

## Message from Executive Director Larry Ramos

It seems the school year is flying by. Soon, students will be preparing for Thanksgiving and Christmas, followed by the new year (2025). Think about that for a moment. One quarter of this century is done. What will happen in the next quarter (2050) is anyone's guess, but students who are in middle school and high school now will likely be adults, perhaps with a family.

Many things will be different in the future and students will need to keep up with all the changes, especially technology. As the world becomes more advanced, students of today will have to prepare themselves for the world of work by getting the training and skills required.

This may mean going to trade schools, gaining certifications in specialized areas, while for others it may mean going to college to meet the demand for doctors, engineers, and scientists. Teachers will be in high demand as well as healthcare workers. The future is exciting to think about but will require students to work hard, be smart with their time, and learn how to read, write, and communicate on a high level.

Finally, students need to work on getting along with others while being good listeners. This can all start now. Before too long, another 25 years will pass and Talent Search does not want any student to be left behind.

## Upcoming Events



### December

- 04 Hutchinson Campus Tour
- 07 SAT Test Administration
- 14 ACT Test Administration
- 20-31 Winter Recess (No School)
- 25 Christmas Day
- 31 New Year's Eve



### January

- 01 New Year's Day
- 01-05 Winter Recess (No School)
- 03 ACT Registration Deadline
- 06 USD 259 Resopens
- 20 MLK Jr. Holiday (No School)



### February

- 08 ACT Test Administration
- 11-13 Parent/Teacher Conferences
- 13-14 No School
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 17 President's Day
- 21 SAT Registration Deadline
- 28 ACT Registration Deadline

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## Student Spotlight: Shanmuka

### Thip Phichith, PEA/ACT Coordinator

Shanmuka is a TRIO Talent Search senior at Southeast High School who will be graduating in May 2024. As an immigrant from India, her journey has been filled with numerous challenges and achievements that have shaped the person she is today. She plans to attend Wichita State University in the fall where she will study computer science.

Shanmuka joined TRIO Talent Search as a sophomore. She has participated in College Jumpstart, National TRIO/GEAR UP Day, the ACT Math Prep workshop and the Senior Jumpstart Financial Literacy Workshop which she thoroughly enjoyed.

Throughout her high school years, she maintained an outstanding GPA. She has been honored with several awards, including Student of the Quarter, Honor Roll at Wichita State, and the Southeast Royalty Award. All these accomplishments are a testament to her dedication and hard work.

In addition to her academic pursuits, Shanmuka has been actively involved in various extracurricular activities. She is a member of the Student Government, the Multi-Cultural Club, and Buffs at Work. Also, she regularly participates in community service. These experiences have not only enriched her high school life but have also helped her develop leadership skills and a sense of community.

Outside of school, Shanmuka enjoys working out, spending time with her family, and listening to music. These hobbies have helped her maintain a balanced lifestyle and provide a much-needed break from her studies.

She says that one of the most significant influences of her high school experience has been the TRIO Talent Search Program. TRIO has provided her with invaluable support, resources, and guidance, helping her navigate the complexities of college preparation and application.



"As I look forward to my future at Wichita State University, I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and am committed to making the most of them."

- Shanmuka

The program also connected her with a network of peers and mentors who have been instrumental in her success. She highly recommends TRIO to other students, as it offers a wealth of opportunities and support that can make a significant difference in a student's educational journey.

## Critical Thinking on the Internet

### Sharon K. Robertson, Administrative Specialist

Students, over the holidays, be mindful of the content viewed and shared over the internet. It is easy to fall prey to AI-generated fake images or ads, fake news, and cyber-bullying on social media. Consider the source of the information. Is it fact from a reliable, reputable source, or is it fiction, someone's opinion? Fact-check. Determine whether it is trustworthy or a manipulative ploy for some sort of gain. Think safety when viewing ads and other information that pop up on the feed. Make sure the website is legitimate (<https://>). Check privacy and security settings. Be sure and update browsers and software regularly. Use antivirus software to ensure protection against cyber threats and phishing attempts. Clear cookies and cache, use strong passwords, and use two-factor authentication for added security. Above all, think before posting. If it would not be said in person, do not post it. Also, make sure the post is not contributing to more fake news.



# Expanding Your Horizons

## Stephanie Haynes, Middle School Director

Middle School Director Stephanie Haynes and Executive Director Larry Ramos accompanied students from Brooks Center for Stem and Arts Magnet Middle School to the Expanding Your Horizons Conference. This one-day event is hosted by Wichita State University and introduces middle school girls to a variety of careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

Attendees met STEM role models, participated in hands-on activities, and learned more about careers in those fields. This conference is hosted in partnership with the Expanding Your Horizons Network, Spirit Aerosystems, Boeing, Evergy, Airbus, and WSU Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

There were a variety of workshops including DNA Necklaces, Become a Weather Wizard, The Board Street Mystery, Mission Marbles, STEM can be Fun, and more. During the UV Detector workshop, students used UV sensitive beads to test the protection of multiple sunscreens and materials by designing their own experiment and taking home their very own UV-detector bracelet.

In the Aquatic Ecology workshop, the girls were able to see and interact with large and small animals. The students also saw preserved museum specimens and learned how they are important for scientific research. There was also an opportunity to observe tiny animals under a microscope.



During the Parachute Party, participants designed and built their own parachutes using coffee filters, string, and craft stick weights. At the end of this workshop, there was a competition to see whose parachute could fall the slowest. Students left with a greater understanding of drag and air-flow principles. Talent Search student A'MeiaRose was the winner of the competition.

The day ended with the students completing an evaluation and a drawing for several different prizes. Haynes received several positive comments from the students. Overall, the students enjoyed the workshops and lunch.



# Financial Aid

Emily Roets-Estevez, PEA/Financial Literacy Coordinator



Financial Aid season is here! Now is the time to start considering how to pay for college by applying for as many scholarships as possible. The first step in the financial aid process is to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is projected to open on December 1, 2024. Completing the FAFSA will show students if they are eligible for federal student aid. The two types of aid include student loans, which must be repaid with interest, and the Pell Grant, which provides students with up to \$7,395 that does not need to be repaid. Before starting the FAFSA, students and at least one parent or guardian, also known as a contributor, must create an FSA ID. The FSA ID serves as the student and contributor's username, password, and legal electronic signature for the FAFSA. Watch these videos from Federal Student Aid for more information about [who must create an FSA ID](#) and [How to Create an Account and Username \(FSA ID\) for Students](#) .

Several large scholarship competitions have winter and early spring deadlines, including the [Dell Scholar Program](#), [Rudd Scholarship](#), [Ron Brown Scholarship Program](#), [The Burger King Foundation Scholarship](#), [Kansas Hispanic Education and Development Foundation scholarships](#), and more. Once a student is accepted to a college, they will be able to access that college's scholarship portals for institutional scholarships. Since only the students at that college can apply for institutional scholarships, the chances of winning are higher. To be a strong candidate for scholarships, it is important to maintain good grades for a high GPA and to retake the ACT to raise one's ACT Super Score. Be sure to ask teachers and counselors for letters of recommendation at least two weeks in advance to allow the appropriate time to craft the best possible letter. Take a moment to update resumes or activity charts to reflect all extracurricular, academic, and work involvement. Connect with a TRIO Talent Search advisor to learn about tutoring and ACT preparation resources and opportunities.

*FAFSA is projected to open December 1, 2024*

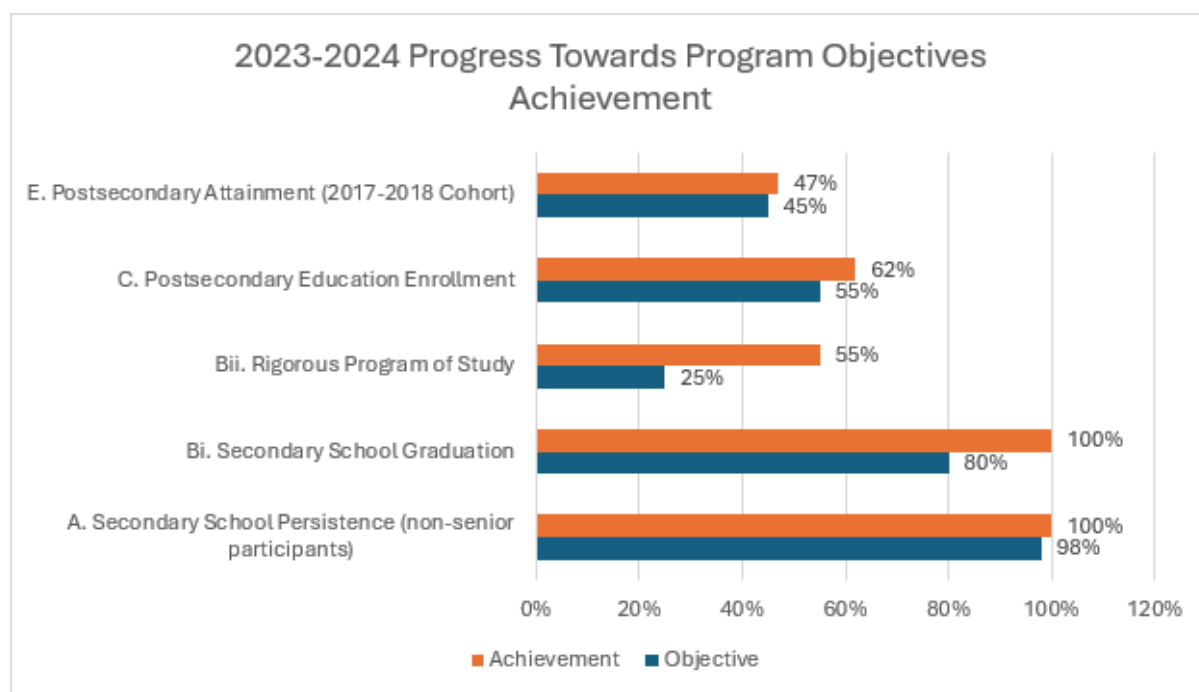
## Program Objective Results for 2023-2024

**Manivone Souriya, Associate Director/Statistician**

Each year, the TRIO Talent Search program submits the annual performance report to the U.S. Department of Education which includes the program objectives with goals. For the 2023-2024 grant year, the program exceeded all of the objectives!

- ⇒ Secondary School Persistence (966/966)
- ⇒ Secondary School Graduation (196/196)
- ⇒ Secondary School Graduation with rigorous program of study (108/196)
- ⇒ Postsecondary Education Enrollment (121/196), and
- ⇒ Postsecondary Attainment 2017-2018 Cohort (42/89), which are used to assess prior experience (PE) points in years 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 to be awarded points to the 2026-2031 grant proposal.

Below is a chart that demonstrates data for program objective goals and achievements for program year 2023-2024.



“Circumstances may cause interruptions and delays, but never lose sight of your goal. Prepare yourself in every way you can by increasing your knowledge and adding to your experience, so that you can make the most of opportunity when it occurs.”

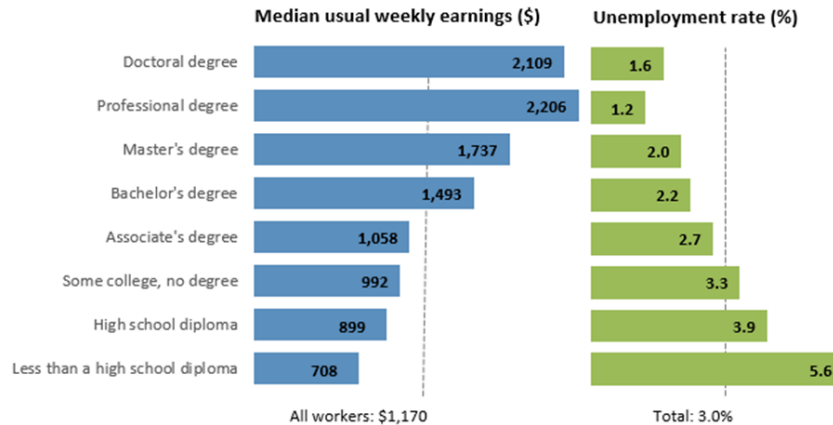
— Mario Andretti

## The Next Step

### Suresh Menon, PEA/Mentoring & Career Coordinator

If going to college after graduating high school is not an option right now, figure out the next step. Each student must create their own vision of success and determine what that looks like. According to Marc Supreme in his book “D@mn, I Graduate in May” he states, “College does not guarantee success. It just means you are educated. You will have to figure out success on your own. Not everyone needs college, but everyone needs to be educated no matter what they want to do.” Income increases with more education and the chances of being unemployed or getting laid off is significantly reduced. In April 2024, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published the article “Education Pays, 2023: Career Outlook.” It states, “Each level of education you complete may help you develop more skills, give you access to higher paying occupations, and signal that you’re able to follow through on important tasks, such as planning ahead and meeting deadlines that employers value.”

**Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2023**



Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.

According to Supreme, “The ultimate goal of going to college isn’t to graduate. It is to leverage college to land the dream career.” College is not only a place to earn a degree but a place where one can gain the necessary knowledge, skills, and connections to actively pursue and secure the desired career path. When considering a college major, job, or trade to pursue, first take out a sheet of paper and answer the following questions:

- ⇒ What are my strengths? What comes naturally? What am I good at?
- ⇒ What are my limitations/weaknesses? What do I struggle with?
- ⇒ What are the things that I am passionate about?
- ⇒ What are the things I dislike and do not tolerate?

Hopefully, this will aid in figuring out the end goal and the type of career desired. It may or may not require college, but there are several options. There’s trade school, two-year colleges to earn an associate degree, and there are certificate programs available.

As quoted by Earl Nightingale, “Success is the progressive realization of a worthy ideal or goal.” Having a goal and working towards it, leads to success. Once that goal is attained, it is time to work on the next goal and then the next. Time is short on this planet. Make it count.





## Mission Statement

The mission of the TRIO Talent Search program is to identify, encourage, and assist low income and potential first generation college students to complete a secondary education, enroll in post-secondary education, and complete a post-secondary program.



## Program Staff

Larry Ramos, Executive Director | Mani Souriya, Associate Director & Statistician  
 Stephanie Haynes, Middle School Director | Thip Phichith, Program Educational Advisor & ACT-SAT Coordinator | Emily Roets-Estevez, Program Educational Advisor & Financial Literacy Coordinator | Suresh Menon, Program Educational Advisor & Mentoring-Career Coordinator | Sharon K. Robertson, Administrative Specialist



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