



## **The DEF Opportunity Partnership – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is The Opportunity Partnership?**

The Opportunity Partnership is a mentoring program that puts the resources of DEF and Decatur to work for low-income students in our community. The primary goal is to connect students with educational and enrichment opportunities that help him/her explore their interests, find their passions, and develop useful life skills.

### **What is the opportunity gap and how do we address it?**

The Opportunity Gap is the growing divide in what is available to young people based on socio-economic status. The result is that low-income children have fewer opportunities than their peers. The mission of DEF is to harness community resources to provide educational and enrichment opportunities for all Decatur youth. While we have made a lot of impact, there is still a gap in what is available to lower-income kids in our community.

### **What kids will participate in The Opportunity Partnership?**

DEF will pilot the Opportunity Partnership in partnership with the Decatur Housing Authority's Afterschool Program (STARS). The program will begin with 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and ideally, the students would remain in the program through middle school.

### **Why the focus on out-of-school or extracurricular experiences?**

Research has shown that extracurricular activities are an effective way to provide mentoring and allow students to develop important soft skills such as problem-solving, teamwork, and persistence. Students at City Schools of Decatur have many academic resources. The Opportunity Partnership is meant to enhance a student's out-of-school time.

### **What is the role of the Opportunity Partnership Mentor?**

Each student will be matched with a mentor who will get to know the student and then help connect the student to educational and enrichment activities. The volunteer mentors will serve as a matchmaker between the student and opportunities that exist in our community and beyond.

### **What is the desired outcome of the Opportunity Partnership?**

With the resources that are available in the Decatur community, we hope to develop a program that allows all kids in Decatur, regardless of income, to have opportunities to discover their interests and pursue their passions so that when they graduation from Decatur High School, they are socially and civically connected to the greater community.

### **What makes a good mentor?**

Mentors are caring members of the community who are interested in connecting with a child in order to help find opportunities for him/her that will help them develop their skills and interests.

### **What is the time commitment required to be an Opportunity Partnership Mentor?**

While we understand that life can be unpredictable, our hope is that mentors stay connected to their mentees through middle school.

**How do I sign up to be an Opportunity Partnership Mentor?** If you are interested in learning more and possibly signing up to be considered as mentor, please complete the interest form at the bottom of the page at [www.decatureducationfoundation.org/mentoring](http://www.decatureducationfoundation.org/mentoring)