

Rising Scholars



Rising Scholars Robotics Workshop, Tuscarawas Campus

At Kent State, our purpose is to help students find their purpose – so they can cultivate their talents and create a brighter tomorrow. There's no better way to do that than by offering education and opportunity for those who need it most.

Through our Rising Scholars Program – one initiative on each regional campus – Kent State partners with local communities to create a support system that prepares promising youth for life after high school. If we all step up and commit to uncovering, nurturing and cultivating these young people with untapped potential we can shine

a light on this underserved population to transform their communities and the world around them.

The Rising Scholars Program combines mentoring with assistance from local communities and businesses to provide support for young adults beginning in seventh grade. The program allows them to maximize their all-important high school years and focus on making well informed career choices after graduation.

Kent State students who have similar experiences regarding family life or socioeconomic challenges serve as mentors to guide these promising middle and high school students through difficult personal and academic situations. When student participants commit to the program, a free college education awaits them at a Kent State regional campus. They will also become the next generation of mentors who “pay back” their community for this generous support.

"Mentors are the secret sauce of this program. Mentors offer another important adult voice in the student's life. This program has been successful because it's built on relationships."

– David Dees Ph.D., *Dean of Kent State's Columbiana County Campuses*

Instilling a Sense of Commitment and Community

The Rising Scholars Program specifically addresses the workforce ready and brain drain issues that many Ohio communities face. Program activities teach these young adults both the direct and hidden skills necessary to succeed in life after high school. The program also instills a strong sense of belonging and promotes a commitment to community service.

This is not just about college access. It is a next step program that engages promising students with curricular and experiential resources to excel. At the end of this program, students will be enrolled, employed or enlisted. This university-wide program represents the diversity of people and communities within our region, and it showcases the unique aspects and challenges found in this area.

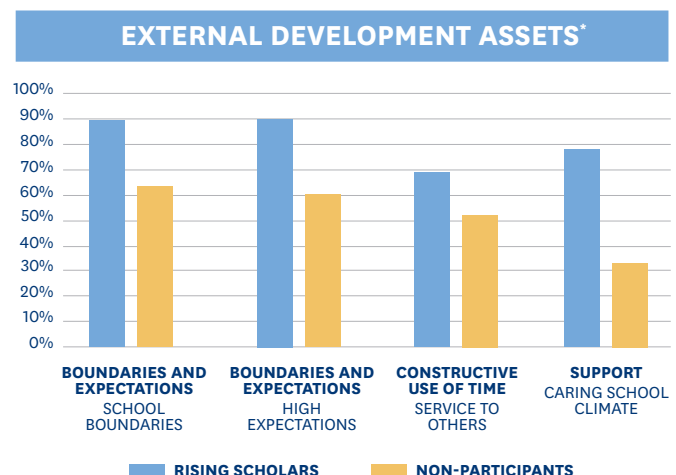
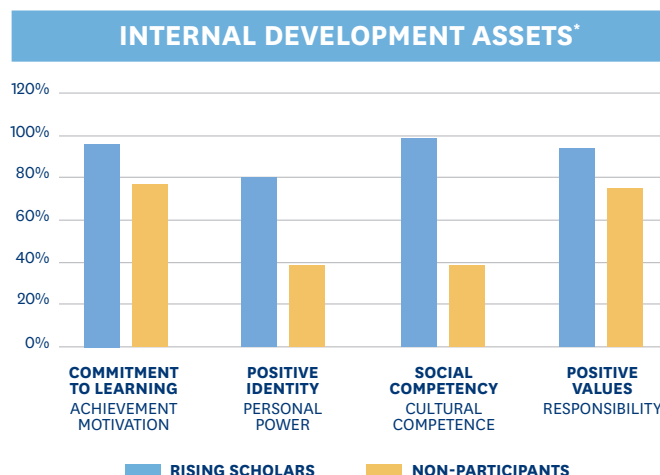
Kent State has regional campuses in seven counties, offering ready access to diverse communities. These campuses are engaged to help these promising students

find a clear path to success. In addition to the student mentors, the university's knowledgeable, caring and committed faculty and staff provide support and service to students throughout the program.

Rising Scholars have access to a variety of career and life skills workshops during the school year including: Military Careers Workshop, Engineering and Manufacturing Careers Workshop, Horticulture Careers Workshop, Nursing Careers Workshop, Broadcasting Careers Workshop, Leadership Skills Class, ACT Preparation Class and Financial Aid Workshop.

Criteria for Selection

Students are selected primarily on the recommendation of middle school teachers and guidance counselors. Criteria for selection include: rising seventh grader, first-generation college student, income eligible, desire to earn post-secondary certification or degree, commitment from parents/guardians, strong attendance record and grades that reflect potential to do well in college (minimum 2.5 GPA).



Since 2018, 31 Rising Scholars have graduated from high school, with 25 going to college. Kent State's main or regional campuses have enrolled 17 of these students in majors including: architecture, art, biology/pre-medicine, bio-medicine, business, nursing, psychology, studio arts and visual communication design.

Morgan Briand, Class of 2018

Morgan Briand graduated from Lisbon David Anderson High School in 2018 after completing six years in the Rising Scholars Program and she currently attends Kent State's Salem Campus, where she is now a mentor.

"Before I got into this program, I was just kind of 'there.' I was really shy and didn't know what I wanted to do," Morgan said. "Being part of Rising Scholars taught me about career paths that I never would have thought of on my own and helped me with my personal skills. This program bettered my leadership skills and helped me think about what I want to do with my life. **There is no way I would ever be at Kent State without Rising Scholars,**" she stated.

Through her years in the program, Morgan realized that she wanted to mentor future scholars. "I watched how so many people were helping me and the others find our places in this world, and I knew I wanted to give back in some way. Wanting to be a mentor pushed me to be a better person and to do better in school," Morgan said.

"There is no way I could afford to go to college without this program and, knowing what I know now, I realize that I had a lot to learn before I ever got here," she said. "Even my parents see a big change in me. They see that I am goal-oriented and much stronger as a person. Rising Scholars has changed my life."



Morgan with her mentee, Kaitlin (Grade 8).

Erin Taylor, Class of 2018

Erin Taylor knew that someday she wanted a job where she could help people. She liked school, always had friends and dreamed of making a difference. She was selected to be part of the Rising Scholars Program in seventh grade and, after a few years in the program, Erin began to see how her life was changing.

"In the beginning, I didn't realize that this program would last all the way through high school," she said. "Then, during my junior year in high school, **I realized that everything was going to change for me,** and I understood how important this program was. That's when I really began to see why I needed to set goals and why I had to look at my future."



Erin with her mentees, Treasure and Melody (Grade 8).

Erin attends Kent State's Salem Campus, majoring in psychology. Following graduation, she would like to work as a child psychologist so that she can help kids through tough situations. Erin is also a mentor. "Everyone involved with Rising Scholars kept me focused on deciding what I want to be and supported me," she said. "I know that I want to help others, and I want to be able to give back."

"I always wanted to go to college, but I didn't know how I could do it. **The Rising Scholars program made it seem like I was made to go to college, that I was smart enough and that I was good enough,**" Erin said.

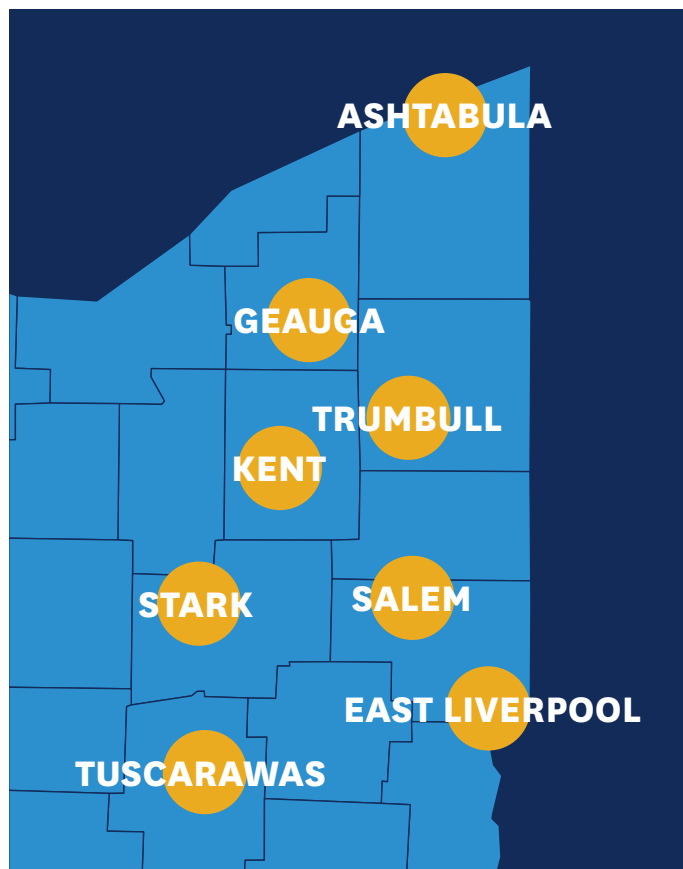
Growing the Program

Philanthropic support from individuals, local businesses and communities has allowed Kent State's regional campuses (Ashtabula, East Liverpool, Geauga, Salem, Stark, Trumbull and Tuscarawas) to expand programs or create new programs as part of Rising Scholars. "When fully implemented, the collective impact of the Rising Scholars Program over Northeast Ohio will be significant," said Nathan Ritchey, Ph.D., Vice President for Kent State System Integration. "Our regional campuses may be small, but together our resources, talent and footprint are quite impressive. We need private gifts to fully execute the program."



2019 Rising Scholars Graduation, Columbiana Campuses

Kent State Regional Campus System



"We will have the capacity to serve nearly 1,000 at-risk students from seventh grade through bachelors' degrees. We are reaching students long before they enter into college with a program that assures they are ready for college in terms of academic preparation, finances and confidence.

This program is a game changer for our region."

– Nathan Ritchey, Ph.D., Vice President for Kent State System Integration



www.kent.edu/SupportRisingScholars