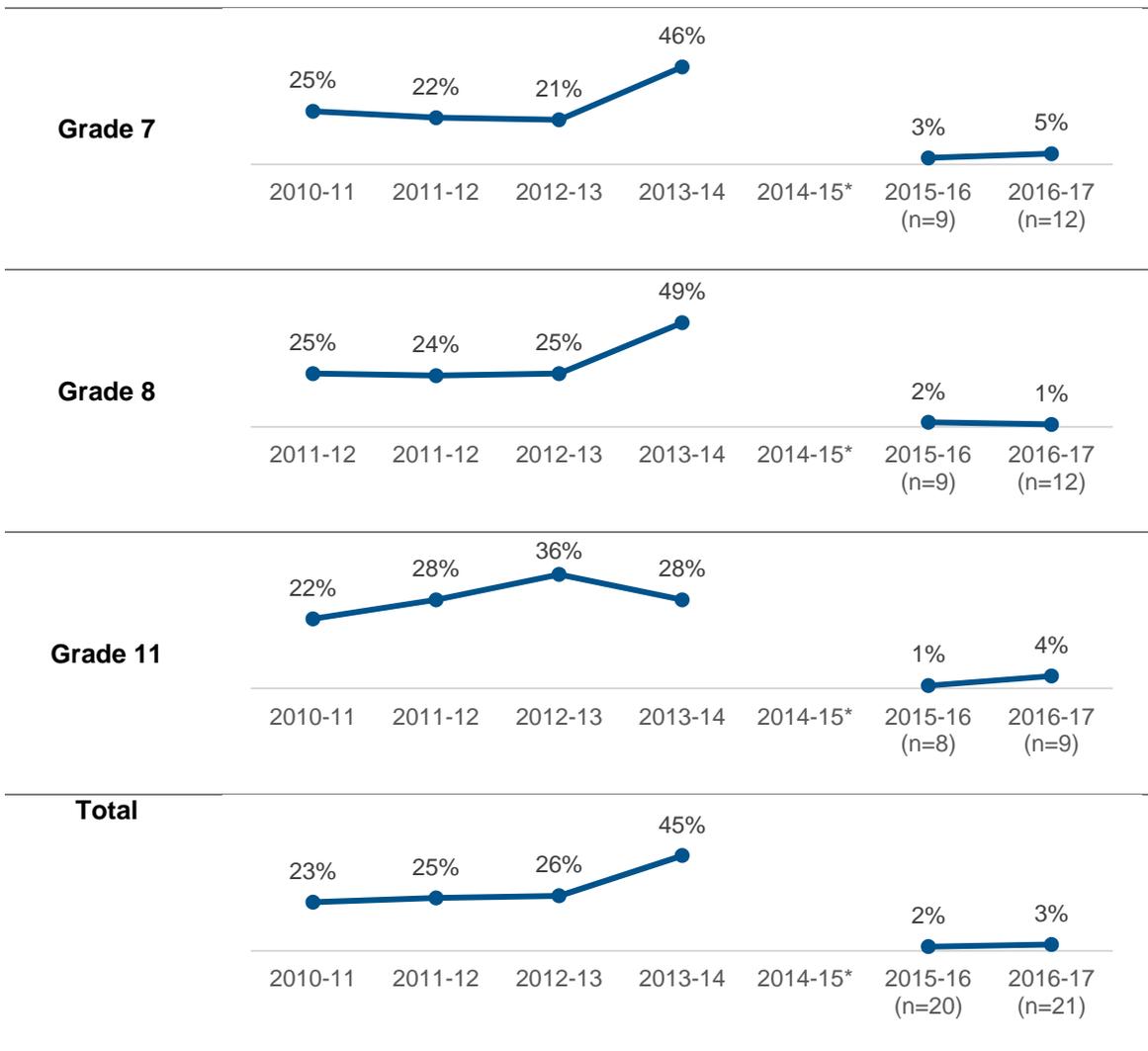
Analysis: Only 3% of students at these grade levels in GUSD schools scored at the proficient level on the state assessment test for 2016–17 (Fig. 8). This figure was up from 2% during the 2015–16 year. Data for both years came from SDDOE. However, these rates are far below earlier data reported by SDDOE during the grant period.

The wide gap between past and more recent data are at least partially attributable to the South Dakota’s transition to a new state assessment of English/language arts and mathematics in 2014–15.³ That is, the state ceased administration of the Dakota State Test of Educational Progress (Dakota STEP) and began administering the much more rigorous and nationally benchmarked Smarter Balanced Assessment in 2014–15. In fact, given this change in assessments, and the reporting of total numbers instead of percentages in the federal APR during the 2014–15 school year, it may be advisable to use the 2015–16 data as a baseline for measuring this sub-objective in future reporting.

Fig. 8: Percentage of Students Achieving Math Proficiency



³ While the Smarter Balanced Assessment was instituted in 2014–15, the assessment was piloted during the 2013–14 school year.



n=Number of schools reporting

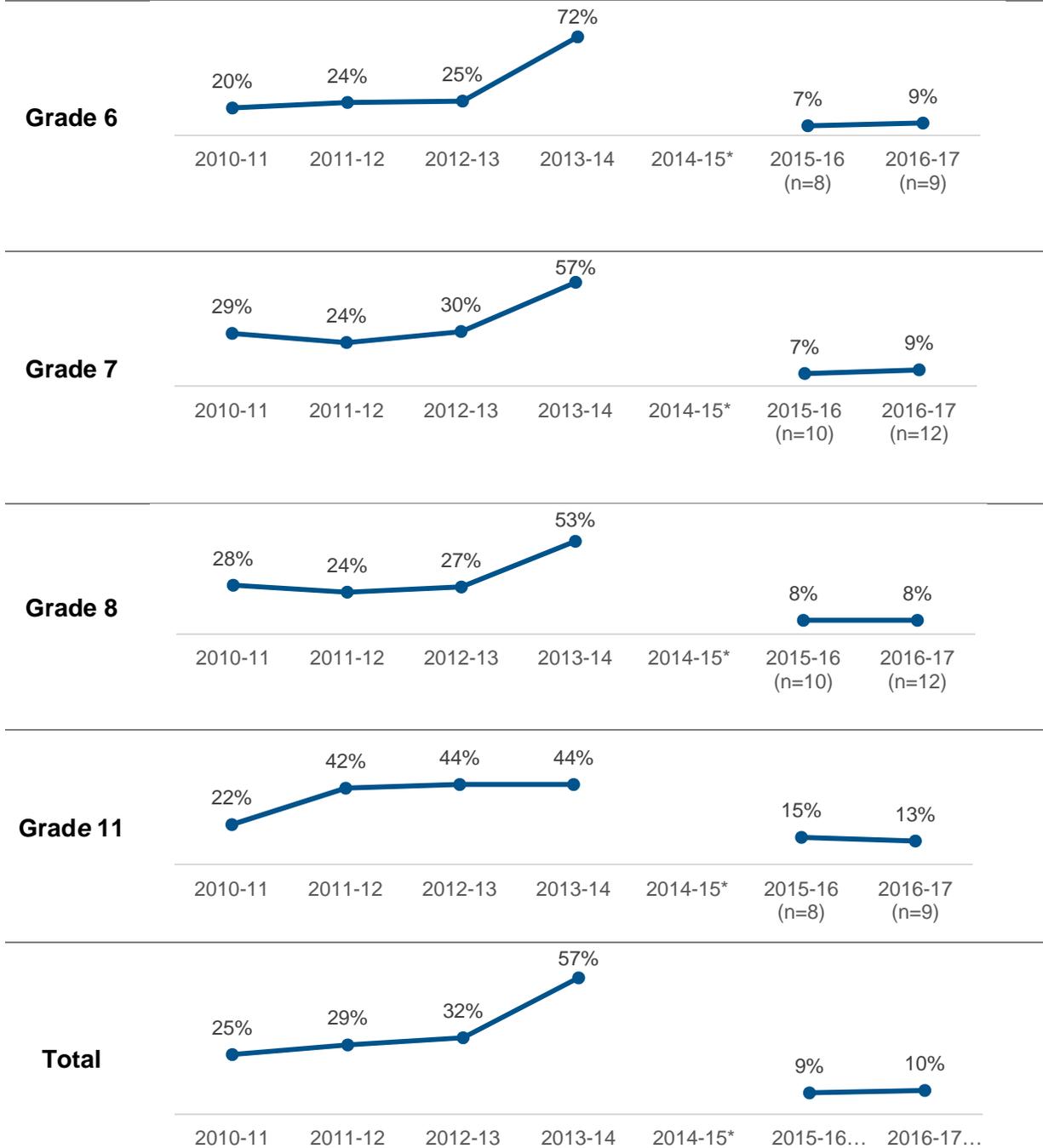
*There were a total of 61 students performing at or above proficiency in math in 2014–15 (6th grade: 9 students; 7th grade: 21 students; 8th grade: 18 students; 11th grade: 13 students). No percentages were reported.

Sub-objective 1.10: The percentage of GUSD students in grades 6, 7, 8 & 11 performing at or above proficiency in reading on the state assessment test will increase by 10% each year.

Status: Not met

Analysis: Ten percent of GUSD students were proficient on state reading assessments in 2016–17, up from 9% the previous year (Fig. 9). That increase exceeded the target growth rate. However, the data for 2015–16, provided by SDDOE, show a significant decrease from the 57% reported by GUSD in its performance data for 2014–15. As noted above, the ICF team partially attributes this gap to the transition to a new and more rigorous state assessment of English/language arts adopted in 2014–15, and given the reporting of numbers instead of percentages in the federal APR during the 2014–15 school year, notes that it may be advisable to use the 2015–16 data as a baseline for measuring this sub-objective in future reporting.

Fig. 9: Percentage of Students Achieving Reading Proficiency



n=Number of schools reporting

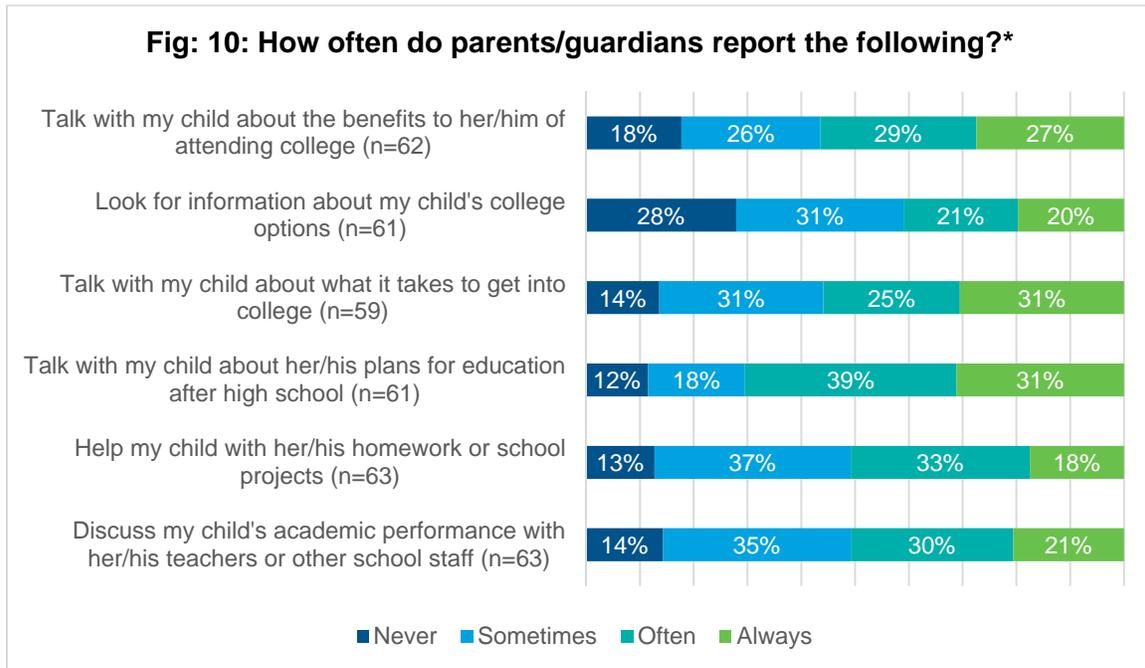
*There were a total of 225 students performing at or above proficiency in reading in 2014–15 (6th grade: 34 students; 7th grade: 48 students; 8th grade: 71 students; 11th grade: 72 students). No percentages were reported.

Sub-objective 1.11: The percentage of GUSD parents who actively engage in activities associated with assisting students in their academic preparation for college will increase by 10% each year.

Status: N/A; only baseline data available



Analysis: With SDDOE input, ICF designed a survey for parents/guardians to examine their knowledge about college as well as their involvement in their child’s education. Despite outreach attempts, very few parents/guardians responded to the survey. Among respondents, most said that they at least sometimes talk with their children about college and post-high school options, look for information about their child’s college options, and discuss their child’s academic performance with teachers and other school staff (Fig. 10). More discussion of the GUSD student and parent/guardian surveys appear later in this report.



*Based on survey data, 2017–18

3.2 Progress on Objective 2

Sub-objectives falling under Objective 2 focus primarily on high school completion and college enrollment, including students’ ability to enroll in college without the need for remediation. Data sources for Objective 2 include extant data provided to ICF by SDDOE and data collected by ICF from tribal/BIE schools using customized data templates.

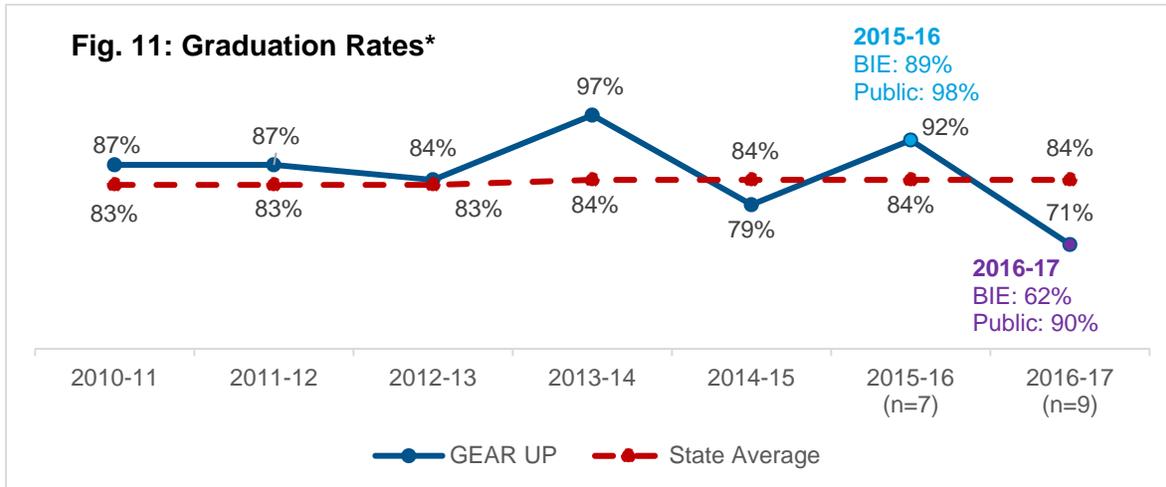
The state also provided ICF with electronic data on college enrollment that it compiled through a state contract with the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), a nonprofit that analyzes enrollment data from 3,600 colleges and universities. All data were aggregated at the school level.

Sub-objective 2.1: Increase the percentage of GUSD students who graduate high school, compared to the state average, by 2018.

Status: Met for 2015–16; not met for 2016–17.

Analysis: As shown in Fig. 11, the statewide graduation rate remained largely the same from 2010–11 to 2016–17. During that same period, the graduation rate for GUSD students increased from 87% in 2011–12 to 92% in 2015–16 before declining to 71% the following academic year. For 2016–17, public high schools in the program had a higher graduation rate

than tribal/BIE schools (90% vs. 62%). Important caveats include the fact that data from 2011–14 came from past GUSD APRs; the graduation data were self-reported by schools and some schools did not appropriately code their students while reporting data; and some schools had more graduating students than enrolled 12th grade students, which resulted in graduation rates over 100% at some schools. A final assessment of this sub-objective is not available until the class of 2018 finishes high school.



*The graduation data were self-reported by schools. Some schools didn't appropriately code their students while reporting the data which caused variances due to missing or inaccurate data. The formula for the GUSD graduation rate calculation is: number of graduated students divided by number of 12th grade enrollment in the same year. Some schools had more graduating students than 12th grade students, which resulted in graduation rates over 100%. The state average was a four-year cohort graduation rate.

Sub-objective 2.2: 50% of GUSD students will be enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution by 2018.

Status: Not met for 2016–17

Analysis: The evaluation team analyzed this sub-objective using data provided to ICF by SDDOE from the NSC, a frequently used source for verified information on students' postsecondary enrollment. Table 3 provides a detailed look at the data generated by requests to NSC, including number of schools reporting and total estimates of the numbers of high school completers and college enrollments.

Table 3: High School Completion & College Enrollment Data via National Student Clearinghouse*

School Year	Number of schools	High School Completers*	Postsecondary Enrollments* (n)	Postsecondary Enrollments (%)
2011–12	11	374	155	41.4%
2012–13	9	221	97	43.9%
2013–14	15	446	189	42.4%
2014–15	12	285	114	40.0%
2015–16	13	403	140	34.7%
2016–17	5	184	39	21.2%
Total	35	1,913	734	38.4%

*The number of high schools included in the analysis varied year by year due to incorrect coding schools used when reported data. Schools with incorrect coding were excluded in the analysis.

When reviewing these data, SDDOE noted that the number of high school completers and postsecondary enrollments in NSC's dataset may be underestimated due to limited data submission by participating high schools. ICF agrees that calculating college-going rates can be challenging for any state or high school, although the NSC data likely provides the most valid way to gain an accurate picture of trends. GUSD will have additional opportunities to collect data on this sub-objective once the class of 2018 completes high school and this effort can provide additional insight on whether the program can meet its goal.

Sub-objective 2.3: 50% of GUSD students who enroll in postsecondary education will place into college-level math without need for remediation by 2018.

Status: Met for 2016–17

Analysis: Under South Dakota BoR policy, a maximum score of 20 or above on the Math ACT is the standard to gain placement into College Algebra and avoid remediation. As noted in Table 4, 2016–17 was the first year in which more than 50% of GUSD students who went to college scored above a 20. This rate indicates that approximately the same percentage of GUSD students who enrolled in postsecondary education achieved the goal of enrolling in college-level math without remediation, in fulfillment of sub-objective 2.3. Students in 2016–17 placed into college-level math without remediation at much higher rates than the preceding groups.

Table 4: Enrollment in College-Level Math without Remediation

School Year	Number of schools	# Who Went to College and Took ACT	# Who Went to College and Have Max Score 20 or Above for Math	% Who Went to College and Have a Max Score 20 or Above for Math
2011–12	8	125	35	28%
2012–13	7	83	21	25%
2013–14	13	149	24	16%
2014–15	8	67	12	18%
2015–16	11	100	19	19%
2016–17	7	199	103	52%
Total	25	723	214	30%

Sub-objective 2.4: 50% of GUSD students who enroll in postsecondary education will place into college-level English without need for remediation by 2018.

Status: Met for 2016–17

Analysis: Under South Dakota BoR policy, a maximum score of 18 or above on the English ACT is the standard to gain placement into college-level English and avoid remediation. As noted in Table 5, during the 2016–17 school year, 62% of GUSD students in postsecondary study had a score of 18 or above. This rate indicates that approximately the same percentage of GUSD students who enrolled in postsecondary education achieved the goal of enrolling in college-level English without remediation, in fulfillment of sub-objective 2.4. Similar to the trend in math, students in 2016–17 placed into college-level English without remediation at much higher rates than the preceding groups.

Table 5: Enrollment in College-Level English without Remediation

School Year	Number of schools	# Who Went to College and Took ACT	# Who Went to College and Have Max Score 18 or Above for English	% Who Went to College and Have a Max Score 18 or Above for English
2011–12	8	125	46	37%
2012–13	7	83	41	49%
2013–14	13	149	49	33%
2014–15	8	67	21	31%
2015–16	11	100	30	30%
2016–17	7	199	123	62%
Total	25	723	310	43%

Progress on the remainder of Objective 2 measures cannot be reported at this time.

Sub-objective 2.5: 50% of former GUSD students will be enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution by 2019.

Sub-objective 2.6: 55% of GUSD students will have accumulated the expected number of credit hours for their chosen degree in their first year attending a postsecondary education institutions.

Sub-objective 2.7: 55% of former GUSD students will have accumulated the expected number of credit hours for their chosen degree each year starting in 2019.

Status: Incomplete

Sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.7 set 2019 as the target date for examination. SDDOE could not provide data for sub-objective 2.6, which relies on data on GUSD students at the postsecondary level. A data sharing agreement between SDDOE and the South Dakota BoR could help facilitate data gathering on all of these objectives in the future.

3.3 Progress on Objective 3

The third major objective of GUSD is to increase the educational expectations of students and increase student and family knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing. In its 2011 application, GUSD outlined eight sub-objectives related to Objective 3, focusing on increased student knowledge of postsecondary education, academic preparation for college and college costs. Others targeted student aspirations and parent knowledge of college financial aid options.

Assessing performance on most of these sub-objectives requires baseline data and survey findings prior to 2017–18 which were not available to ICF. To assess progress, ICF, with SDDOE input, developed new student and parent/guardian surveys in fall 2017. As noted earlier in this report, students and parents/guardians completed surveys from fall 2017 through early 2018 after providing their consent to participate. This section provides an overview of the surveys, basic demographic information on survey respondents, and survey findings related to the specific sub-objectives. For all of the relevant sub-objectives, results from the surveys should serve as a baseline for future trend analysis.

With that in mind, this section is structured differently than 3.1 and 3.2. Its aim is to: 1) provide an overview of the survey and the demographics of its respondents; 2) provide baseline data on student and parent/guardian knowledge related to each sub-objective; and 3) offer additional analysis based on other questions in the survey designed to provide information on student and parent/guardian involvement with GUSD.

3.3.1 Survey Overview

The 2017–18 student and parent/guardian surveys were offered to all 23 schools currently participating in GUSD. One school declined to participate, stating they did not receive services during the 2017–18 school year, and two others did not participate for undisclosed reasons, resulting in a final sample of 20 schools. After extensive outreach, 1,197 of the estimated 2,985 grade 6–12 GUSD students enrolled in these 20 schools, or 40.1%, had completed the student survey by March 2018. Despite continuous outreach by ICF and GUSD, however, only 65 parents/guardians completed the surveys during this time period and data on parent/guardian responses should be viewed with extreme caution given this limited response.⁴ Table 6 provides a breakdown of student and parent/guardian survey responses by GUSD school.

Table 6: Responses to GUSD Surveys, 2017–18 School Year

School Name	Number of Student Survey Responses	Number of Parent/Guardian Survey Responses
American Horse Middle School	61	
Crazy Horse Middle School	*	*
Crazy Horse High School	*	12
Crow Creek High School	43	
Crow Creek Middle School	126	
Enemy Swim Middle School		
Lower Brule High School	51	*
Lower Brule Middle School	33	*
Marty High School	55	
Marty Middle School	46	
McIntosh Middle School	44	10
McIntosh High School	47	*
Pine Ridge High School	128	*
Pine Ridge Middle School		
Rock Creek Elementary	*	
St. Francis High School	29	*
St. Francis Middle School	22	
Tiospa Zina Middle School	61	
Tiospa Zina High School		
Todd County High School	177	
Todd County Middle School	192	13
Wakpala High School	32	
Wakpala Middle School	28	
Total	1,197	65

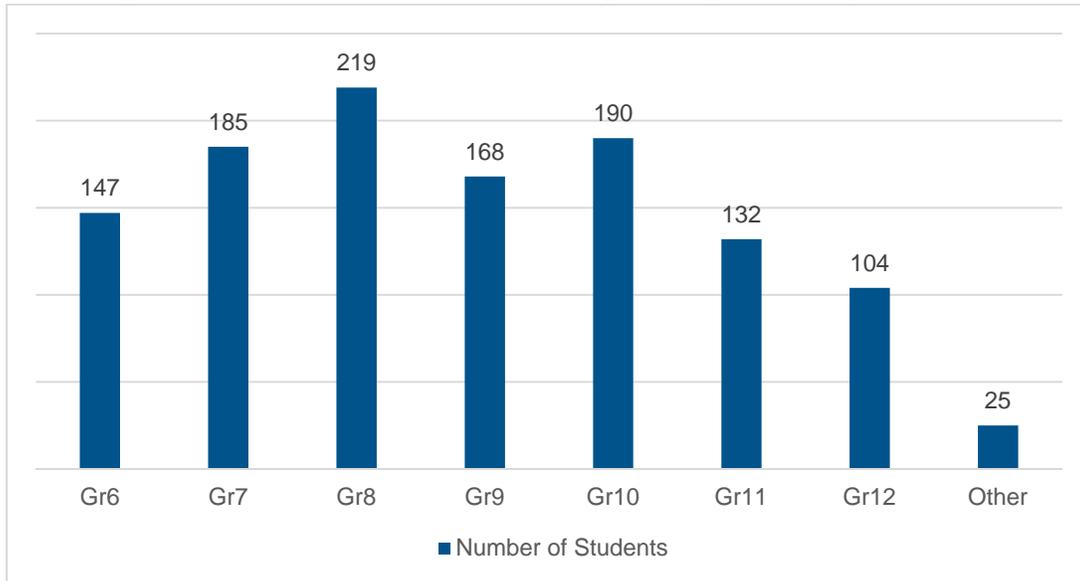
*School had fewer than 10 responses. These numbers are suppressed per SDDOE policy to protect student privacy.

⁴ This estimate does not include students whose parents/guardians opted-out of data collection.

3.3.2 Student Demographics

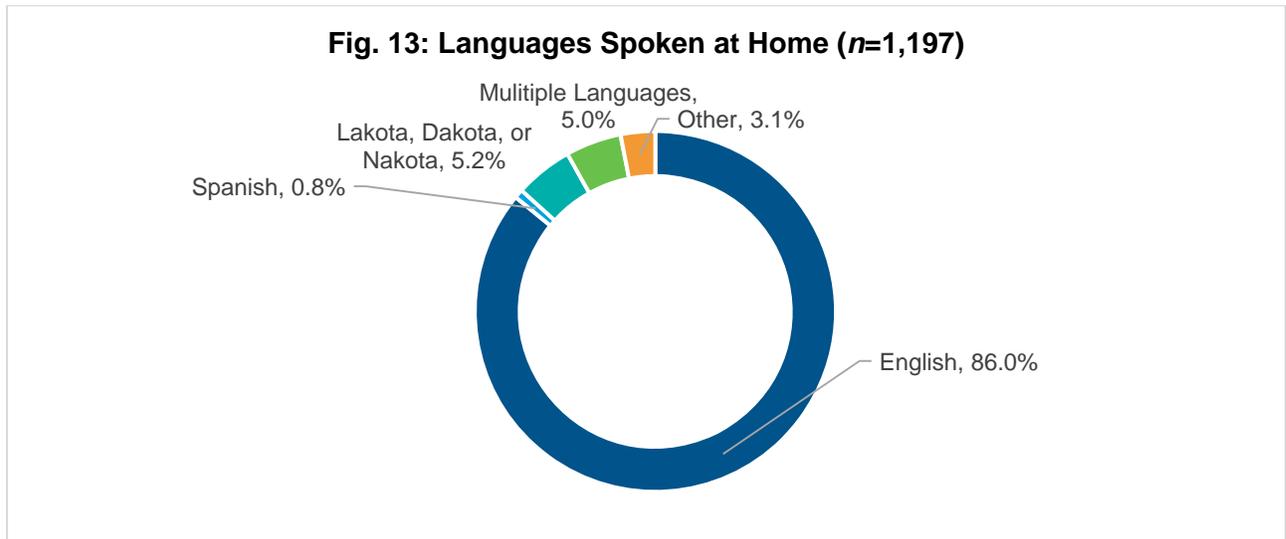
Student respondents were 53% female and 47% male, and they also reflected all secondary school grade levels (Fig. 12). The largest number of respondents, 219, were in Grade 8, followed by 190 who were in Grade 10 and 185 in Grade 7. Only 104 students were high school seniors in 2017–18.

Fig. 12: Grade Level of Students Responding to Survey



English was the predominant language of 86% of students responding to the survey (Fig. 13). Lakota, Dakota or Nakota was the primary language of 5.2%, while 5% indicated that multiple languages were spoken at home. Four percent of students cited Spanish or other languages.

Fig. 13: Languages Spoken at Home (n=1,197)



Broken out by race/ethnicity, Native American students were the majority of respondents, accounting for 59.5% of those completing the survey (Table 7). The next most common response was multiple races, cited by 10.2% of students. Hispanic and white students

accounted for 8.2% and 5.8% of respondents. Race/ethnicity information was not available or not provided for 12.6% of students.

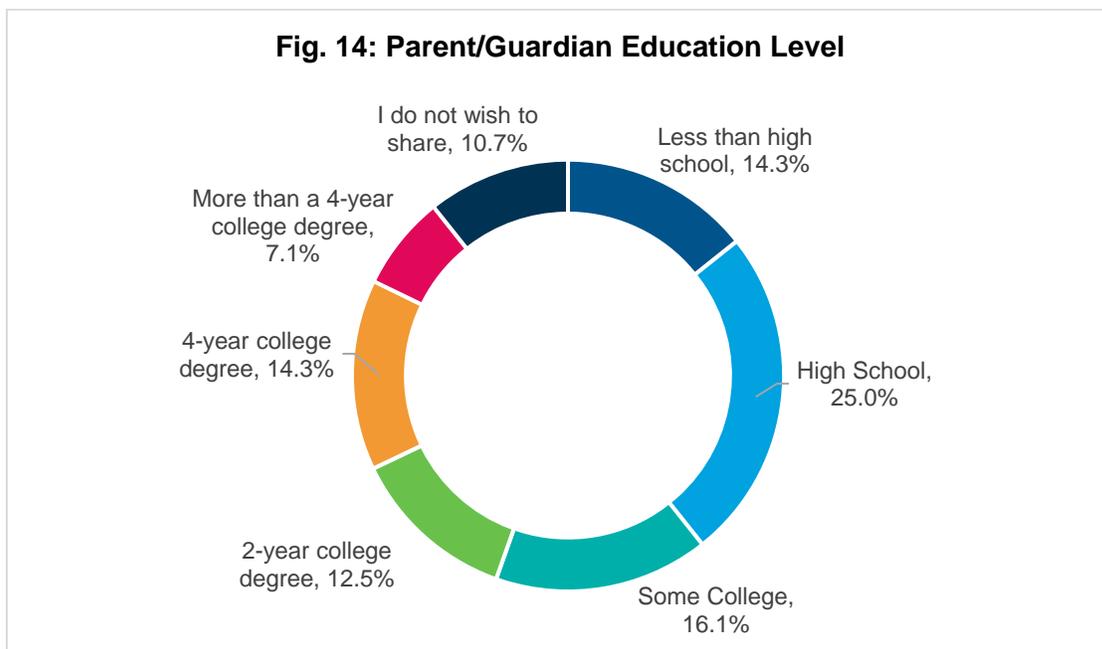
Table 7: Race/Ethnicity of Student Respondents

Race/Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
American Indian	677	59.5%
Asian American	*	<1%
Hispanic	93	8.2%
Black	13	1.1%
White	66	5.8%
Native Hawaiian	24	2.1%
I do not wish to share	143	12.6%
Multi-race	116	10.2%
Total	1,138	100%

*This category had fewer than 10 responses. These numbers are suppressed per SDDOE policy to protect student privacy.

3.3.3 Overview of Parent/Guardian Respondents

As noted earlier, only 65 parents/guardians completed the 2017–18 GUSD survey. Among these respondents, 56.4% were female and 43.6% were male. Nearly four in ten had a high school education or less, including 25% with a high school education and 14.3% with less than a high school education (Fig. 14). Sixteen percent had some college, while about one-third had earned a college degree. Of this latter group, 12.5% had earned an associate degree while 14.3% had a bachelor’s degree and 7.1% had more than a four-year degree. One in 10 parent/guardian respondents, or 10.7% did not wish to share their level of education.



3.3.4 Student Knowledge about College

GUSD has four sub-objectives related to student knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing:

Sub-objective 3.1: The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge on the benefits of pursuing a postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.

Sub-objective 3.2: The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge of the academic preparation necessary for postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.

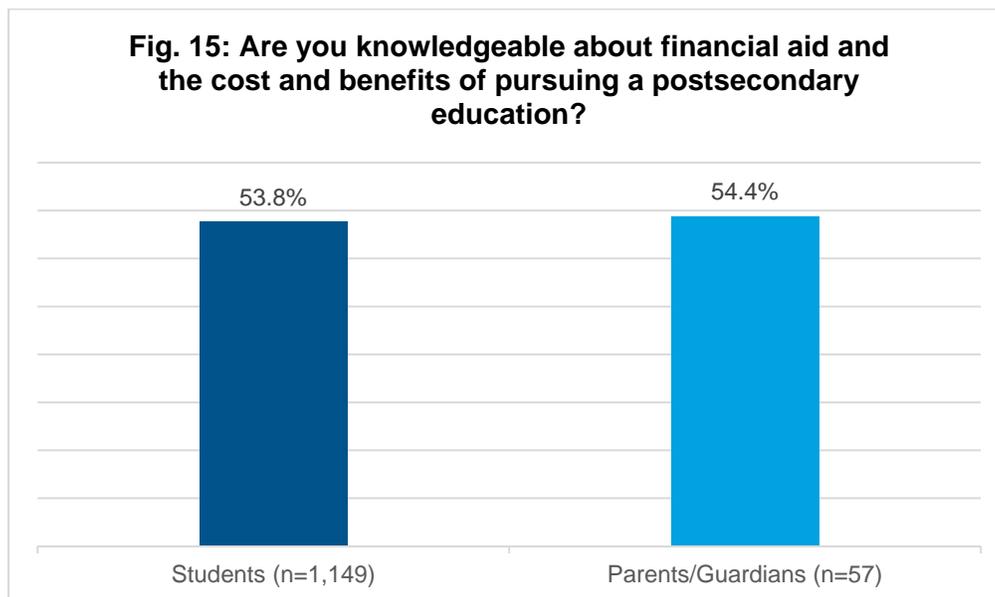
Sub-objective 3.3: The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge on the cost of pursuing postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.

Sub-objective 3.4: The percentage of GUSD students who demonstrate knowledge on the availability of financial aid will increase by 10% each year (including completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA).

Status: N/A – baseline data collected

Analysis: The 2017–18 student survey sought to examine these issues in several ways, with questions related to knowledge of college, knowledge of financial aid, and general understanding of terms related to college. In all cases, however, these surveys provide only baseline data. As a result, it is not possible to determine whether the program has achieved these objectives as of yet. This section will provide an overview of the baseline data gathered and include interpretations where possible.

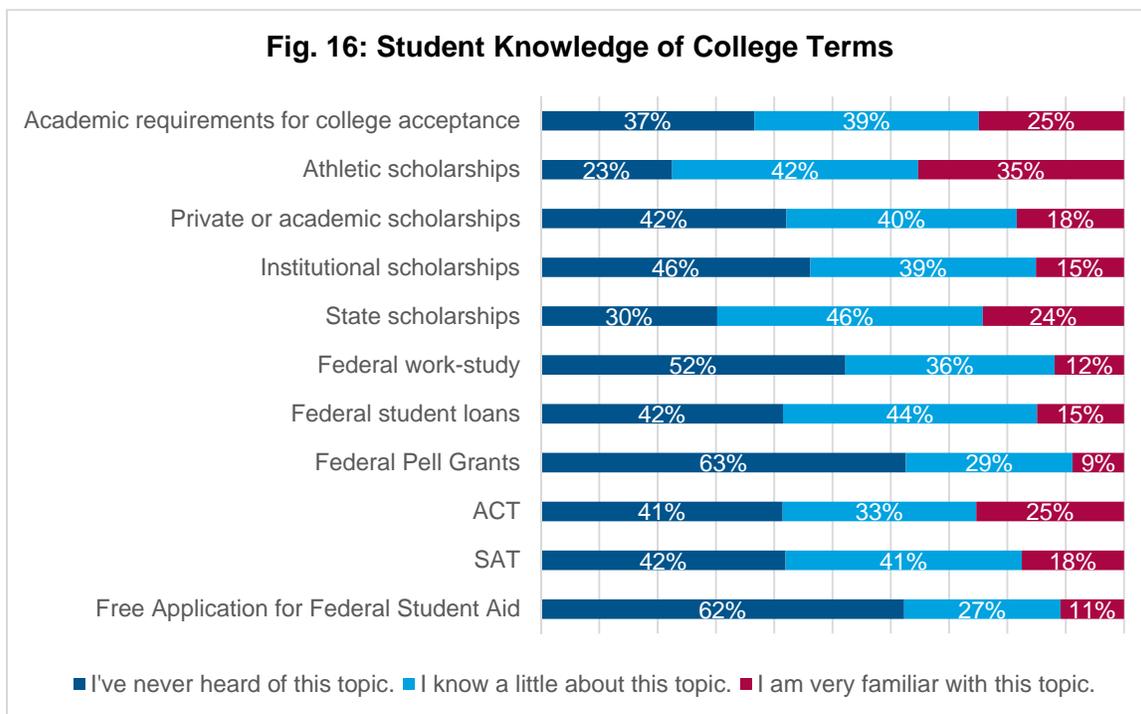
On **knowledge of the benefits of postsecondary education**, 53.8% of students indicated that they possessed such information. This was similar to the 54.4% of parents/guardians of GUSD students who said they had such knowledge (Fig. 15).



On **knowledge of academic preparation** for college, 25% of students said they were very familiar with academic requirements for college acceptance (Fig. 16). Another 39% said they have some knowledge of the topic. However, more than one-third of students (37%) said they had never heard about requirements for college acceptance.

Another key indicator of academic preparation is whether students are familiar with the Scholastic Aptitude Test or the ACT. One of every four students said they are familiar with the ACT and 18% cited the same level of knowledge with the SAT. Also, 33% of students said they had some knowledge of the ACT while 41% had some information on the SAT. However, more than 40% of students responding to the survey said they had never heard of these assessments, which are critical for entry into four-year colleges and universities. Not surprisingly, high school GUSD students cited greater familiarity with ACT and SAT than middle school students in the program. Knowledge of key college terms showed few differences between students who attended a public school and those enrolled at tribal/BIE schools.

On **knowledge of financial aid**, students were more likely to cite knowledge of scholarships than to note familiarity with federal financial aid programs. Overall, 35% of those surveyed said they were very familiar with athletic scholarships and 24% cited similar knowledge of state scholarships (Fig. 16). But they were less familiar with federal aid such as Pell Grants, federal work-study, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). On Pell Grants, only 9% said they were very knowledgeable while 63% said they had never heard of these federal need-based grants. Only 12% were very familiar with federal work/study, while 52% of respondents had not heard of this program. Students also had little knowledge of the FAFSA, which is critical to receiving federal aid. Only 11% said they were very familiar with FAFSA and 27% said they had some knowledge. Yet nearly two-thirds, or 62%, said they had never heard of the term.



On knowledge of college terms, students showed few differences based on whether they attended a public school or a tribal/BIE school. For example, high school students in both sectors had limited knowledge of FAFSA, with a mean score of 1.6 on a 3-point scale (Table 8). Both groups had greater knowledge of the ACT and SAT, with mean scores of 2.2 and 2.0, respectively, on the same scale.

Table 8: Knowledge by Type of School Attended

College Terms	Public school students						BIE school students					
	Middle school		High school		All		Middle school		High school		All	
	Valid N	Mean	Valid N	Mean	Valid N	Mean	Valid N	Mean	Valid N	Mean	Valid N	Mean
FAFSA	248	1.3	246	1.6	494	1.5	346	1.3	308	1.6	654	1.5
SAT	244	1.5	248	2.0	492	1.7	339	1.6	309	2.0	648	1.8
ACT	246	1.4	248	2.2	494	1.8	340	1.5	310	2.2	650	1.8
Federal Pell Grants	244	1.4	245	1.5	489	1.5	333	1.4	303	1.6	636	1.5
Federal Student Loans	244	1.7	248	1.8	492	1.8	329	1.6	307	1.8	636	1.7
Federal work-study	236	1.6	245	1.6	481	1.6	330	1.6	306	1.6	636	1.6
State scholarships	238	1.9	247	2.0	485	2.0	328	1.9	305	2.0	633	1.9
Institutional scholarships	243	1.7	244	1.8	487	1.7	329	1.6	303	1.7	632	1.7
Private or academic scholarships	237	1.8	239	1.9	476	1.8	327	1.7	304	1.8	631	1.7
Athletic scholarships	241	2.0	247	2.2	488	2.1	321	2.1	303	2.2	624	2.1
Academic requirements for college acceptance	240	1.8	244	2.1	484	1.9	334	1.7	306	2.0	640	1.9

The survey also sought to gather baseline data on students' **perceptions of college costs**. Specifically, it asked students to estimate the average cost of tuition and fees, excluding the cost of food, housing, and books, for four-year colleges in South Dakota. Eight response options were offered, ranging from *up to \$1,000* to *more than \$18,000*. The correct estimate on the survey was option 5, \$6,501–\$9,400, as average tuition and fees at four-year public universities was \$8,811 in 2017–18, according to the BoR data.⁵

Only a small group of students (15.5%) correctly identified the cost of tuition and fees by selecting option 5 on the survey (Table 9). One-third of students, or 33.5%, significantly overestimated the average annual cost of tuition and fees, believing it was more than \$13,000 a year. Eighteen percent significantly underestimated the cost of a four-year college, believing that tuition and fees did not exceed \$3,000.

Table 9: Student Estimates of Annual Cost at Four-Year Public College

Option	Cost ranges	Students (<i>n</i> =1,112)
Option 1	\$1–\$1,000	3.6%
Option 2	\$1,001–\$1,900	4.0%
Option 3	\$1,901–\$3,000	10.3%
Option 4	\$3,001–\$6,500	18.5%
Option 5	\$6,501–\$9,400	15.5%
Option 6	\$9,401–\$13,000	14.6%
Option 7	\$13,001–\$18,000	15.8%
Option 8	More than \$18,000	17.7%

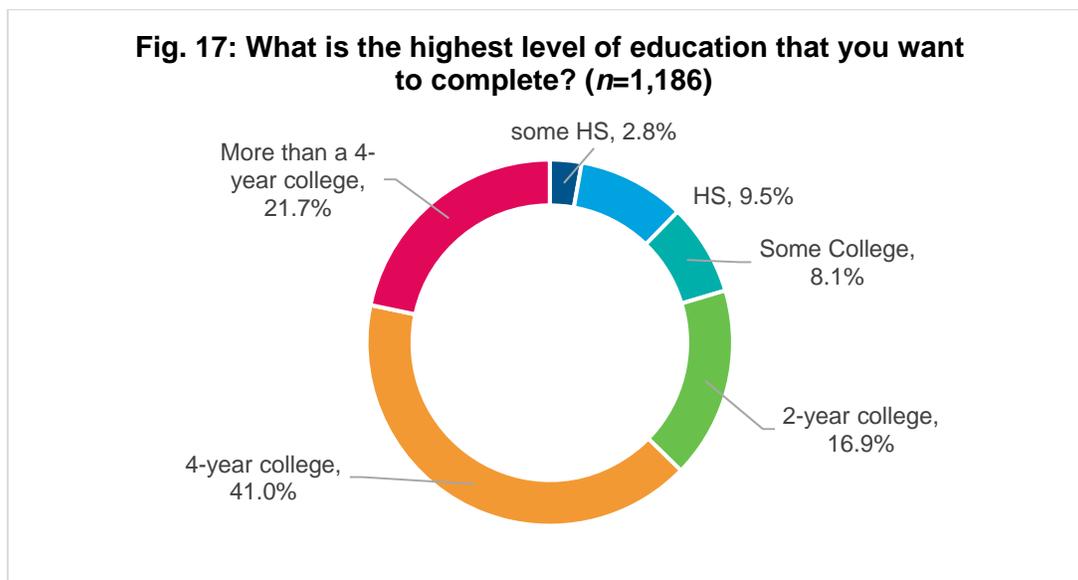
3.3.5 Students' Education Aspirations

Sub-objective 3.5: 65% of GUSD students will aspire to continue their education after high school.

Status: Met for current year.

Analysis: This sub-objective can be measured annually or at any time GUSD students complete a survey, as it does not require the gathering of baseline data. A question on the recent survey asked students to select the level of education to which they aspire, and most students indicated a goal to go beyond high school (Fig. 17). Overall, 87.7% of students in the survey want to continue education beyond high school, including 41% who aspire to complete a four-year degree and 21.7% who intend to go beyond a bachelor's degree. Another 16.9% want to complete a two-year college degree, while 8.1% seek some college experience. Only 12% aspire to a high school education or less.

⁵ For more information on FY18 tuition costs, please visit <https://www.sdbor.edu/student-information/Documents/FY18TuitionFeesRoomBoard.pdf>.



3.3.6 Parent/Guardian Knowledge about College

GUSD has three sub-objectives related to parent/guardian knowledge of postsecondary education options, preparation, and financing:

Sub-objective 3.6: The percentage of GUSD parents who demonstrate knowledge on the benefits of pursuing a postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.

Sub-objective 3.7: The percentage of GUSD parents who demonstrate knowledge on the costs of pursuing postsecondary education will increase by 10% each year.

Sub-objective 3.8: The percentage of GUSD parents who demonstrate knowledge on the availability of financial aid will increase by 10% each year starting in 2016.

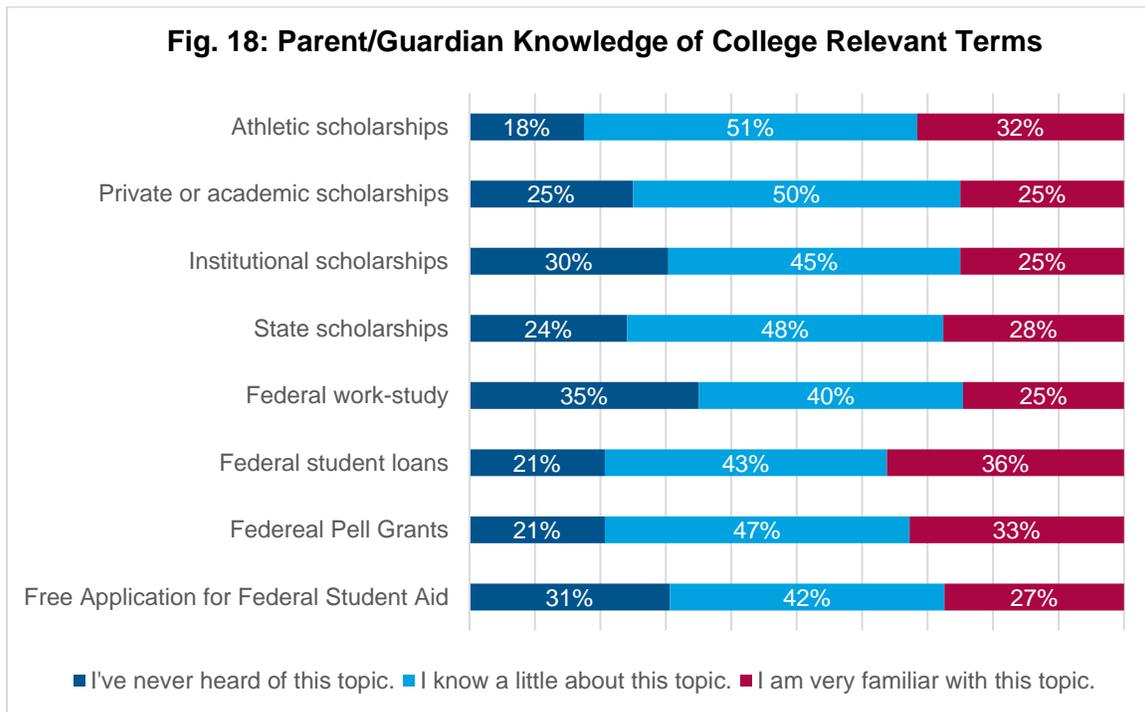
Status: N/A; baseline data collected

Analysis: The 2017–18 parent/guardian survey examined these topics with questions on knowledge of college, knowledge of financial aid, and general understanding of college terms. As is the case with students, the parent/guardian surveys provide only baseline data to measure these sub-objectives. In addition, this data should be viewed with caution due to the low number of responses. Despite outreach efforts, only 65 parents/guardians responded to the survey, representing approximately 2.1% of GUSD students.

Overall, 54.4% of parents/guardians said they felt knowledgeable about the benefits of pursuing a postsecondary education. As noted earlier, this rate was similar to the 53.8% rate of students who said they knew the benefits of college.

Asked in greater detail about specific college terminology, 80% of parents/guardians said they had a little or a lot of knowledge about Pell Grants (Fig. 18). This was double the rate of students who said they cited familiarity with Pell. Only 31% of parents/guardians were not familiar with the FAFSA, as 27% cited strong knowledge and 42% had a little information on it. Parents/guardians were most likely to say they were familiar with athletic scholarships, as 83% cited some knowledge. Thirty-five percent of parents/guardians said they had never heard of college work-study, while 30% had no knowledge of institutional grants that may be available

from individual colleges and universities. Not surprisingly, parents/guardians of high school students were more likely to cite knowledge of key financial aid terms compared with parents/guardians of middle school students in GUSD.



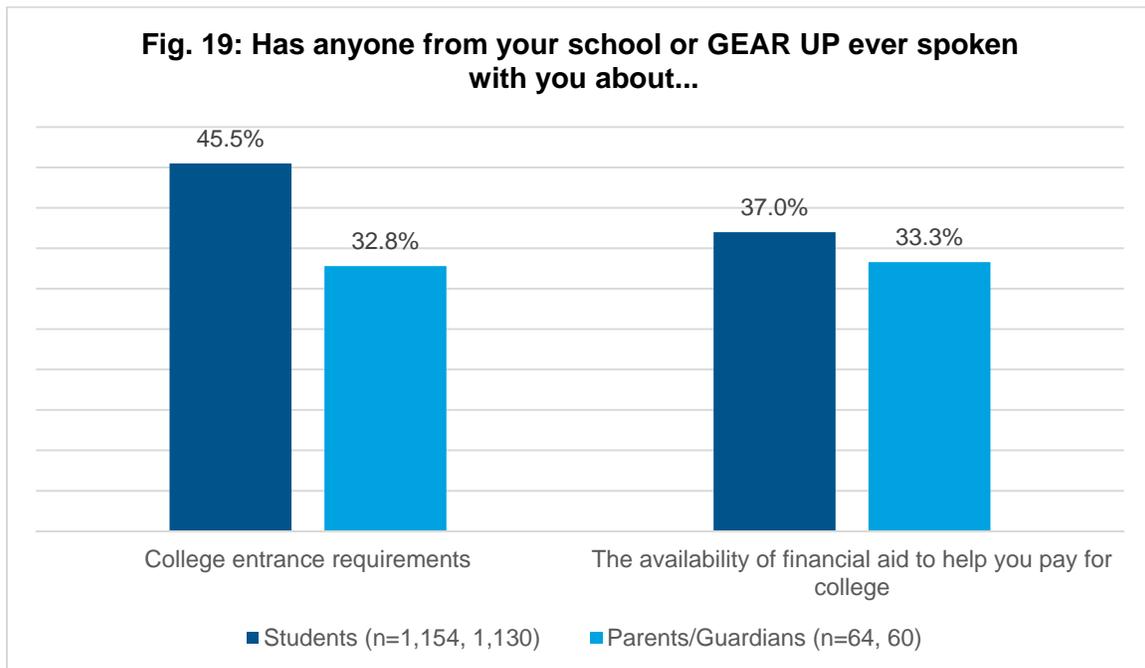
However, only about 8% of parents/guardians identified the correct cost of tuition and fees by selecting Option 5 on the survey question asking parents/guardians to identify the cost range for a South Dakota public four-year university. Nearly two-thirds overestimated college costs, including 28.6% who believed that tuition and fees exceeded \$18,000 a year—more than double the actual tuition rate (Table 10). Sixteen percent of parents/guardians significantly underestimated the cost, believing that tuition and fees did not exceed \$3,000. Nearly 5% believed the annual cost was \$1,000 or less.

Table 10: Parent/Guardian Estimates of Annual Cost at Four-Year Public College

Option	Cost ranges	Parents/guardians (n=63)
Option 1	\$1–\$1,000	4.8%
Option 2	\$1,001–\$1,900	3.2%
Option 3	\$1,901–\$3,000	7.9%
Option 4	\$3,001–\$6,500	11.1%
Option 5	\$6,501–\$9,400	7.9%
Option 6	\$9,401–\$13,000	22.2%
Option 7	\$13,001–\$18,000	14.3%
Option 8	More than \$18,000	28.6%

3.3.7 Other Survey Findings

The student and parent/guardian surveys included other questions to examine student and parent/guardian interaction with GUSD programs and staff. For example, fewer than half of GUSD students and parents/guardians have spoken with someone from GUSD or the school about college entrance requirements (Fig. 19). About one-third of students and one-third of parents/guardians said they have spoken with someone from GUSD or their school about the availability of financial aid to help pay for college.



Other questions sought to examine how often parents/guardians interact with their children on topics such as homework, school achievement and planning for students' college and/or career. For example, 27% of parents/guardians said they always talk with their child about the benefits of attending college, while another 29% said they often have such discussions. About half of parents/guardians said they often or always help their child with homework or school projects, and a similar percent also say they talk about their child's academic performance with teachers or other school staff. On planning for the future, 70% of parents/guardians said they always or often talk with their child about plans for education after high school.

3.4 Additional Findings on Program Implementation

SDDOE provided ICF with data on the number of activities offered at 27 participating schools during the 2016–17 school year. Five of these schools left the program after the 2016–17 school year; as a result, they did not provide data for sub-objectives described elsewhere in this report. These 27 participating schools reported offering a total of 147 sessions of homework assistance, tutoring and/or academic enrichment, for an average of 5.4 sessions per school (Table 11). The level of student attendance at these sessions and the duration of these services were not available for this report. Overall, five schools reported having at least 10 sessions devoted to homework assistance, tutoring and/or academic enrichment.

Participating schools also reported conducting 58 mentoring or cultural activities, and the majority of these activities occurred at three schools. In addition, schools listed 54 sessions devoted to financial aid advising or counseling, with two schools conducting 10 or more of these activities. Table 11 provides a more detailed breakdown by category of services provided.

Table 11: Number of Activities at GUSD Schools, 2016–17

Category of GUSD Activity	Number of Activities
Tutoring / Homework Assistance / Academic Enrichment	147
Rigorous Academic Curricula	25
Comprehensive Mentoring / Cultural Activities	58
Financial Aid Counseling / Advising	54
Career Exploration	22
College Planning Workshops	33
Family Cultural Events	6
Other	69

Source: South Dakota Department of Education

In addition, SDDOE provided ICF with a look at hours of participation among students both statewide and by school. Overall, these data showed that GUSD students spent 12,217 hours in GUSD activities during the most recent academic year. Data showed that 41.6% of these hours occurred at just one school, a large middle school that includes 21% of total GUSD enrollment. With more than 1,800 students listed as GUSD participants for the 2016–17 school year, the average student had spent 6.8 hours in core program activities.

While these data provide a general snapshot of program activities, a detailed breakdown of student participation is needed to conduct a comprehensive correlational analysis to look at the potential impact of activities on project outcomes. ICF provides more information on this issue in Areas for Improvement, Chapter V.

Chapter IV: Challenges

Since ICF began its work as external evaluator of GUSD, several challenges have emerged in conducting research on the program. These challenges fall primarily into four areas: 1) data collection; 2) identifying comparison schools for a rigorous quasi-experimental design study; 3) decline in the number of schools served by the program; and 4) response rates for student and parents/guardian surveys. This section examines these challenges in greater detail as SDDOE approaches the end of the grant. In some cases, recommendations to alleviate these challenges are contained in the chapter on Discussion and Recommendations.

4.1 Data Collection

GUSD's 26 sub-objectives contain specific targets for many outcomes including secondary school attendance and academic achievement. Many also require comprehensive baseline data from either SDDOE or individual schools/districts in order to assess whether or not the objective has been met. ICF received data from SDDOE from October 2017 through February 2018. However, many GUSD sites are tribal/BIE schools that are not required to report certain information to SDDOE, and obtaining data from these schools often proved difficult. To meet this challenge, ICF developed a series of school-specific, Excel-based data collection templates. ICF delivered a draft of the tribal/BIE templates to SDDOE in October 2017; however, the agency believed that tribal/BIE schools would not be able to comply with the data request due to burden. In response, ICF delayed the data collection time line, reduced the amount of data requested to cover only two academic years (2015–16 and 2016–17) and worked with SDDOE to pre-populate the templates for each school with as much information as possible.

After customizing these data templates, ICF attended a January 2018 meeting with SDDOE staff and GUSD Regional Coordinators to discuss the data collection process. In this meeting it was agreed that data would be collected from January 22, 2018 through February 9, 2018. After the meeting, SDDOE sent each tribal/BIE data template to principals in all participating schools, and GUSD Regional Coordinators worked directly with principals to collect the requested information. ICF also provided on-demand technical assistance with this process as issues arose. However, several schools had difficulty meeting the data collection deadline, relatively few engaged ICF in its offer of technical assistance, and ICF had to continue accepting data files through early March 2018. Despite these efforts, only six of 15 tribal/BIE schools provided completed forms for analysis in this report. As a result, ICF did not have all available data on grant objectives. Unique factors at tribal/BIE schools also led to unique challenges related to measuring some sub-objectives. For example, grade point average scales were different across tribal/BIE schools and one school used competency-based assessment, which could not be converted into a GPA scale.

Aside from missing data from tribal/BIE schools, another challenge was obtaining the required information on GUSD students in postsecondary education. While basic information on enrollment in postsecondary institutions was generally available, data on objectives related to postsecondary credits earned and students' ability to begin college without the need for remediation were not available at all. To obtain these data, SDDOE likely needs to enter into a data sharing agreement with the South Dakota BoR representing the state's six public

universities. Notably, achieving such an agreement would still not yield information about students' who attend tribal or out-of-state postsecondary institutions.

Student and parent/guardian surveys are essential to measure many of GUSD's sub-objectives, but some schools elected not to participate in this process. As GUSD had not conducted surveys in several years, ICF and SDDOE agreed to use newly developed, 2017–18 student and parent/guardian surveys to establish a baseline condition for many sub-objectives. Yet four schools (17% of GUSD sites) elected not to administer student surveys at all despite multiple follow-ups from the evaluation team and GUSD Regional Coordinators. Limited technology also was likely an issue at some schools. While ICF offered an online student survey option, no students responded in this fashion. All surveys were administered using paper-and-pencil copies that were printed by ICF and shipped directly to SDDOE for distribution. ICF originally proposed to collect survey data from November to December 2017 but agreed to extend the collection window twice, through Feb. 9, 2018. Despite extensions, most students did not complete the survey. Only three schools submitted 10 or more parent/guardian surveys, as only 65 parents/guardians across all schools completed the instrument. At 11 schools, no parents/guardians completed a survey despite repeated attempts to gather input.

4.2 Developing a Quasi-Experimental Design Study

ICF sees value in conducting a student-level, quasi-experimental design (QED) study examining the impact of participating in GUSD upon college enrollment outcomes. These studies have become commonplace in the GEAR UP program and are increasingly viewed as essential not only for current grantees but also for any grantees that want to obtain funding in the future. In South Dakota, such a study could utilize propensity score matching (PSM) to examine college enrollment outcomes for students who graduated from GUSD high schools against a demographically and academically similar group of students who graduated from non-GUSD high schools. Such an analysis would provide high-quality impact data and help answer questions related to the program's operation and success.

Despite this goal, many challenges pose potential barriers. Most, if not all, tribal/BIE schools with large Native American populations throughout the state are either currently participating in the grant or were previously in the grant since its receipt in 2011. This poses a challenge to identifying suitable comparison schools. Even if such schools could be found, these non-participating tribal/BIE schools could provide significant barriers for researchers as the schools are not required to report data to the state. The statistical matching and analysis procedure to complete the study are complex and would require extensive planning and buy-in. While some tribal/BIE schools completed ICF's data collection template for this report, it likely is far too burdensome to ask non-participating schools to fill out such a form, and even more so to ask for the student-level data necessary for a rigorous QED impact study. ICF outlines this issue in more detail in a related deliverable, the GUSD Data Collection Plan.

4.3 Decline in Number of Schools Served

GUSD faced significant turnover from participating schools with its administrative and management issues and the subsequent restructuring of the grant. In Year 1 of this seven-year grant, during 2011–12, 38 schools across the state were active in GUSD and participated in its

programming, according to SDDOE. However, in current school year 2017–18, the number of participating schools had declined to only 23. Even at these remaining schools, buy-in was uneven as indicated by the 60% of tribal/BIE schools that did not fully complete the data templates used by ICF to assess progress of the program.

4.4 Survey and Extant Data Request Response Rates

During the time that it required federal grantees to administer GEAR UP surveys, the U.S. Department of Education set response rate targets of 80% for student surveys and 50% for parent/guardian surveys. While the survey requirement no longer exists, it remains essential for many grantees to examine progress on sub-objectives related to student aspirations and student and parent/guardian knowledge of college admission requirements, college options, and the availability of financial aid. Surveys designed by ICF for GUSD in fall 2017 had response rates far below these target rates for both students and parents/guardians.

For student surveys, ICF received 1,197 responses out of a potential total of 2,985, for a response rate of 40.1%. As a result, this report can provide only a partial picture of student views and attitudes. As noted above, only 65 parents/guardians completed the parent/guardian survey administered in 2017–18, thereby limiting any analysis due to the small number of responses. Overall, the parent/guardian response rate was just 2.1%, with 11 schools providing no responses at all. As a result, the conclusions from parent/guardian data should be viewed with extreme caution due to the few responses received.

A related challenge was the data collection response rate from tribal/BIE schools. While most schools provided some data, only six of the 15 schools, or 40%, returned fully completed forms. As a result, essential outcomes on student achievement, high school graduation, and attitudes about postsecondary education are often incomplete. Additional data would have bolstered the depth of reporting about GUSD progress on its 26 grant sub-objectives. This is especially challenging given that tribal/BIE schools make up the bulk of participating schools for 2017–18.

Chapter V: Areas for Improvement

Through its work on GUSD during the past six months, the evaluation team has identified four primary areas for improvement: 1) promoting enhanced school and tribal buy-in; 2) boosting survey response rates; 3) obtaining comparison student data; and 4) obtaining additional data on GUSD participation.

5.1 Promoting Enhanced School and Tribal Buy-In

Much of ICF's data collection relied on public and tribal/BIE schools working to collect data via surveys as well as the tribal/BIE data collection forms. As part of this process, ICF worked through an intermediary, the GUSD Regional Coordinators, to work with schools to aid in data collection. Ultimately, however, there was minimal opportunity to cultivate relationships with the sites or promote buy-in for the evaluation among key stakeholder groups. This likely was a factor in the low response rates.

Moving forward, it is critical to obtain buy-in to provide richer data for any final evaluation. One strategy may be for SDDOE to show schools how they might gain from participation in GUSD evaluation. For example, SDDOE could consider adding items to student and parent/guardian surveys that have particular value for schools, such as ways to measure non-cognitive skills essential for college readiness or questions about what services should be high priorities at the school. SDDOE also could provide a small stipend to a "school data coordinator" designated at each school to help facilitate data collection. ICF provides additional context related to these recommendations in a related deliverable, the GUSD Data Collection Plan.

5.2 Boosting Survey Response Rates

In part due to lack of buy-in and other factors, response rates to student and parent/guardian surveys were lower than the levels needed to fully assess the program. ICF used multiple modes for survey administration, with both paper and online options. However, lack of technology infrastructure likely hampered the use of online surveys, as no students completed the questionnaire in that fashion. Boosting paper-and-pencil response rates likely requires creativity on the part of all parties. With parents/guardians, for example, having them complete a survey while at school for other events is one strategy to boost response rates. A comprehensive inventory of schools' technology infrastructure also may help find schools that have the technology capacity to do online surveys. Schools with less than a 50% response rate to the recent student survey also should be contacted to discuss their ability and capacity to support online completion.

Also, while surveys should remain relatively short, SDDOE may want to consider adding a small number of open-ended items that allow students and parents/guardians to voice issues of concern, discuss overall experiences with the program, and/or provide suggestions about what services were most and least valuable to them. Findings could assist the State in providing some measure of sustainability after the grant ends. Still another recommendation would be to have evaluators themselves administer surveys on-site as part of broader site visits. ICF provides additional context related to this recommendation in a related deliverable, the GUSD Data Collection Plan.

5.3 Obtaining Comparison Data and Postsecondary Student Data

With quasi-experimental studies increasingly important in GEAR UP evaluations, GUSD would benefit from enhanced efforts to support such a research project to compare GUSD students to those attending non-GUSD schools. One challenge for South Dakota is a lack of non-participating schools with high rates of Native American student enrollment. It will be important to redouble efforts to locate comparison schools, and SDDOE and the BIE will need to play significant roles to make such studies possible.

In addition, GUSD is lacking key data points on the postsecondary education progress of participating GUSD students. In its analysis of sub-objectives, ICF was unable to tabulate information related to credit accumulation and ability to start college without remediation. These sub-objectives likely require a data sharing agreement between SDDOE and the South Dakota BoR. Establishing such an agreement could prove a pivotal step in completing a complete progress report on all core activities for this project.

5.4 Obtaining Additional Data on GUSD Participation

As described in Section 3.4 of this report, SDDOE provided some data regarding the number of GUSD activities taking place at schools and the total hours of services received by students. These data showed that the average student participated in activities for 6.8 hours during the 2016–17 school year. In addition, schools were most likely to offer Tutoring / Homework Assistance / Academic Enrichment activities, with some schools also offering mentoring, cultural activities, and financial aid advising. However, providing detailed student-level data on participation could allow the evaluation team to conduct a correlational analysis examining student dosage and its possible relationship to project outcomes. Future evaluation activities could focus on this work in order to provide a richer, more detailed analysis of program implementation.

Chapter VI: Additional Discussion and Recommendations

This chapter provides recommendations to SDDOE regarding future evaluation activities for GUSD, including: 1) strategies for improving data collection based the ICF evaluation team's experiences conducting the current evaluation; 2) a roadmap for sustaining data collection through the end of an optional no-cost extension (September 2019); and 3) optional data collection activities.

6.1 Strategies for Improving Data Collection

One of the biggest challenges faced by the ICF evaluation team was garnering school-level buy-in regarding data collection. As a result, response rates were quite low. To improve buy-in, we suggest SDDOE consider the following:

1. Send an introductory letter to each superintendent and/or school principal in the districts and schools participating in GUSD early in school year 2018–19. The letter should communicate the State's expectation that schools participate fully in all evaluation activities as a condition of receiving a GUSD sub-award. The letter should include a detailed timeline and an estimate of the amount of effort necessary for all planned data collection activities.
2. Require each school receiving a GUSD subgrant to designate a "school data coordinator" to assist GUSD Regional Coordinators and the State in facilitating data collection related to the evaluation. Provide each school data coordinator with a modest incentive that is contingent upon successful completion of data collection activities.
3. Allow as much time as possible for all data collection activities. Specifically, we have suggested allowing up to four months for the collection of extant data from participating schools. We have also suggested conducting the parental/guardian permission process for surveys early in the school year and allowing a full three months for the administration of parental/guardian consent and student and parent/guardian surveys.
4. Make sure that GUSD Regional Coordinators are actively engaged in follow-up with school data coordinators during weekly visits. GUSD Regional Coordinators should schedule time to talk with school data coordinators during each visit, even if the visits do not occur during an official data collection period.
5. Continue to pre-populate all data request templates with as much data as possible prior to making requests of schools, and ensure not duplication of effort.
6. Continue to offer surveys predominantly using paper-and-pencil versions, but make effective use of online surveys in two scenarios: (1) where paper response rates are extremely low (e.g., less than 50%), and (2) in schools that have strong technology infrastructure.

In addition, based on the ICF evaluation team's experience using the two data collection instruments, we suggest the following enhancements to each type of instrument:

6.1.1 Tribal/BIE Data Templates

- SDDOE should revise the tribal/BIE data templates to request data for only one school year (i.e., 2017–18).
- SDDOE may wish to consider updating all comment fields and instructions in the tribal/BIE data forms to ensure participants can accurately complete each column of the template.

6.1.2 Student and Parent/Guardian Surveys

- Consider removing the “other” category from the ethnicity survey question, as this seemed to confuse respondents.
- One reason schools were reluctant to do surveys was that there was no clear benefit to school staff, students, or parents/guardians. SDDOE could consider adding items that would be of particular value to schools (e.g., ways to measure non-cognitive skills essential for college readiness, questions about sustainability or what services would be key priorities in the absence of GUSD, strategies that would be effective in improving parent/guardian involvement, etc.)
- Keep surveys short and targeted toward the APR indicators, but consider adding a small number of open-ended items that allow students and parents/guardians to voice issues of concern, discuss overall experiences with the program, and/or provide suggestions about what services were most and least valuable to them. Findings could assist the State in providing some measure of sustainability after the grant ends.

6.2 Roadmap for Sustaining Data Collection through the End of the Grant

This section describes recommendations related to data collection and evaluation activities through the end of a potential one-year, no-cost extension (through September 30, 2019). Specifically, ICF’s recommendations will assist SDDOE in gathering the data necessary to complete the 2019 APR and a final performance report, presumed to be due to the U.S. Department of Education in September 2019. Table 12 illustrates the school years covered by each of the remaining anticipated reports and provides a brief statement summarizing ICF’s data collection recommendations.

Table 12. Data Required for APR Reporting

Reporting Deliverable	School Year (SY) Covered	Sub-Objectives 1.1 thru 1.10 & 2.1 thru 2.7	Sub-Objectives 1.11 & 3.1 thru 3.8
2019 APR (Year 7)	SY 2017–18	Collect extant data from schools in fall of SY 2018–19	Surveys already collected in spring of SY 2017–18*
Final Report (No-Cost Extension)	SY 2018–19	No future data collection is proposed**	Collect surveys in spring of SY 2018–19
Notes *ICF collected survey data covering SY 2017–18 between November 2017 and February 2018. These data can be reported to address sub-objective 2.11, and sub-objectives 3.1-3.11 for the 2019 APR. **Complete enrollment and outcome data for school year 2018–19 will not available until after the final report due date. Therefore reporting on these outcomes for the final report is not possible.			

6.2.1 Extant Data Measuring Objectives 1 and 2

As demonstrated in Table 12, ICF suggests implementing a recommended process to collect the extant data necessary to measure sub-objectives 1.1–1.10 and 2.1–2.7. Specifically, we recommend collecting these data in early fall of school year 2018–19. These data will be retrospective in nature, covering outcomes for the 2017–18 school year. The audience for data collection should include all schools that were participating in the GUSD program for the 2017–18 school year.

ICF anticipates that, should SDDOE receive approval for a no-cost extension, there will not be sufficient time in the extended grant period to collect a final set of data covering school year 2018–19. This is due to the fact that the grant period will end in September 2019, before schools would have sufficient time to finalize all outcome data from the previous school year. As such, we recommend not reporting new data for sub-objectives 1.1–1.10 and 2.1–2.7 for this final report.

6.2.2 Survey Data Measuring Objectives 1 and 3

As shown in Table 12, ICF has already collected survey data from GUSD participants during school year 2017–18. These data will assist SDDOE in reporting performance against sub-objectives 1.11 and 3.1 through 3.8 for the 2019 APR. However, SDDOE will potentially need to collect additional student and parent/guardian survey data covering the 2018–19 school year if a no-cost extension is approved. This data will be used in the final report. ICF includes our recommended process to collect these data. The audience for this data collection activity should include all grade 6–12 students and parents/guardians in schools participating in GUSD for the 2018–19 school year. We recommend implementing the parental/guardian permission process in fall of the 2018–19 school year, and using paper-and-pencil surveys in spring to collect the requested data.

6.3 Optional Data Collection

The ICF evaluation team describes three additional evaluation options to enhance the evaluation of GUSD: 1) an examination of college application/enrollment rates by high school, 2)

a student-level quasi-experimental design study examining the impact of GUSD on post-secondary enrollment making use of NSC data, and 3) a series of site visits to gather qualitative input from program stakeholders.

6.3.1 Examination of College Application/Enrollment Rates by High School

One option would be to establish a data sharing agreement with the South Dakota BoR to allow SDDOE to gather data on the number of college applications received and first time undergraduates enrolled at BoR institutions in the periods before and during which GUSD was implemented (e.g., from fall 2011–12 to fall 2017–18). Application and enrollment data could be gathered for each South Dakota high school, and for specific subgroups of students (e.g., all students, Native Americans, low income students).

With this level of data, SDDOE could conduct analyses to estimate the trend in college application and enrollment rates overall, at GUSD high schools, and at non-GUSD high schools. Comparing these trends could shed light on any possible effects of GUSD. If desired, a more rigorous analysis could be conducted by matching GUSD and non-GUSD high schools to one another using a method such as propensity score matching (PSM).

6.3.2 Student-Level Quasi-Experimental Design Study of GUSD's Impact on Postsecondary Enrollment

Another option would be to conduct a student-level quasi-experimental design (QED) study examining the impact of participating in GUSD upon college enrollment outcomes. This study could make use of data from SDDOE, tribal/BIE schools, and the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC). Specifically, the study would use propensity score matching (PSM) to examine college enrollment outcomes for students who graduated from GUSD high schools (treatment condition) versus a demographically and academically similar group of students who graduated from non-GUSD high schools (comparison group).

6.3.3 Site Visits to Gather Qualitative Input from Stakeholders

Thus far, ICF is aware of no systematic efforts that have been made to collect qualitative data about the process and summative outcomes of GUSD. One option to ameliorate this issue would be to conduct a series of site visits including tasks such as artifact and document collection, GUSD staff interviews, classroom observations, and facilitated discussions with principals, teachers, parents/guardians, and students. Site visits could be targeted to specific schools to uncover best practices or identify areas of challenge, or could be conducted in all participating schools.

One potential benefit of conducting site visits in all schools could be the possibility of having the evaluation team conduct some of the required data collection in-person, alleviating capacity issues for school staff. For example, the site visit protocol could begin with a meeting among the evaluation team and the school data coordinator to discuss the tribal/BIE data forms and assist with their completion. The protocol could also be arranged such that evaluators would bring printed survey materials with them to school visits. The evaluation team could then help administer surveys to students during such visits, extending the capacity of school data coordinators and improving response rates.

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Appendix A: 2017–18 Student and Parent/Guardian Surveys

South Dakota GEAR UP Student Survey – 2017-18 School Year

Directions: Please respond to all items by completely filling in the circle for each answer:

Like this: Not like this:

Notes: (1) Please do not write your name anywhere on this survey. (2) Please do not write on the barcode to the right of this box. It identifies your school, but does NOT identify you or your parent/guardian.



Dear Student,

Your school is part of a program called South Dakota (SD) GEAR UP that helps students in grades 6–12 get ready for college. The SD Department of Education hired a company, ICF, to do a study of GEAR UP. The study involves a 10–15 minute survey with questions about what you know about college and your plans for college. Your parent or guardian has been informed that you will be asked to complete this survey. If you are taking the survey today, it means your parents have not said “no” to your completing the survey. But it is still your choice whether or not to complete it. You can also choose to skip questions or stop taking the survey at any time without penalties. Also, by law, we have to keep your information private. We will only write reports with school and grade level results—we will never write a report about your personal survey answers and the survey does not ask for your name. There are no risks to taking the survey. Participating in the survey may help your state figure out how to help more students. For any questions, you or your parent/guardian may contact Nate Hixson at (434) 205-0478 or nate.hixson@icf.com.

If you agree to take this survey, please fill in “I agree to take this survey” below:

- I agree to take this survey
- I do not agree to take this survey

Please answer the following questions. Be sure to fill out both sides of the survey.

1. What is the **highest** level of education that you **want** to complete (Please select only one)?

- Some high school
- 4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)
- High school
- More than a 4-year college degree
- Some college
- 2-year college degree (Associate's Degree)

2. Has anyone from your school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about...

- College entrance requirements?
- The availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?

3. Are you knowledgeable about financial aid and the cost and benefits to you of going to college?

-
-

4. On average, how much do you think or would you guess it costs (tuition and fees only) for one year to attend...

\$1 to \$1,000	\$1,001 to \$1,900	\$1,901 to \$3,000	\$3,001 to \$6,500	\$6,501 to \$9,400	\$9,401 to \$13,000	\$13,001 to \$18,000	More than \$18,000
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A public 2-year community college in South Dakota (please select only one)

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

A 4-year public college in South Dakota (please select only one)

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

5. How much do you know about each of the following topics?

*I've never heard
about this topic*

*I know a little about this
topic, but not much*

*I am very familiar
with this topic*

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

A

B

C

SAT

A

B

C

ACT

A

B

C

Federal Pell Grants

A

B

C

Federal student loans

A

B

C

Federal work-study

A

B

C

State scholarships

A

B

C

Institutional scholarships

A

B

C

Private or academic scholarships

A

B

C

Athletic scholarships

A

B

C

Academic requirements for college acceptance

A

B

C

6. What is your current grade level?

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

other

7. What is your gender?

A

Male

B

Female

8. What is the language you use **most often** at home? (please select only one)

A

English

B

Spanish

C

Lakota, Dakota, or Nakota

D

Other (specify): _____

9. What is your ethnicity?

A

Hispanic/ Latino

B

Not Hispanic/ Latino

C

Other (specify): _____

10. What is your race? (Select all that apply)

American Indian or Alaska Native

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander

Asian

White

Black or African American

I do not wish to share

Thank you. Your time and answers are greatly appreciated.

Please return your completed survey to the person who gave it to you.

PLEASE COMPLETE FRONT AND BACK

South Dakota GEAR UP Parent/Guardian Survey – 2017-18 School Year

Directions: Please respond to all items by completely filling in the circle for each answer:

Like this: Not like this:

Notes: (1) Many of the questions on this survey ask about “your child.”

If you have more than one child, please complete this survey in reference to the child who brought the survey home.

(2) Please do not write your name anywhere on this survey. (3) Please do not write on the barcode to the right of this box. It identifies your child’s school, but does NOT identify you or your child.



Dear Parent/Guardian,

You recently received a letter regarding a parent/guardian survey related to a study on the South Dakota GEAR UP program. As a reminder, the SD Department of Education hired a company, ICF, to do a study of GEAR UP. The study involves a 5–10 minute survey with questions about your child’s experiences in school and your expectations for his/her future. Filling out this survey is optional and you may choose to skip questions or stop taking the survey at any time without penalties. Also, by law, we have to keep your information private. We will only write reports with school and grade level results— we will never write a report about your personal survey answers and the survey does not ask for your name. There are no risks to taking the survey. Participating in the survey may help your state figure out how to help more students with programs like GEAR UP. For any questions, you may contact Nate Hixson at (434) 205-0478 or nate.hixson@icf.com.

If you agree to take this survey, please fill in “I agree to take this survey” below:

- I agree to take this survey
- I do not agree to take this survey

Please answer the following questions. Be sure to fill out both sides of the survey.

1. Has anyone from your child’s school or GEAR UP ever spoken with you about...

- College entrance requirements?
- The availability of financial aid to help you pay for college?

2. Are you knowledgeable about financial aid and the cost and benefits of your child pursuing a postsecondary education?

-

3. On average, how much do you think or would you guess it costs (tuition and fees only) for one year to attend...

	\$1 to \$1,000	\$1,001 to \$1,900	\$1,901 to \$3,000	\$3,001 to \$6,500	\$6,501 to \$9,400	\$9,401 to \$13,000	\$13,001 to \$18,000	More than \$18,000
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A public 2-year community college in South Dakota (please select only one)	<input type="radio"/>							
A 4-year public college in South Dakota (please select only one)	<input type="radio"/>							

4. How often do you do the following?

Never Sometimes Often Always

Discuss my child’s academic performance with her/his teachers or other school staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help my child with her/his homework or school projects	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talk with my child about her/his plans for education after high school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talk with my child about what it takes to get into college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Look for information about my child’s college options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Talk with my child about the benefits to her/him of attending college	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

PLEASE COMPLETE FRONT AND BACK

5. How much do you know about each of the following financial aid and/or scholarship opportunities in South Dakota?

*I've never heard
about this topic* *I know a little about
this topic, but not much* *I am very familiar
with this topic*

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |
| Federal Pell Grants | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |
| Federal student loans | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |
| Federal work-study | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |
| State scholarships | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |
| Institutional scholarships | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |
| Private or academic scholarships | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |
| Athletic scholarships | <input type="radio"/> A | <input type="radio"/> B | <input type="radio"/> C |

6. What is your child's current grade level?

- 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 other

7. What is your child's gender?

- A Male B Female

8. Does your child participate in the free or reduced-cost lunch program at school?

- Y N not sure

9. What is the language you use **most often** at home? (Please select only one)

- A English B Spanish C Lakota, Dakota, or Nakota D Other (specify): _____

10. What is your ethnicity?

- A Hispanic/ Latino B Not Hispanic/ Latino C Other (specify): _____

11. What is your race? (Select all that apply)

- American Indian or Alaska Native Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 Asian White
 Black or African American I do not wish to share

12. What is your highest level of education? (Please select only one)

- A Less than high school E 4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)
 B High school F More than a 4-year college degree
 C Some college G I do not wish to share
 D 2-year college degree (Associate's Degree)

Thank you. Your time and answers are greatly appreciated.

Please place your completed survey in an envelope or folder and send it back to school with your child.

PLEASE COMPLETE FRONT AND BACK