

Our Story

DECA | ANNUAL REPORT | 2018

OUR STORY BEGAN 16 YEARS AGO WITH A
GROUP OF LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS WHO BELIEVED THAT
ALL CHILDREN—DAYTON'S CHILDREN—DESERVED THE
CHANCE FOR A ROCK-SOLID EDUCATION. **DECA**, THE FIRST
EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL IN OHIO, WAS BORN.

“High achievement always takes place in the framework of high expectation.”

—Charles F. Kettering

Dear DECA Friends,

DECA's story began 16 years ago with a group of individuals who believed that all children—Dayton's children—deserved the chance for a rock-solid education. DECA, the first early college high school in Ohio, was born. DECA's mission; prepare students for college and beyond, hasn't changed since we opened our doors.

Acting on that mission, DECA continues to celebrate our college graduation rate. The National Student Clearinghouse documents DECA grads complete college at five times the national rate for students of our demographic. Turn to page 5 to see DECA compared to other area schools. DECA breaks the cycle of generational poverty and racial inequity through education. The roads to high-skill, high-wage jobs are varied, but college remains the pathway to the higher income careers. The Dayton community needs a deeper pool of skilled professionals, especially in STEM careers, and DECA is responding.

In this Annual Report, we identify DECA's DNA, **The Five Building Blocks of Success: Building Relationships, Investing in Quality Teaching, Focusing On Academics, Leveraging Community Resources, and Enrolling Early in College.**

You'll read personal stories of both students and teachers affirming our distinctive, intentional DECA culture. We highlight examples of creative, collaborative teaching and the robust community support DECA enjoys. Adam Wilks and his classmates returned to celebrate their ten year reunion.



Adam Wilks and his classmates at their 10 year reunion

Read how DECA has impacted him as a young professional. We also provide the results of the state testing on pages 4-5. Two data points of progress: DECA outpaced the state average for the ACT for the first time, and our third graders improved their reading tremendously.

You'll observe DECA's sustained focus on the singular goal of preparing students for college—academically, socially, emotionally, and financially.

Quality schools do not result from flavor-of-the-month or sloganeering reforms. Rather, DECA's journey is one of steady growth and careful attention to achievement and culture. We pay attention to critical partnerships among parents, teachers, and the community, all rowing in the same direction. We strive to have little contradiction between our actions and our words. We focus on results. The trajectory of our students' lives, and often their families' lives, change because of DECA.

Building a stellar school system is complicated work amid competing demands and pressures. However, the sheer energy of seeing Adam and hundreds of other DECA graduates mature into successful professionals reminds us that **Dayton can count on DECA!** With your continued help, DECA changes lives!

Judy Hennessey
Judy Hennessey,
Superintendent & CEO

David A. Taylor
David Taylor,
Deputy Superintendent



DECA's DNA

The Five Building Blocks of Success

DECA High students build friendships

DECA's class of 2019 outpaced the State average on the ACT test.

1 Building Relationships

Teaching is relationship building. DECA students learn at higher levels because of the relationships our faculty has with our students, parents, community, and each other.

2 Investing in Quality Teaching

Nothing matters more than the quality of teaching which occurs in every classroom each day. DECA teachers are coached and learn to be coaches. They work hard, practice new skills, and own their results.

3 Focusing On Academics

The measure of a great school is the answer to this question, "Are students learning at increasingly higher levels?" DECA uses data gathered from many sources to respond. Then, we act on that information for improvement.

4 Leveraging Community Resources

DECA students are required to engage in job shadows, service, and non-paid internships, expanding our students' ability to choose a "good fit" college major and ultimately a career.

5 Enrolling Early in College

DECA demonstrates that being on a college campus, taking a seat in a college classroom, and performing in the classes is the best way to convince potential first-generation college students that they can do it.



1

Building
Blocks of
Success

Building Relationships

Recognizing that freshmen always have discreet needs from upperclassmen, DECA faculty decided to establish freshmen-only advisories.

Freshman advisor Alec Wade emphasized, *“The goal was to help freshmen find their place in our DECA community, while also making them independent and resilient learners.”* Colleague Christine Thobe added, *“High school anywhere can seem like a big place. It can be hard to find your niche, your squad. DECA freshmen now have a team that pushes and advocates for their success. Success is an expectation, not an option.”*



Left to right | Freshmen advisors: Brittany Jones, Alec Wade, Kellee Callahan, Christine Thobe, Elton Griffith and Maria Ogletree

The change was a resoundingly smart move. More students completed gateways in their first year and almost 100% of our freshmen are on track academically in their sophomore year at DECA. According

to teacher Brittany Jones, relationships drove the impact, *“We work hard not only to build a strong relationship within our team, but also among freshmen students and families.”*

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF
OUR STORY—INVEST DEEPLY
IN RELATIONSHIPS.

The DECies

Hollywood isn't the only place you can receive an Oscar (or a Dundie from *The Office*). DECA also holds its own version of the Oscars each year for faculty and staff. The festive event is an opportunity to reflect on the passions, commitments, and skills of our talented team. It's the one thing we do each year that's truly about the adults. One of this year's winners, Christi Pham, physical education teacher, wowed the audience with her humble acceptance speech, noting that she travels between two schools and doesn't have a gym in either. Christi's words are inspiring:

“DECA has taught me to be better than I was yesterday, love deeper than I knew I could beyond my own three children, and remember the prevailing power of the simple hug.”



2

Building
Blocks of
Success

Investing In Quality Teaching



“Float Day”, learning the physics of floatation

DECA's physics teacher, Stew Miller, knows the power of STEM experiences in and out of the classroom. Stew's curriculum includes a project on the physics of floatation. Students are required to assemble a boat, sturdy enough to hold a person, constructed with only cardboard, heavy adhesive tape, and garbage bags. Mr. Miller invariably has to convince students it can be done, applying the physics concepts introduced in class. When “float day” arrives, excited students line up for test runs at the UD RecPlex. Cheering one another on as they paddle across the pool in their cardboard boats, students can't miss Mr. Miller's delight. He knows the best STEM lessons force students to apply their newly gained knowledge outside the classroom.

“JK Rowling said it right when she said, ‘We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already; we have the power to imagine better.’”

—DECA teacher, Christi Pham accepting her DECie Award



Staff Sergeant Adam Wilks,
USAF, Tinker Air Force Base
DECA '08

A Graduate's Story

“Heaven only knows where I'd be without DECA,” says first-generation college grad Adam Wilks. Returning for his ten year reunion this summer, Adam reminisces, *“Looking back, it seems like everything about the program was personally designed for me. DECA groomed me to be an exceptional student, one that would not accept mediocrity.”*

After graduating from Wright State, Adam joined the Air Force where assignments have taken him to four states. He is currently on a team responsible for the training and education of 1,500 Air Force members. Also a husband and proud father, Adam appreciates his mother and DECA, *“My mom did everything she could. She did everything right. She ensured I had the tools to be educationally successful. She got me to DECA.”*



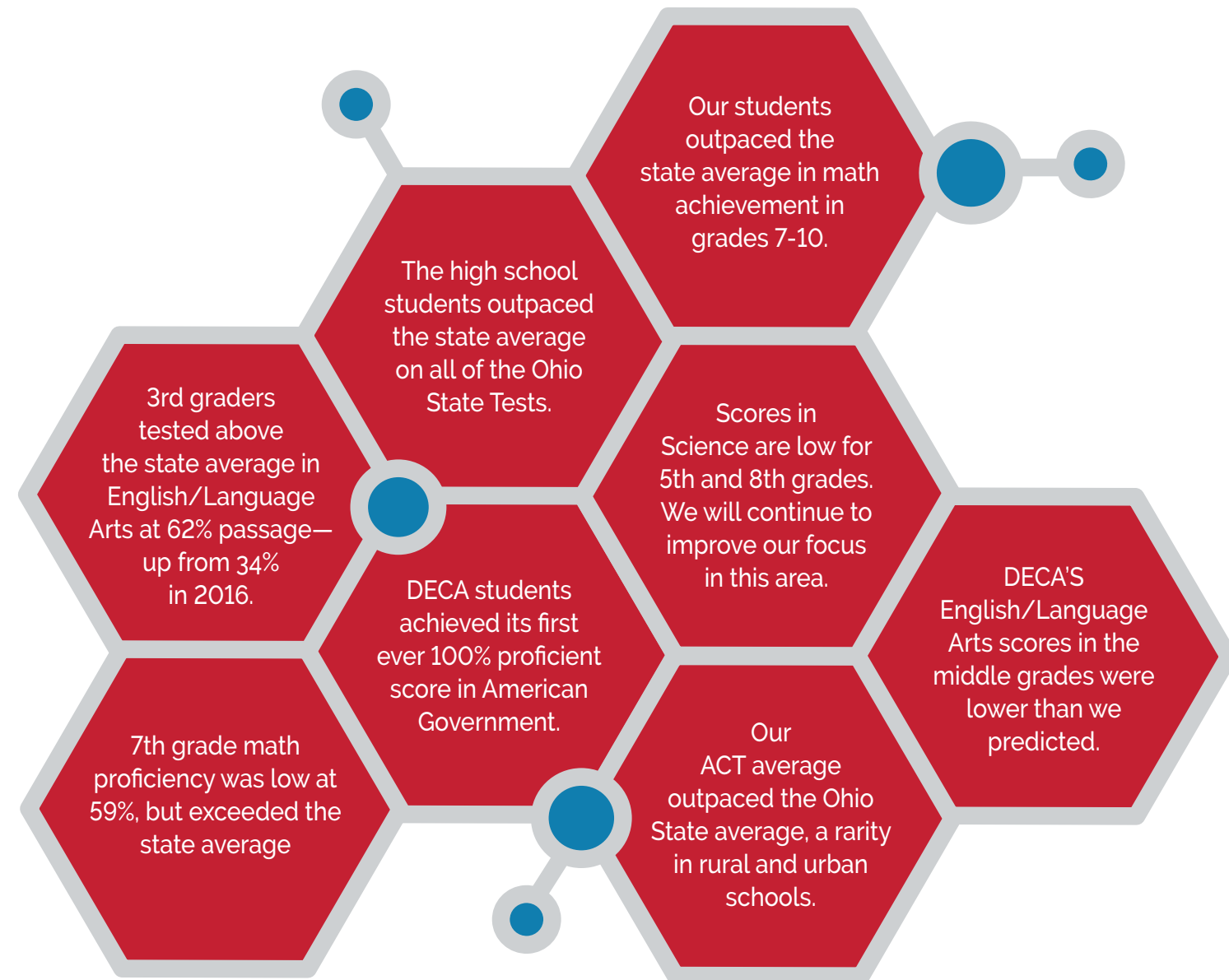
3

Building
Blocks of
Success

Focusing On Academics

This is the third year the Ohio State Tests (OSTs) have been administered. Markedly more challenging than the previous exams, the OSTs are given from 3rd grade through high school. Additionally, the ACT or SAT is required of all high school students. DECA's 2018 results are evidence of great achievement as well as challenging areas that need focused improvement.

DECA'S DNA IS AN ONGOING
STORY, POWERED WITH A
QUALITY EDUCATION!



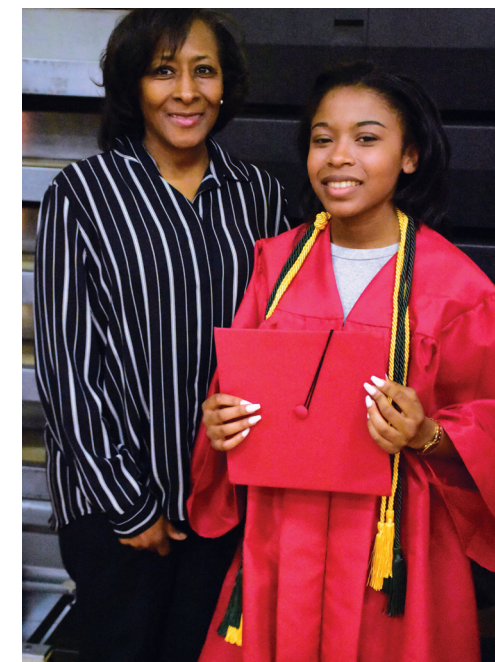
“Brains are not handed out by gender. They are not handed out by race, so we have a capable pool of people that just need to have the opportunity and experiences in STEM.”

—Pamela Jackson, Retired Vice President Technology, Emerson, B.S. Chemical Engineering and Chemistry, MIT, MBA, Boston University

One college graduate can shift the trajectory of an entire family. An education is the passport to a better life. DECA is a public school system where 75% of the student body is at or below the poverty rate. Yet, nearly 100% of our graduates attend college. Better yet, the National Student Clearinghouse reports DECA grads are completing their college degrees five times the national average for our demographic. See graph below:

Did you know?

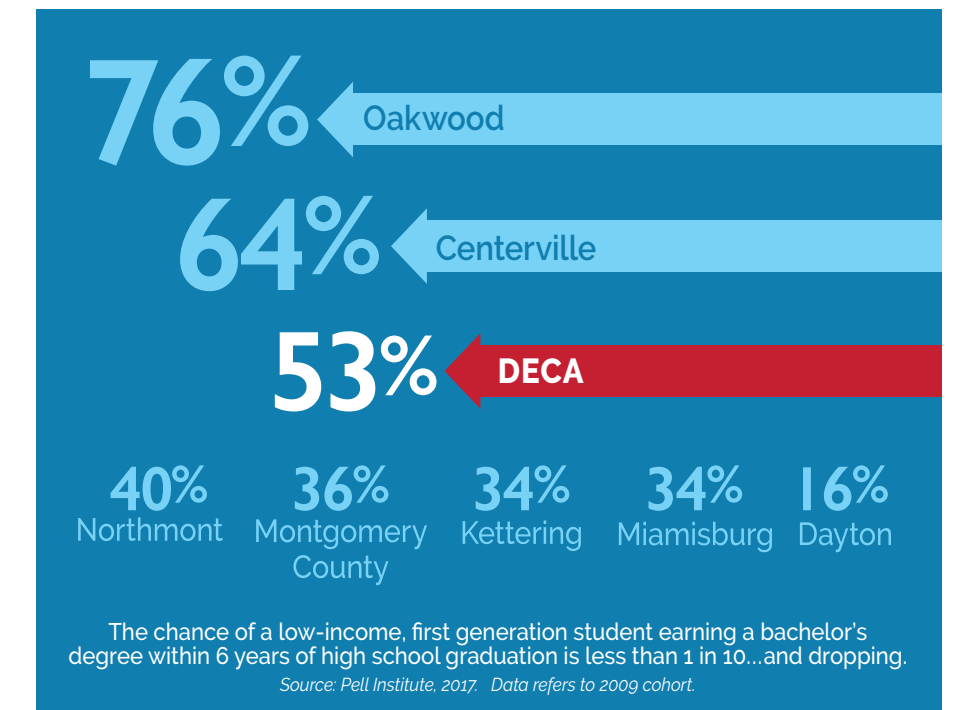
DECA grads are on par with upholding this important national statistic: 59 percent is the 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2009. That is, 59% had completed a bachelor's degree by 2015 at the same institution where they started in 2009.



Loren celebrates her DECA diploma with family



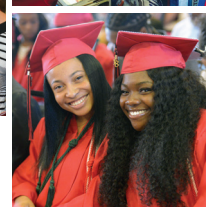
Percent of students graduating from college within 6 years:



Focused academics. Photo credit: Tobias Ellis, DECA grad '16



DECA High students



4

Building
Blocks of
Success

Leveraging Community Resources

“Because our firm has resources in cities around the world, we can help make connections like this one between a DC lawyer and a former DECA student.”

—Donna Smith, WilmerHale Finance Managing Director

Westminster Presbyterian Church

It takes immense resources and commitment to provide the all-in support DECA students need. Westminster Presbyterian Church continues a vital partnership with DECA Middle and has met the behind-the-scenes needs of our students and teachers. Jenne Gross, Westminster’s Mission Associate, says that the congregation’s goal is to support DECA staff so they can do the hard work of teaching students.

Charlie Bull, Principal, describes the congregation as standing in the gap by providing countless volunteer hours and kind deeds. Just a sample of their support includes serving as academic tutors, hosting events and clubs, collecting uniforms and school supplies, painting and cleaning, and making dinner for teachers on late work nights.



DECA students interacting with community volunteers

“EVERY VOLUNTEER LEAVES

DECA MIDDLE FEELING

WELCOMED AS PART OF THE

SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND

KNOWING THEY MADE A

DIFFERENCE TO SOMEONE.”

—Jenne Gross describes Westminster’s return on their investment

WilmerHale

WilmerHale is a global legal and business services company serving clients worldwide. The WilmerHale Dayton office announced its two-year philanthropic partnership with DECA in 2017. Employees have volunteered as Saturday tutors, Mock Trial coaches, and sponsors for job shadows. Most recently, local WilmerHale staff reached out to a D.C. affiliate to meet with Ariel Giles, a DECA grad considering law school. Law partner Craig Goldblatt shared, “I was impressed by how bright, eager, and hardworking Ariel is. We had a long, thoughtful conversation about changes in the legal profession and how those changes are affecting the opportunities for young lawyers. It was clear that he already had a sophisticated understanding of these issues... DECA really does have a profound impact on its students.”

Enrolling Early in College

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOUR SCHOOL HAS WON

THE COLLEGE

SUCCESS AWARD!

Presented by GreatSchools.org*, the **College Success Award** recognizes public high schools whose graduates are prepared for college and beyond. DECA is proud to receive this national award which celebrates college enrollment, persistence, and performance.

The GreatSchools report states, “College enrollment rates don’t tell the whole story. In far too many high schools, students don’t receive the level of academic preparation, social-emotional support, and pre-college counseling required to thrive in a college setting. It is critical to look not just at how many students are enrolling in college, but if they are set up to succeed in that setting.”



DECA Prep students take part in DECA High graduation activities

College Success Award winning schools:

Provide access to rigorous academics.

Systemic supports for at-risk students at every grade level.

Have more robust staffing for academic counseling.

*GreatSchools.org is funded by some of America’s largest and most respected foundations supporting education, the Carnegie Corporation, the Schwab, Kresge, and Gates Foundations.

*“The **College Success Award** recognizes practices that lead to successful high school-to-college pipelines.”*

“The story of our students’ lives, and often their families’ lives, change because of DECA.”

—Judy Hennessey, Superintendent and CEO

PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT
HAS ALLOWED DECA TO
CONTINUE INVESTING IN
OUR STAFF AND FACILITIES.

of funding receipts. (DECA benefitted from a significant carry-over in Federal Title I monies in FY18. This will not occur in FY19.)

Our non-recurring revenues of \$1.01 million were primarily the result of the generous contributions of our many dedicated supporters. Our cash balance improved to \$2.1 million which exceeds our goal of two months of expenditures on hand.

Financial Report

DECA’s continued growth in enrollment to 1,165 students increased our recurring revenues by 10% to \$11.9 million. Recurring revenues are primarily related to State and Federal funding rates per student. This year our revenue growth was slightly higher than our enrollment growth due to an increase in students with special needs and the timing of Federal funds receipts.

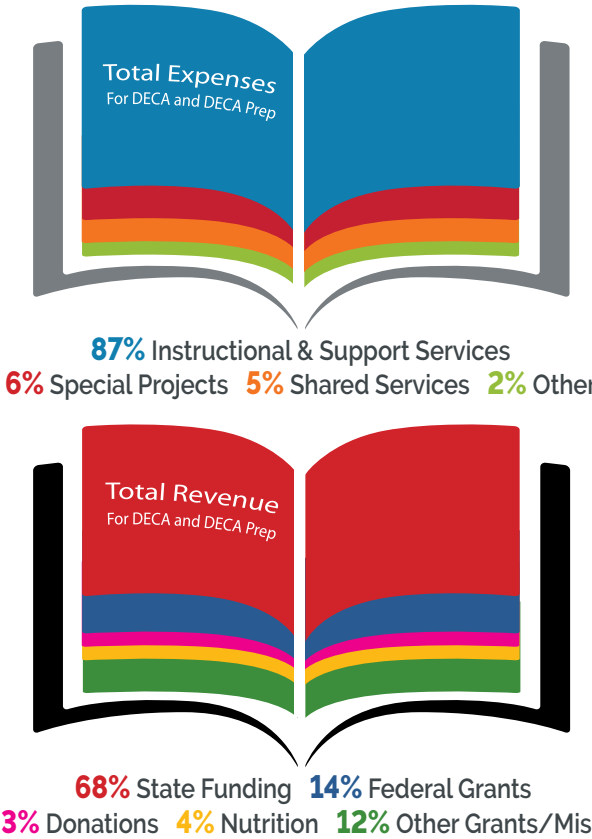
Recurring expenses increased by 7% to \$11.9 million as we added staff to support the increase in students

and absorbed inflation in many spending categories. We continue to focus our spending on classroom activities with 87% of spending dedicated to instructional and support services as shown in the chart below. The net of our recurring revenues and expenses was a positive \$28K which indicates that we operated slightly better than break even on a recurring basis. We will strive to achieve this in future years but will be challenged by government funding rate increases below our inflation rates and uncertainty in the timing

Operating Funds

	FY 2017	FY 2018
Beginning Balance	\$1,244,994	\$1,367,872
Recurring Revenue	Consolidated \$10,791,006	Consolidated \$11,927,235
Expenditures	\$11,161,213	\$11,898,504
Balance	\$(370,207)	\$28,731
Non-Recurring Revenue	Consolidated \$1,263,446	Consolidated \$1,015,324
Expenditures	\$770,361	\$254,780
Balance	\$493,085	\$760,544
Ending Balance	\$1,367,872	\$2,157,147

*Report does not reflect the impact of the construction project at DECA PREP, funded by an OFCC grant and private philanthropy.



Lives Changed Luncheon

On May 1st, more than 250 DECA supporters packed the second *Lives Changed Luncheon* at the Dayton Country Club. The program showcased current DECA students and graduates who shared how a DECA education shaped their lives. Ariel Giles, a DECA '08 grad was an impressive master of ceremonies. Ariel returned from Washington, D.C. where he works as a policy

analyst in the Mayor’s office. Current students also spoke, including members of the Mock Trial Team who demonstrated their closing arguments from this year’s competition. Thanks to many generous supporters, this event raised \$178,000 to support DECA’s academic programs, including summer bridge, ACT prep, and Saturday Reading Boot Camp.

Thanks to your continued support, the luncheon has outgrown its location each year. Save the date, April 23, 2019, for next year’s *Lives Changed Luncheon* to be held at Sinclair’s Ponitz Center. If you would like to invite a table to join you or engage your company as a sponsor, please call the DECA Development Office, Bethany Renner at 937-251-8353.

“The lessons I learned at DECA directly transferred to the self-starter attitude and intellectual curiosity necessary to succeed in college...Proudly. I stand before you today and say DECA changed my life.”

—Ariel Giles, DECA, B.A. University of Dayton, M.P.A. American University



Guest speaker, Ariel Giles, '08 DECA grad and Judy Hennessey



Lives Changed Luncheon



David Taylor

DECA'S IMPACT IS BEYOND
DAYTON—YOU CAN COUNT
ON DECA'S STORY TO
CHANGE LIVES!




DECA PREP
200 Homewood Ave., Dayton, OH 45405
937-610-0110


DECA Middle
110 N. Patterson Blvd., Dayton, OH 45402
937-528-6808


DECA High
300 College Park, Fitz Hall, Third Floor, Dayton, OH 45469
937-229-5780

FACEBOOK: Dayton Early College Academy
INSTAGRAM: @deca_sup | @decaprep | @decamiddle | @DECAHigh
TWITTER: @DECA_Schools | @decaprep | @decamiddle | @DECA_HS

DaytonEarlyCollege.org

