

Appendix C. Consent Letter

Note, the student version of this letter will be sent to students who will be 18 as of April 1, 2017, and the parent version will be sent to parents of students who will not be 18 at that time. The portions in brackets [parent/student] will be customized corresponding to whether the parent or the student receives the letter.

Dear [PARENT of *STUDENT NAME/STUDENT NAME*],

[Your child's/Your] school is participating in a study of *Student Messaging in GEAR UP* funded by the U.S. Department of Education and conducted by Abt Associates. The goal of the study is to better understand the college advising that students receive and strategies that increase the number of students who enroll in and complete college.

By participating in the study, [your child/you] may have a chance to receive a set of text messages designed to help [your child/you] successfully complete the transition to college and the first year of college. The simple messages will inform [your child/you] about key enrollment tasks, requirements to maintain good academic standing, and supports to help address common challenges faced during the first year in college.

What are we asking students to do? We are asking all 2016-2017 seniors from [your child's/your] high school to complete a voluntary 15 minute survey. The survey will ask if they are interested in a chance to receive the college success text messages and, if interested, to provide their cell phone numbers.

Who will receive the text messages? Students who plan to go to college and indicate in the survey that they are interested in a chance to receive text messages will have a chance to participate in the text message program. Some students will get the texts and some will not. Who gets the program will be decided by chance, like flipping a coin. Messages will be sent to students over the summer after high school and during the first year of college; approximately 20 to 30 messages will be sent (standard text messaging rates may apply).

What information will be used in the study? Information for the study will come from the short survey that students complete and from educational records, including information on college enrollment and financial aid data from the National Student Clearinghouse and the Federal Student Aid databases.

How will we protect [your child's/your] privacy? Protecting [the privacy of your child/your privacy] is very important to us. The study reports will not include any student or school names. We will not share information that identifies you or your child with anyone outside the study team, except as required by law. The data set prepared for the U.S. Department of Education will contain survey responses without identifying information. Only researchers who complete a research application that is approved will have access to this data set.

What are the risks or benefits of participating? This study has very little risk for [your child/you]. [Your child/you] may feel stressed thinking about [his or her/your] educational future. By participating in this study, [your child/you] may receive messages to help complete the final steps to college enrollment and successfully persist in college. Participation may help the U.S. Department of Education learn how best to support students during their transitions into college. There is a small chance of loss of confidentiality but we have many procedures in place to reduce this risk.

Is participation voluntary? Yes. We would like [your child/you] to participate in this study, but [your child/you] can continue participating in GEAR UP activities even if [your child does/you do] not complete the survey. [Your child/You] can skip any questions on the survey or stop at any time.

If you **do not want** [your child/] to be included in the study, contact the study team via email XXXX@abtassoc.com, or phone 1-XXX-XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely,

Alina Martinez, Ed.D.
Study Project Director

If you have any questions about participating in the study, you may call XXX-XXX-XXXX, or email me at XXXX@abtassociates.com. If you have any questions about subjects' rights, please contact Abt's Institutional Review Board Administrator, Katie Speanburg, by phone at (877) 520-6835 [toll-free number]. If you have questions about the GEAR UP program, please contact your school directly.

Study Email

Study Phone

Paperwork Burden Statement: According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is xxxx-xxxx. Public reporting burden for this collection is estimated to average 15 minutes per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. The obligation to respond to this collection is voluntary. If you have comments or concerns regarding the status of your individual submission of this form, application or survey, please contact (National Center for Education Evaluation/Institute of Education Sciences U.S. Department of Education, 555 New Jersey Avenue, SW Room 502i, Washington, DC 20208) directly. (Note: Please do not return the completed instrument, form, application or survey to this address.)