Educational Talent Search Cedar Rapids (ETSCR) has a lot to celebrate! Our journey started in October 2021, as a new federally-funded TRIO program in the Cedar Rapids Community School District. Year One has been a mix of challenges and joy. After overcoming staffing and recruitment challenges, it's a pleasure, in this first of many publications, to introduce an amazing staff (see page 2); share our recruitment and retention successes; and inform you of upcoming plans.

Our program is designed for motivated and high-potential students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Two-thirds of the participants must come from families earning a limited income (determined by taxable income and family size) and in which neither parent holds a bachelor’s degree. Our foremost priority is to increase the rate at which TRIO-eligible participants complete secondary education and enroll in and graduate from a college or postsecondary program of their choice. Ultimately, we want to assist students in maximizing every opportunity and exploring options that will assist them in becoming better informed, thoughtful, and productive individuals and citizens.

The work we are doing we can’t do alone. Many thanks to district administrators, school staff, parents, students, and the University of Northern Iowa Center for Urban Education for taking this journey with us. We’d like to hear from you.

Best,
Dr. A. Denita Gadson
Director

“Being able to talk with someone about furthering my education has impacted my life in a great way and has helped me stay on track with my goals. I believe the program is the best and I’m proud to be in it.”
Joselyne Nhabwimpundu, Senior
Jefferson High School

S.T.A.T.S
Scholars Taking Action through Talent Search

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INTRODUCTIONS • SEMESTER REWIND • UPCOMING EVENTS • STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS
About Us

OUR SERVICES

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<td>Academic Assistance &amp; Advisement Monitoring</td>
<td>Discovering options in higher education and admissions requirements; waiver of application fees</td>
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<td>Student progress in high school, course selection, graduation requirements, and dual enrollment advisement</td>
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<td>College Applications</td>
<td>How to best present yourself on university applications</td>
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<td>Financial Aid Information &amp; Application Assistance</td>
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<td>Discover career options, educational requirements, and internships/job shadowing opportunities in various fields</td>
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<td>College Entrance Exams</td>
<td>Information on and test-taking strategies for the SAT and ACT; fee waivers</td>
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<td>How to balance a personal budget; open a bank account; finding a part-time job; information on job trends</td>
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<td>Study Tips</td>
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<tr>
<td>College Tours &amp; Cultural Field Trips</td>
<td>Visit in-state &amp; out-of-state colleges and college fairs; experience live cultural events</td>
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OUR STAFF

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Our program is proud to give students the opportunity to explore Iowa’s colleges and universities with our annual College Visit Day field trips. Any member of ETSCR is able to attend. On these trips, students attend sessions on admissions, financial aid and scholarships, major interest areas, and many more. They are also taken on campus tours and given a chance to eat in the schools’ dining halls.

During these visits, students are encouraged to ask questions and will get direct answers from university staff and students. Our hope is to provide students with a framework to make educated college decisions by exploring what these institutions have to offer!

**UNIVERSITIES VISITED:**
- Iowa State University
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Iowa

**MORE SEMESTER HIGHLIGHTS:**
- Hosted 6 Kick-off events
- Scholars Taking Action through Talent Search: A conversation at Jefferson and Washington with Robert Smith, Exec. Director of UNI Center for Urban Education

TRIO gives me the support I need to transition to college.

Jayden Webb, Junior
Washington High School
Highlight:

Black College Expo
March 31 - April 2, 2023
Chicago State University | Chicago, IL

Requirements:
- ETSCR member
- 3.0 GPA with exceptions
- 1-2 letters of recommendation
- NCRF Scholarship
Deadline: March 20

Benefits to students:
- Real-time college acceptance
- College application fees waived
- Informative seminars and workshops
- Various scholarship eligibility

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS:
- Kirkwood Regional Center Field Trip | January 31, 2023
- Simpson College Visit Day | February 8, 2023
- Luther College Visit Day | February 27, 2023
- La'James International College Field Trip | March 2, 2023
- Coe College | March 6, 2023
- Kirkwood Community College Visit Day | April 19, 2023
- NewBoCo Field Trip | April and May 2023
- Cedar Rapids Museum Field Trip | April and May 2023

**Applications and permission forms are available via qualtrics
Winter break is a time for students to relax after the stresses of school. They lay in bed, play video games, or binge watch a new show. The problem with all this relaxing is that it can cause the brain to shut down and make the transition back to school that much more difficult. Oxford Learning identifies a lack of practice during extended breaks as a key reason students can’t focus in the classroom.

We recommend students take proactive steps to improve their ability to focus in order to combat this. For example, students should get a full night’s sleep and be sure to eat in the morning before school. And as for studying at home, the most important thing is to limit distractions. When working on homework or studying, students should find a space that works for them. This can range from the school library to their bedroom at home. And lastly, try to keep phones out of learning environments. Phones become distracting when seen or heard, so place them on silent or turn them off completely during study times and school. By practicing these habits, students can improve their focus and overall academic performance, especially after taking time off.

A WORD FROM AN ETSCR SENIOR:

I was introduced to Talent Search as a Junior in high school and I have already gotten information on scholarships, had exam fees waived, visited colleges, and received academic counseling. I have also received other opportunities related to my area of interest. Talent Search has helped me in so many ways. It has been an amazing program full of people who are willing to help and support students from all backgrounds.

Charlotte Lokinu, Senior
Jefferson High School

SCHOLARS SPEAK

Rusimbana “Frank” Budederi
Waldorf University
Emeline Kamuguishia
Kirkwood Community College
Rose Phanord
Employed
Colin Primer-Posey
Employed
Alieyah Walter
Employed

The TRIO ETS program is funded by the U.S. Department of Education