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**University of Nevada Las Vegas
Higher Education Component of GEAR UP Abstract**

The Higher Education component of GEAR UP at University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV) consists of two distinct components: (1) professional development for middle school teams (2) evaluation of the entire project. The major emphasis of the State GEAR UP proposal is to address root causes of low academic achievement through systemic change. To achieve this goal, sustained professional development will follow a “continuous improvement” model to more effectively conduct situational analysis, use data in decision making, and align curriculum instruction and assessment. Other ‘whole school’ reform strategies will be included as the project advances. In addition, aligning the curriculum with college entry requirements will be emphasized.

Case studies will be conducted at select GEAR UP middle schools in the Clark County School District throughout the six years of the project to assess the climate of each of the schools as well as the systemic changes occurring.