REPORTER

ST. OLAF COLLEGE

TRIO EDUCATIONAL TALENT SEARCH

Current events and updates happening in St.Olaf TRIO Educational Talent Search (ETS)!



ETS IS IN ITS FALL ERA! NEW OPPORTUNITIES, NEW MEMORIES, AND PLENTY MORE HAPPENING THIS SEMESTER!

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A Message from Our Director

Greetings TRIO ETS Community,

Welcome to the 2026 - 2027 school year! We are excited that TRIO Educational Talent Search (ETS) will be entering its 36th year of partnership with St. Olaf College. We hope you had a fantastic summer, are recharged, and are ready to start the new school year!
The TRIO ETS team (Kali, Azi, Antonio, and Joe) is back and excited to start working with you all to support your transition to high school and college exploration. The St. Olaf TRIO ETS team is also ready to provide classroom and small-group workshops, academic advising, financial aid, financial literacy events, virtual & in-person college visits, and access to mentor programs, online tutoring, and more.

We are excited to continue the partnerships with Minneapolis Edison High School, Northeast Middle School in Minneapolis, Humboldt High School, and Community of Peace Academy in St. Paul. We have many new initiatives planned for this coming year, and we are excited to share them with you. Please stop by the St. Olaf TRIO ETS office at your school to get involved in more activities or to contact your advisor if you have questions.

We are here for you! Let us know how we can support you!
Looking forward to a fun and successful 2026 - 2027 school year.
-Juan A Telles, Director



Joe | Admin. Asst.



Antonio | Sr. Advior



Juan | Director



Aztlan | Advisor for Edison H.S. & Northeast M.S.



Kali | Advisor for Humboldt H.S.



St.Olaf TRIO ETS Mentor Program

By St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Senior Advisor Antonio Moore

The new academic year is officially in motion, and momentum is building rapidly for the St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Mentoring Program! With a dedicated group of mentors ready to guide, encourage, and inspire the next generation, this year's program is poised to be one of our most vibrant and impactful yet.

A great mentoring relationship begins with strong preparation. We have officially completed our mentor training sessions, equipping our volunteer mentors with the tools, perspective, and understanding needed to support students through their academic and personal growth. The enthusiasm, empathy, and commitment shown during these training sets an incredible tone for the journey ahead.With training wrapped up, the program is moving directly into its most exciting phase: matching mentors with mentees at Humboldt High School.

Matching mentors and mentees are based on shared interests, goals, and backgrounds to ensure meaningful, lasting connections. In the coming days, students will officially learn who their mentors are, and the communication will kick off with the first of our letter exchanges.

Over the course of the program, pairs will connect through six scheduled letter exchanges, giving them a personal and consistent space to share stories, discuss goals, and reflect on their growth. In addition to their correspondence, the program will feature three exciting field trips, giving mentors and mentees the chance to step away from their routines, bond in person, and create shared memories.



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Open House 2026: Come See What's Happening!

By St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Academic Advisor Kali Hickman

We kicked off the year with two jam-packed evenings: Thursday, August 27 at Community of Peace Academy (CPA), and Thursday, September 3 at Northeast Middle School (NEMS), Humboldt High School, and Edison High School. The halls were alive again, and it felt great to reconnect with our school communities as we swapped summer stories with students and met families face-to-face.

Curious what TRIO ETS looks like in action? Check out our Academic Advisors' table setups below; they're resource-packed, student-ready, and built for a strong start. (Photos attached.)











Your Next Stop: The Minnesota National College Fair



By St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Academic Advisor Kali Hickman

On Tuesday, October 6, TRIO ETS brought 60 students from Humboldt High School, Community of Peace Academy, and Thomas Edison High School to the Minnesota National College Fair. After a busy morning of exploring college options, we wrapped up with a well-earned lunch at a local Chinese buffet.

What made the fair worth it



The Minnesota National College Fair is a huge, time-saving event for students and families. In one place, you can:



- Talk with representatives from 200+ colleges and universities
- Ask about majors, course offerings, and admission requirements
- Learn about campus life, including housing, dining, sports, clubs, and student support
- Get clear answers on financial aid and scholarships

Our students collected brochures, scanned QR codes, and practiced their “elevator pitch” with real admission reps. Many left with a sharper idea of programs they want to pursue and a starter list of schools to research.

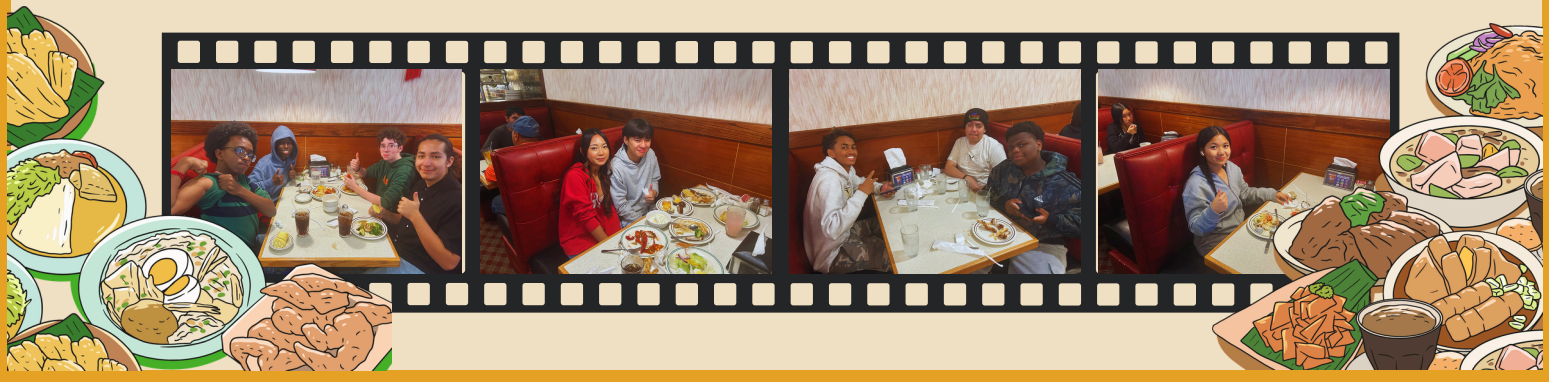
Lunchtime highlight

After the fair, everyone refueled at a Chinese buffet. Over lo mein and fried rice, students compared notes, shared favorite booths, and traded tips on which questions got the most helpful answers.

Family next steps

- **Debrief together:** Ask your student which colleges stood out and why.
- **Make a short list:** Pick 5–7 schools to explore online this week.
- **Check deadlines:** Look at application and FAFSA timelines and set reminders.
- **Keep the momentum:** Reach out to reps your student met and ask follow-up questions.

A big thank-you to our students for showing up with curiosity and to our families and school partners for supporting college exploration. If you missed this trip, do not worry. TRIO ETS has more college and career events coming soon.



Essay Season Is Here! Tips to Make Your College Essay Shine

By St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Academic Advisor Aztlan Thao

Writing your college essay can be exciting, stressful, or maybe a little bit of both. Wherever you are in the process, here are a few TRIO ETS tips to help you tell your story and put together an essay you're proud of.

I. Write about something that matters to you.

Choose a topic that you genuinely care about, and try to get specific. Instead of simply saying you volunteered somewhere, think about a particular experience or moment that stuck with you. What did you learn? Did it change the way you think or help you grow? The more personal you can make it, the more your essay will stand out.

2. Make sure it sounds like you.

Your essay is a chance for admissions officers to get to know the person behind the application. Don't feel like you need to use big words or sound overly formal. Let your personality, values, humor, and perspective come through while still making sure your writing is clear and polished.

3. Give yourself room to revise.

Your first draft doesn't need to be your final draft. Once you have something written, ask your TRIO advisor, school counselor, teacher, friend, or family member to take a look. A fresh set of eyes can help you notice areas that could use more detail or parts of your story that are especially strong.

4. Take your time finding the right story.

Sometimes the hardest part is figuring out what to write about in the first place. You've had plenty of experiences that have shaped who you are, even if they don't immediately seem "college essay worthy." Give yourself time to brainstorm, reflect, and find a story that feels right to you.

5. Keep the bigger picture in mind.

If you start feeling stuck, remind yourself why you're writing the essay. Yes, it's part of your college application, but it's also an opportunity to reflect on your experiences, your growth, and the person you're becoming. Looking at it that way can make the process feel a little more meaningful—and hopefully a little less stressful.









College Starts Earlier Than You Think (And That's a Good Thing!)

By St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Academic Advisor Kali Hickman

Whether your student is in middle school or starting to count down the days to high school graduation, thinking about college can feel overwhelming. The secret? You do not have to figure it all out in one giant leap during senior year. Doing a little bit at a time makes the whole process easier and far less stressful.

Here are three simple things your family can focus on this month to keep moving forward.

1. Focus on habits, not just grades



Good grades open doors, but good habits keep those doors open.
Middle schoolers: Help them build simple routines for homework and time management. Encouraging them to join a club, sport, or community group helps them find what they actually enjoy doing.

High schoolers: Encourage them to challenge themselves with their courses when possible. Remind them to keep track of any volunteer work, jobs, or extracurricular activities for future applications.

2. Start talking about money early



College is an investment, but financial aid makes it realistic for every family. Talking about costs early removes the surprise later on.

Take a look at the difference between grants (money you keep), scholarships (money you earn), and loans (money you pay back).

Start searching for local scholarships together. You do not need to wait until senior year to start building a list.

3. Reach out to your TRIO advisor



This is why we are here! Your TRIO ETS advisor works with students year-round on career paths, college visits, and application steps. Encourage your student to stop by and check in with us this week.

Try this together this week:

Ask your student over dinner: "If you could pick any career to try for one week, what would it be?" Let the conversation flow from there without worrying about the logistics just yet.

Questions? We are here to help.

Contact your school's TRIO ETS advisor or stop by our office in your school. We are at Northeast Middle School on Mondays, Community of Peace Academy on Tuesdays, Thomas Edison High School on Wednesdays, and Humboldt High School on Fridays. We are excited to support you and your student every step of the way.



Study Smart, Stress Less: Make Time for the Fun Stuff, Too!

By St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Academic Advisor Kali Hickman

Trying to pull your grades up without living at your desk? Here are simple habits that actually help and don't feel like punishment.

Set a routine that's realistic



Pick a time you can stick to most school nights (say 7–8 pm). Treat it like practice: show up, do the reps, done. Work in short bursts: 25 minutes on, 5 off, so you don't fry your brain.

Don't just reread, quiz yourself



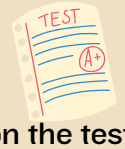
Close your notes and try to explain the topic out loud or on paper. What did you miss? Fill those gaps. Mixing problems (a little math, a little vocab, back to math) also makes your brain remember better.

Notes you'll actually use



Give every page a date and title. Jot key ideas on the right, questions in the margin, and a two-sentence summary at the bottom. If you highlight, limit yourself to three highlights per page and turn each one into a question.

Three-day test plan



3 days out: List what's on the test and how it's scored.

2 days out: Do timed practice: old quizzes, textbook problems, or flashcards you made.

Night before: Light review and sleep. Cramming feels productive but doesn't stick.

Make class time count





Sit where you can focus. Ask one clarifying question. When your teacher repeats something or writes it on the board, star it, it's probably on the test.

Phone, but make it helpful



During study blocks, put it on Do Not Disturb and face down (or in another room). Use it for reminders, calendar, or flashcards, then back to work.

When you're stuck



Try "three before me": check your notes, a worked example, and a classmate. Still stuck? Ask your teacher or tutor and say exactly where you got lost: "I did steps 1–3, but factoring the last term isn't clicking."

20-Minute Jumpstart



Write three tiny tasks (under 7 minutes each). Do two quick work/break cycles. End by writing one question you still have and bring it to class.
Small, steady habits beat last-minute panic. You've got this. 💪📚

Senior Year Starts Here: A Guide for Parents & Guardians

By St. Olaf College TRIO ETS Academic Advisor Aztlan Thao

Parents and guardians — senior year is here! This year can bring a lot of excitement, but also plenty of deadlines, decisions, and questions about what comes next. Between classes, activities, college applications, and financial aid, seniors have a lot on their plates. Your encouragement and support can go a long way in helping them stay organized and confident throughout the year.

Fall / Early Winter 

Stay connected with counselors and TRIO advisors: Encourage your senior to check in with their school counselor and TRIO advisor throughout the fall. We're here to help with everything from building a college list and completing applications to reviewing essays and keeping track of important deadlines.
Keep an eye on testing requirements: Depending on the colleges your student is considering, they may choose to take or retake the ACT or SAT. Encourage them to review the admissions requirements for each school and keep an eye on upcoming registration deadlines. (And don't forget — your TRIO advisor may be able to help with ACT fee waivers!)

Get those college applications submitted: Check in with your student about their application progress and encourage them to apply to at least three colleges by November 30. Starting early gives them plenty of time to work through any questions or unexpected issues.

Winter 

Complete the FAFSA: The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is one of the most important steps in paying for college. Families should complete the FAFSA as soon as they're able and make sure all required student and parent information is submitted.

Don't be afraid to ask for help: Financial aid can be confusing, especially if it's your family's first time going through the process. Your student's TRIO advisor and school counselor can help answer questions and guide your family through the process.

Spring 

Compare college decisions: As acceptance letters and financial aid offers arrive, sit down with your student and look at their options together. Consider cost, financial aid, academic programs, campus environment, and what matters most to your student.
Look closely at financial aid offers: Not all financial aid is the same. Pay attention to the difference between scholarships and grants, work-study, and student loans when comparing each college's offer.
Make it official: Once your student has made their decision, help them complete any remaining enrollment steps, such as submitting a deposit, registering for orientation, completing housing forms, and turning in required documents.

Most importantly, celebrate them! Senior year can be stressful, and getting through applications, financial aid, and graduation is a big accomplishment. Your support throughout the process matters more than you might realize.

New Season, New Scholarships

🌟 SCHOLARSHIPS OPENING IN NOVEMBER

📅 Nov. 1 — Dream National Scholarship

💰 $33,000| 👥 High school seniors who are first-generation immigrant students

📅 Nov. 1 — DAR Scholarships

💰 2,000–25,000 | 👥 Undergraduate and graduate students

📅 November — InspirASIAN Scholarship

💰 $2,000 | 👥 High school seniors | GPA: 3.4



📌 NOVEMBER 5–20 DEADLINES

🎓 Nov. 5 — Regeneron Science Talent Search

💰 Awards: 2,000–250,000 | 👥 High school students, ages 14+

🎓 Nov. 11 — College Scholarship Program

💰 Up to $55,000 | 👥 High school seniors | GPA: 3.7

🎓 Nov. 20 — NHS Scholarship

💰 3,200–25,000 | 👥 High school seniors in National Honor Society



📌 NOVEMBER 30 DEADLINES

💸 Niche No Essay Scholarship — $2,000

💸 Sallie Mae Scholarship — $2,000

💸 ScholarshipOwl No Essay Scholarship — $1,000

💸 Welder Training Scholarship — Amount varies

💸 BigFuture Scholarships — 500–4,000 (high school juniors)



Ready, Set, Test! ACT Dates & Twin Cities Locations

Minneapolis

Minnehaha Academy Upper School

Center Code: **248420**

Test Dates:

February 27, 2027

Edison Senior High School

Center Code: **204030**

Test Dates:

- **October 17, 2026**
- **December 12, 2026**
- **February 27, 2027**

Washburn Senior High School

Center Code: **196910**

Test Dates:

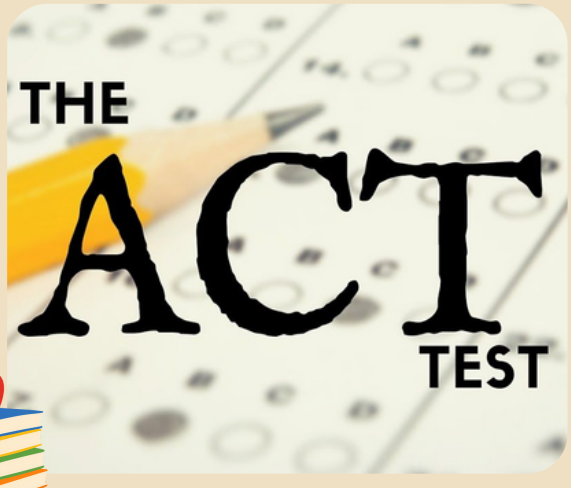
- **October 17, 2026**
- **December 12, 2026**
- **February 27, 2027**
- **June 12, 2027**
- **July 10, 2027**

Breck School

Center Code: **192780**

Test Dates:

- **June 12, 2027**



Saint Paul

St. Paul Academy and Summit School

Center Code: **161220**

Test Dates:

February 27, 2027

St. Paul Public Schools

Center Code: **255540**

Test Dates:

December 12, 2026

Richfield

Academy of Holy Angels

Center Code: **215610**

Test Dates:

October 17, 2026

December 12, 2026

February 27, 2027

April 10, 2027

June 12, 2027

Fridley

Totino-Grace High School

Center Code: **199960**

Test Dates:

April 10, 2027

Saint Louis Park

Benilde-St. Margaret's School

Center Code: **178790**

Test Dates:

December 12, 2026

April 10, 2027

Eagan

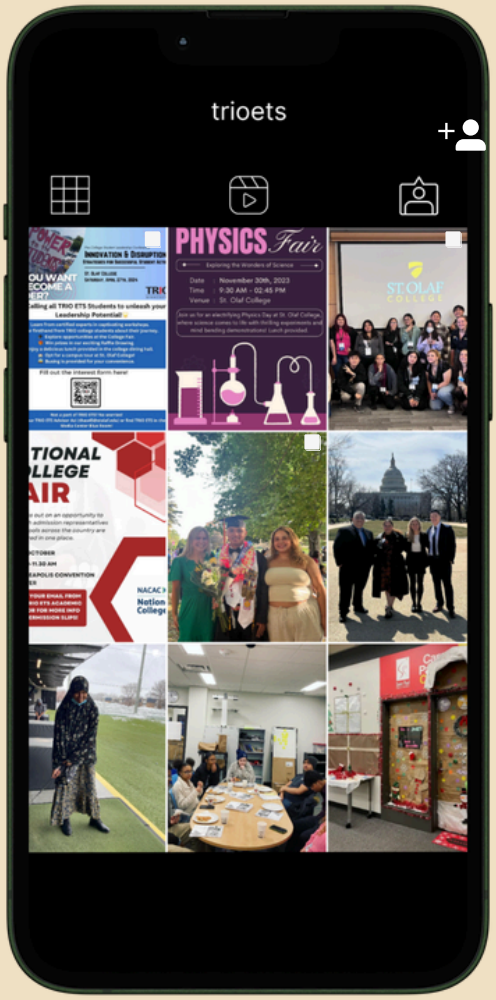
Eagan High School

Center Code: **167750**

Test Dates:

February 27, 2027

Stay in the Loop! Follow Us on Social Media



📢 Stay Updated on Events & Opportunities
Get the latest info on college tours, workshops, and deadlines right on your feed!
🎓 Explore College & Career Resources
Learn about scholarships, financial aid, and tools to help you prepare for life after high school.
🤝 Be Part of a Supportive Community
See success stories, connect with peers, and stay motivated with TRIO ETS by your side!

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Use your Cell Phone Camera to Scan the QR Code and follow us on Instagram and Facebook!

Educational Talent Search (ETS) is a TRIO program funded by the U.S. Department of Education and sponsored by St. Olaf College. The ETS program annually assists 700 middle and high school students as they explore their academic and vocational options and set goals for the future. ETS Academic Advisors, in cooperation with school counselors and teachers, provide college preparatory services through workshops, classroom activities, and group and individual counseling sessions. St. Olaf College Educational Talent Search works at the following five schools: St. Paul Community of Peace Academy, St. Paul Humboldt High School, Minneapolis Northeast Middle School, and Minneapolis Edison Senior High School.

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