



Dr. Dan A. Sims, Superintendent

ACTION MEMORANDUM

To: Bibb County Board of Education, Dr. Dan A. Sim, Superintendent

From: Dr. Lori Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent of District Effectiveness and Federal Programs
Dr. Tracey B. Muff, Director of Before and After School Programs

Subject: Towering Your Success, FY25 GEAR UP External Program Evaluator;
Authorization to enter into a data sharing agreement with the External Program Evaluator for District grant-funded schools

Summary

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) Partnership grant has been awarded to Bibb County School District for the next seven years by the United States Department of Education. This competitive grant will provide a total of \$18,502,463 in funding to expand college and career readiness programs, improve academic achievement, and offer additional resources and support for students graduating in the Class of 2030 and 2031. Following a Request for Proposals process, Towering Your Success, LLC, was selected as the external evaluator for the GEAR UP partnership Program.

Background

On August 22, 2024, the Office of Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. informed the district that the United States Department of Education selected Bibb County School District to receive a total of \$18,502,463 over seven years in funding for the GEAR UP grant. This program is a federal competitive grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of students in need who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The grant aims to provide services at high-poverty middle and high schools, supporting a cohort of middle and high school students.

As part of the grant requirements, the U.S. Department of Education mandates using a third-party external evaluator to oversee the evaluation of the grant's effectiveness. The external evaluator is responsible for managing grant-funded activities, accessing and collecting student data from the district's student information systems, and meeting reporting requirements set by the U.S. Department of Education. To fulfill this requirement, the District Effectiveness and Federal Programs Department, in coordination with the Procurement Department, conducted a Request for Proposals (RFP) process to select an external evaluator.



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Towering Your Success, LLC, a company specializing in research and program evaluation for educational agencies and non-profit organizations, was selected as the external evaluator for the Bibb County School District's GEAR UP grant. Towering Your Success, LLC specializes in research and program evaluation for educational agencies and non-profit organizations. With extensive experience evaluating grants from federal agencies like the U.S. Department of Education and Labor, Towering Your Success has managed the evaluation of more than \$63 million in grant-funded projects.

Previously, the firm was the evaluator for the district's first YouthBuild grant. The company currently serves as the external evaluator for the district's 21st Century Community Learning Center Grants, assessing programs in 28 schools. Towering Your Success also evaluates two 21st Century Community Learning Center grants for the Dooly County School System.

<u>Grant Award Type</u>	<u>Program Evaluator Selection</u>	<u>Contract Year</u>	<u>FY25 Contract Amount</u>
GEAR UP	Towering Your Success, LLC	1	\$171,000.00

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Bibb County Board of Education approves Towering Your Success, LLC as the external evaluator for the FY25 GEAR UP grant at a cost of \$171,000 and authorize the district to enter into a data-sharing agreement with the evaluator to access student information, including data from Infinite Campus, for federal reporting and evaluation purposes at all GEAR UP grant-funded schools.

Superintendent's Comments and Approval

<u>Superintendent's Comments</u>	Approved / Not Approved
Dr. Dan A. Sims	Approved