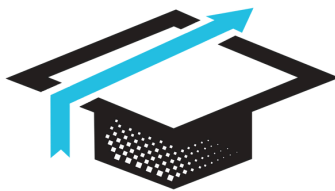




2024-2025

**SOCIAL
MEDIA
GUIDE**

PART 1: GETTING STARTED



There are countless ways to connect with your students and their families—text blasts, phone calls, emails, flyers... the options are endless. However, leveraging social media is one of the easiest and most effective ways to maintain communication and foster a sense of community. Not sure where to begin? This guide will take you through the steps of creating a social media presence for your school’s GEAR UP program!

For any questions or concerns regarding any GUV communications efforts, contact the GEAR UP Communications Specialist, Emma Donovan: emmadonovan@schev.edu

What Social Media Platform is Best for Our Program?

When deciding what social media platforms your program should use, think about who you are trying to reach the most:

Parents/guardians: Facebook

Students: Instagram and TikTok (if your district allows)

Community and district leadership: Facebook and X (formerly known as Twitter)

Facebook

Parents and guardians are most likely to use Facebook as their primary social media platform, making it an ideal choice for your program. Since many parents already receive information from your school's Facebook page, leveraging this platform can enhance your outreach. Depending on your program's specific needs, you can create various types of Facebook profiles to maximize engagement and communication.

A comparison chart showing the features available for three types of Facebook profiles: Page, Profile, and Group. The 'Page' option is marked as 'RECOMMENDED' in a blue badge. Each profile type is described and then listed with its available features, marked with a blue checkmark (✓) or a red X (✗).

Profile Type	Description	Direct publishing	Reminder publishing	Content planning	AI tools	Engagement tools	Analytics and reporting
Page	Facebook page that you are an owner or an admin of. All features.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Profile	Facebook personal or professional profile. Limited features.	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Group	Facebook group and you are a member or an admin of. Limited features.	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗

I would personally recommend a “page” for all GUV school programs. This gives you the most control over the content being published on your page.

Instagram

If your team is focused on engaging with students, Instagram could be the ideal platform. It ranks third among social media platforms most used by teens aged 13-17, trailing only behind YouTube and TikTok. One consideration, however, is that every post to your feed must include an image. This can be a graphic, a digital flyer or a photo; you cannot share text-only posts unless they are shared as part of your Instagram story.

Tik Tok

Another effective platform for engaging your GEAR UP students is TikTok. As one of the most popular platforms among teens aged 13-17, it offers a dynamic way to connect. If your team is interested in collaborating with students to create video content, TikTok could be a fantastic way to get them involved! However, it's crucial to familiarize yourself with your district's policy on using this platform.

X (Twitter)

If your team wants to showcase your GUV program to district leaders, X might be an effective platform. While X has experienced a significant decline in regular users and engagement in recent years, it remains a key communication tool for many politicians, district leaders and community partners.

Creating an Account

Once you have decided what social media platform(s) your GEAR UP team wants to use, make an account! There are a few steps you should take to ensure that this goes smoothly:

Choose an Account Administrator

When setting up social media accounts for your program, it's essential to designate one person as the account administrator. This individual will be responsible for posting content, monitoring and responding to comments, and accepting follower requests (if the account is private). While other team members can have access to the accounts, having a single point of contact ensures effective management and oversight.

Decide Privacy Settings

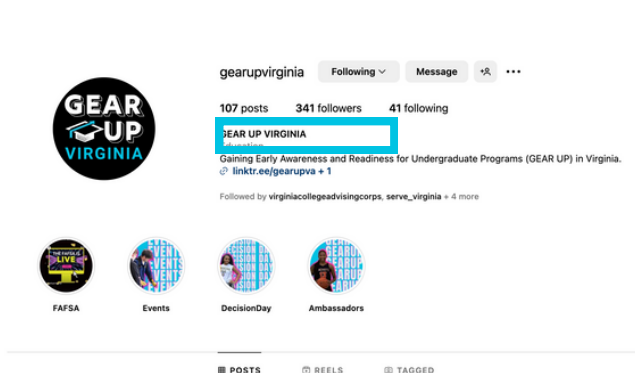
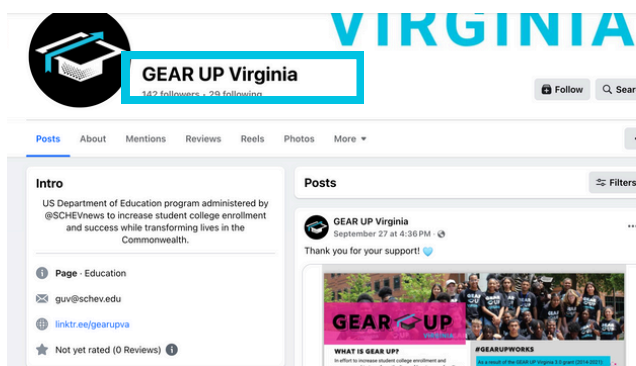
Depending on the platform(s) your team chooses, you might consider making the page private, which means only approved followers can see your content. However, in most cases, it's advisable to keep your GEAR UP accounts public. This allows your community to easily find and engage with your page.

Choosing a Username or Page Name

The primary way people will discover your program's account or page is by searching for your username or page name, so it's crucial to keep it simple. Here are a few examples of potential usernames using "George Washington High School" as a reference:

- @GWHSGEARUP
- @GWHS_GEARUP
- @GWHS2027GEARUP
- @GEARUP.GWHS

These are just a few options! Be sure to include your school name and "GEAR UP" in some form to clearly identify the account's purpose. Additionally, remember that your program's full name will be visible on the page, so there's no need to include it in the username.



Create a Bio

After creating your account, the next step is to craft a concise bio for your page. This should be a brief description of what your page is about. Here are a few examples using George Washington High School:

- Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) at George Washington High School.
- We are GEARing UP at George Washington High School!
- The official page of the GEAR UP Virginia program for George Washington High School's class of 2027!

You can also enhance your bio by including a link to the GUV website or tagging the GEAR UP VA account (note that tagging is only possible in your bio on Instagram).

Profile Picture

Along with your username, your profile picture is one of the most recognizable elements of your page. The ideal choice for your profile picture is your school's GEAR UP logo. Make sure the entire logo is clearly visible (see below).



If your logo doesn't fit well, you might need to add extra white space to the background. Canva makes this easy! Need help with Canva? Check out the 'Guide to Canva' in the Communications Resources folder on the Grant Management page of the GEAR UP website.

Spread the Word!

Once your profile is set up, it's time to let your GUV community know! Ask the person managing your school or district's social media to post an announcement encouraging people to follow your account. GEAR UP VA can also give your new profile a shoutout!

Creating Content

You've planned and prepped, and now it's finally time to post! There are plenty of things you can share on your social media account. Here are a few examples:

- **Announcements/Reminders:** Share upcoming events like college visits, camp registrations and more.
 - *Tip: Be sure to specify whether events are open to parents/guardians or are student-only.*
- **Shout-Outs/Highlights:** Celebrate a GEAR UP student or parent who's gone above and beyond by posting a picture and recognizing their achievement. You could even feature a 'GEAR UP Student of the Month.'
- **Event Recaps:** Engage with families by sharing pictures from recent GEAR UP events.
- **Reposts:** Share posts from the GEAR UP Virginia accounts to keep your community informed!

Feed Posts vs. Story Posts

Feed posts are the content you share on your page that appears on your followers' timelines and remains visible on your profile until you choose to delete it. Most of your posts will be shared this way.

Story posts, on the other hand, are photos or videos that disappear from your profile, feed and messages after 24 hours. Stories are perfect for quick updates, reminders, behind-the-scenes moments or sharing posts you've been tagged in.

Link your Instagram & Facebook

If your team plans to use both Instagram and Facebook for your GUV program but is concerned about the time commitment, you can link the two accounts to post on both platforms simultaneously. You can also use 'Meta Business Manager' to manage comments, direct messages and schedule content all in one place.

Graphics, Collages, Videos and More!

Sometimes your content needs a little extra flair. Canva makes it easy to create graphics, flyers, presentations, collages, videos and even web pages! The best part? Educators and schools can access Canva Pro for free! Here's how:

1. Go to the Canva homepage.
2. Select the 'Education' tab at the top.
3. Click on 'Teachers and Schools.'
4. Get verified!
 - Teachers just need to enter their school email address.
 - For school accounts, the school will need to contact Canva for verification.

Posting Checklist:

Before hitting 'post' on your social media content, there are a few things to double-check. Use this checklist to make sure everything is set:

- **Am I posting to the correct account?** It may sound obvious, but even experienced social media managers can accidentally post to the wrong account. Always double-check!
- **Is the post too wordy?** Long, wordy posts may lose your audience. Keep captions short and simple, and use clear, easy-to-read graphics.
- **Did I spell-check?** Double-check your spelling in both the caption and any graphics before posting.
- **Did all students in the photo sign a release form or give permission?** Ensure that students or their parents have signed a general photo release form, or have opted in to allow their image to be used. Verbal consent from students also works if they're comfortable with the post.
- **Did I tag GEAR UP VA?** We want to see and share your content! The best way to ensure we see your posts is to tag us—don't hesitate to tag us in every post.
- **Did I tag everyone who needs to be tagged?** If your event involves vendors, community organizations or a college visit, be sure to tag all relevant accounts.

Resources For Creating Content

A Guide to Facebook Stories:

<https://buffer.com/library/facebook-stories/>

A Guide to Instagram Stories:

<https://buffer.com/library/instagram-stories/>

A Guide to Instagram Reels:

<https://metricool.com/instagram-reels-guide/>

A Guide to Meta Business Suite:

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-use-meta-business-suite/>

A Guide to Canva:

www.levelupvirginia.org/home/showpublisheddocument/404/638633087067843522

GEAR UP Student Influencer Team

New to GEAR UP Virginia communications for the 2024-2025 school year is the launch of our Student Influencer Team. This internship program allows GUV cohort students to explore careers in communications, marketing and related fields. Led by GUV Communications Specialist Emma Donovan, the program requires minimal involvement from schools—but your team can be as involved as you'd like!

Our Student Influencers will be able to produce various forms of content based on their interests. Examples include:

- **Vlog-Style Content**
 - This is for the students that are looking for more of an “influencer” style of content. they can create:
 - Vlogs of GUV events
 - Day in the life of a GUV student videos
 - Get ready with me style videos
- **Performative Content**
 - This is for students who LOVE being in front of the camera, majorettes, cheerleaders, dancers, singers, actors and rappers. They can create:
 - TikTok-style dance videos at GUV events or in GUV swag
 - GUV/ GUV objective-related songs/raps or skits
- **Technical Content**
 - Students who want to work on skills such as:
 - Graphic design
 - Blog writing
 - Newsletter creation
 - Website development
- **Photography/ Videography Content**
 - Students interested in being behind the camera and taking photos and videos for their cohort. Students can also use this content to:
 - Develop photo editing skills
 - Create short films or “advertisements” for the program.

For more information on the Student Influencer Team, check out the [information presentation](#):

