

ANNUAL REPORT | 2020

DECA

The **DECA**
Difference.



"We all know that education, more than anything else, improves our chances for building better lives."

—Nelson Mandela

Dear Friends of DECA,

DECA was built on the foundation of *Doing What's Right*, and it is this very value that continues to guide our approach during a year that has been like no other. When the world came to a near grinding halt due to the COVID-19 health crisis, DECA proved, as we have time and time again, that service to our students is our top priority. Whether that service be through an equitable education, standing up against racial injustices, or serving groceries to families in need, DECA continues to show up for those we serve.

If there is one thing this pandemic has shown us, it is how important DECA is to our community. Our students know we are a place they can come to be seen, heard and appreciated. Our community believes in us enough to step up and wrap their arms around us, offering their time, talent and treasure. Our teachers devote themselves to being a stabilizing force in the lives of the children they serve, making sure each one is reached. And our parents stick with us through difficult times and despite uncertainty.

As the world changes, one thing remains the same—DECA exists to ensure that children in the city of Dayton have access to all the resources they need to get to and through college, and DECA is here to stay.

While we work to respond to the pandemic of COVID-19, we also work to respond to the pandemic of racism. We are at an inflection point for our nation, and schools like ours play a special role in making sure that all children, regardless of race, gender or creed have access to an exceptional education.

At DECA we believe it is our obligation to show up for our Black students every day and make sure that they are recognized and celebrated for their individual identities and cultures—to be a place where our students can come and be seen, loved, and challenged to become something bigger and better, while still remaining true to who they are. We live this work with our students every single day. It's not easy stuff. We don't have the luxury of not wrestling with these hard conversations.

We are a work in progress. But as we see it—as we have always seen it—it is our obligation to empower our learners. It is our obligation to learn more—teach smarter—ask more questions—show up and do better, and it is an honor to be a part of the journey.



Dave Taylor

Dave Taylor
DECA Superintendent



“This is not a year to step back or ‘take a loss,’ hoping to make up ground whenever we return; this is an opportunity to commit, lean in, and do what’s right for our kids, for Dayton, and for the world.”

—Internal District Coaching Newsletter

WE GO TO COLLEGE! The DECA Difference.



Free. Public. Open to all living within the boundaries of the Dayton Public Schools.

Website: DaytonEarlyCollege.org Facebook: [@daytonearlycollege](https://www.facebook.com/daytonearlycollege) Instagram: [@decaprep](https://www.instagram.com/decaprep) | [@decamiddle](https://www.instagram.com/decamiddle) | [@decahigh](https://www.instagram.com/decahigh) | [@deca-sup](https://www.instagram.com/deca-sup)

Achieve Jaw-Dropping Results

The class of 2020 is DECA's largest graduating class. These students are an extraordinary group, faced with dramatic changes during their young lives. Born during 9/11, our graduating class of 2020 lived through the tornadoes of 2019 that destroyed some of their homes and communities; the mass shootings in the Oregon district where DECA lost a member of our own family; and now, they are going off to college during a pandemic.

But these seniors are resilient. Through it all, they have demanded success of themselves and of one another.

The majority of our students have worked jobs throughout their high school careers, and will continue working through the pandemic and college. Each of the 63 students completed more than 100 hours of community service, three job shadows, two non-paid internships while earning transferable college credit. Many of them will be first-generation college students, and 100% of them have been accepted to college.

The DECA Difference: We recognize the racial wealth gap is a huge issue for the students we serve and it is part of our mission to do everything we can to help our students get one step closer to closing that gap. One way we are addressing that is to advocate for our students to get to and through college with minimal debt so they get off on solid footing.

Over one third of the class earned a full tuition scholarship—positioned not to just enroll but complete college with little debt.

Why it matters: On average, Black households in the U.S. with heads who have completed a college degree have less net worth than white households headed by someone with less than a high school education.

A 2019 study from the Insight Center for Community Economic Development notes "Black students are more likely to take on student loans and accumulate student loan debt...ironically, their wealth position could deteriorate because of their intense motivation to pursue higher education."

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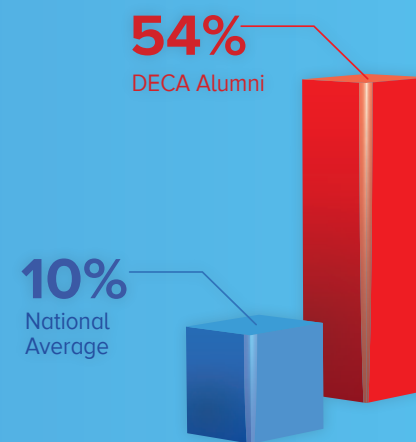
Alabama A&M University



University of Dayton

DECA CLASS OF 2020 EARNED:

- Nearly 1,000 college credits
- 9 UD Flyer Promise Full Tuition Scholarships
- 7 Ohio State Young Scholar Full Tuition Scholarships
- 7 College Promise Full Tuition Scholarships
- 1 Kettering Foundation Full Tuition Scholarship



DECA alumni are earning college degrees at five times the rate of peers with similar economic backgrounds.

Spotlight



With great pride, we announce that **Jordan Davis**, DECA class of 2010, earned his doctorate in electrical engineering from UC San Diego. Jordan attended Cornell University for undergrad, and later earned his Master's at UC San Diego. His research is timely, developing silicon photonic bragg structures to transmit mega quantities of data. A first generation college graduate, Jordan humbly credited DECA with preparing him, emphasizing the powerful impact of the unique opportunities DECA provided him—competing in Mock Trial and Robotics, interning at WPAFB, earning 75+ Sinclair college credits while in high school, and being awarded with the coveted Gates Millennial Scholarship.

"My DECA teachers have encouraged me over the last decade to advance my education as far as possible. This was a motivator in my decision to earn my PhD," said Davis. "DECA's gateway system forced me to present my academic work and defend my thinking, which gave me confidence when it came time to defend my doctoral thesis."

It is our greatest pleasure to introduce you to the very first DECA graduate to earn a PhD - Dr. Jordan Davis.

Do What's Right, Not What's Easy

When times get tough, DECA gets going, and supporting our families and students throughout this pandemic has been no different.

When school districts across the nation made the transition to remote learning last March, DECA PREP Principal, Aileen Ernst, immediately saw the effects the pandemic was having on our families and got to work.

Mrs. Ernst reached out to The Connor Group and together they worked to create the largest food distribution operation in DECA's history.

“One of our company’s core values is **‘do the right thing’**, which probably sounds familiar to DECA folks,” said Larry Connor, managing partner of The Connor Group. “But in times like this, doing the right thing doesn’t mean just talking about the problem. It means finding a solution with your deeds and actions. That’s what we’ve tried to do with the food program.”



Find a solution they did. Thanks to The Connor Group’s nearly \$400,000 donation, and selfless volunteers from For Love Of Children (FLOC), The Connor Group, University of Dayton, WilmerHale and DECA students, families, and staff who showed up to unload, organize, and pack up groceries, DECA was able to distribute food to over 1,134 DECA families throughout the spring and summer months.

“At the start of the pandemic I lost my job and was out of work for three months. You can be living in a nice home, driving a nice car and suddenly, you can’t afford food to feed your family,” said Felicia Mallory, mother to DECA fifth grader Jamir. “When you’re down, you really see who is there for you and DECA has been there for my family. The fact that Mrs. Ernst and DECA staff even thought of doing this for DECA families...well, there aren’t even words so show my appreciation. The food was amazing. Everything in those boxes was food that we loved and we ate every bit of it. All I could do was cry every time we went to pick up our box. Cry, and thank God for Mrs. Ernst. I really saw her heart—she exemplified the love and passion she has for her students with every box of groceries she served.”



3,808+
BOXES OF FOOD DISTRIBUTED
4,498
LOAVES OF BREAD
18,000
APPLES & ORANGES
18,806
CARTONS OF ORGANIC MILK
1,134
FAMILIES SERVED
1,000+
VOLUNTEER HOURS
54
HOME DELIVERIES

Dear DECA Community

You know I love our schools—our kids, families, faculty, staff, and administrators—but it is with great enthusiasm that I turn the leadership of DECA over to Dave Taylor, DECA's new Superintendent and CEO.

Dave is the real deal—ethical, smart, tough, fair, committed, respected. He simply rolls up his sleeves and digs in to get the job done. He has already demonstrated skillful leadership during unprecedented tough times. He delights in the successes of our students and faculty. I have no doubt that with Dave's leadership and the support of our administrators, DECA will continue to innovate and stand apart from our peers.

I cannot capture the many epiphanies and moments of sheer exhilaration I have experienced during the past sixteen years. I have been humbled by what I didn't know more times than I can count. DECA students filled my soul and it has been my privilege to partner with them to create a different type of school district. Parents have taken me under their wings and teachers have shared their genius. There are so many "DECA moments" that will always fill my heart.

Over the years, parents and students have repeatedly said, "DECA gives me hope." When I started college fifty (yes, fifty) years ago, I was able to enroll in an "innovative program" for people who wanted to be teachers in the city. The program was created as a result of MLK's assassination, summer riots, and a call for a fairer America. Like many young people, we thought we would change things. There was almost no limit to our enthusiasm and naiveté.

I have observed the events of these past few months with a deep sense that we not only fell short, but hardly made a dent in racist practices, policies, and attitudes. As a white student, school was a place of affirmation for me. My teachers were intentional about fostering my empowerment. My teachers expected a lot and assumed that, with support, I could achieve. That is what I want for all DECA students. When our students become stellar readers and writers, they are better positioned to dismantle the corrosive effects of poverty and racism.

We live in a deeply flawed community with the indelible impact of racism. Our housing, jobs, schools, stores, and churches all reflect Dayton's history of segregation and racism. Yet, a broad spectrum of people and organizations have helped DECA in small and huge ways, literally keeping our doors open at various junctures. Dayton is rooting for DECA. I ask each one of you to see DECA as your platform for profound change.

With deep affection, thank you for being such caring supporters and empowering us to provide students with what is needed to succeed.

Judy Hennessey
Judy Hennessey, PhD



Annual Appeal Honoring Dr. Judy Hennessey

To recognize her sixteen years of dedication to DECA and the commitment to our students and families, the DECA Board of Trustees invites the community to join them in honoring retiring Superintendent Dr. Judy Hennessey through our annual appeal.

"Since she stepped foot on DECA's campus, Dr. Hennessey has been our students' greatest champion," said Tom Bettcher, DECA Board Chairman. "She believed and proved that that with access to a solid education, there are no limits to what students can achieve. Every day she came to DECA, she challenged both students and staff to be the very best versions of themselves. The result has changed countless lives. We are forever grateful for her leadership, her passion and her wisdom."

Funds raised to honor Dr. Hennessey will go towards ensuring DECA can continue to deliver educational excellence for every one of our nearly 1,300 students. Your gift will help fund the distinctive features that set DECA apart from other schools such as summer bridge, in-house ACT prep, and academic competitions.



Donations can be made at daytonearlycollege.org/support or by mailing your gift with the enclosed envelope.

Live Our Core Values

Feeling connected and finding joy during this time of isolation is difficult, but at DECA, we can do hard things. Even in a world of remote learning and social distancing, we have made it a priority to connect with our students.

We celebrated promotions in ways that tested our imaginations - transforming parking lots to graduation spaces and adding masks to our graduation attires. Our eyes became the focal point of expression, showcasing the pride, joy, and great sense of accomplishment. We congratulate all of our students, families, and staff for every effort to move forward and adapt to what has been a new experience for all.

DECA PREP and DECA Middle Summer Learning

- 31 summer books groups serving 155 students
- 116 Individual summer interventions across every grade level
- Small groups meeting 3-4 times per week throughout the summer



Recognizing the importance of reading, especially this summer, over 40 DECA Middle students worked with 15 dedicated DECA volunteers to participate in virtual summer book clubs. Students were put into groups of five and tasked with reading a quality children’s novel and meeting with their peers and leader virtually once a week for a discussion about the book. Volunteers quickly learned how to run a Google Meet, facilitating their book groups through a computer screen rather than in-person.

Our 15 community volunteers went above and beyond to make the groups engaging for our students, pouring themselves into learning technology that was new to most of them.

“I appreciated getting a first-hand sense of what it’s like for a student to do online learning,” said devoted DECA volunteer Karen Spina, who had grown accustomed to leading face-to-face book groups with DECA students. “While the switch to remote presented a learning curve, the book group became really important to me and the girls in my group. It provided a chance to connect to one another during a time that can feel so lonely, and it became so much more than just sharing about reading.”



At DECA we know that college begins with kindergarten, so even during a pandemic it was important for us to celebrate the successes of our youngest scholars for their determination and hard work throughout the 2019-2020 school year, drive-thru style! We also celebrated our 4th graders moving to Middle and our 8th graders’ promotion to DECA High.



Our DECA Middle team showed up in force and in spirit to welcome the class of 2028 to DECA Middle with a socially distanced House Reveal Extravaganza. Our rising 5th graders and new 6th, 7th, and 8th graders were able to pull through and use a confetti flick stick to find out which house they would be joining for the next four years! Just another way DECA staff help the students we serve find joy!

“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

2021 Goals

We know that how we respond in the coming days, weeks, and months will have an out-sized impact on the families we serve. At the onset of this pandemic in March we:

- Responded immediately
- Created community
- Worked tirelessly
- Filled in the gaps

As we start this year with remote learning, we continue our commitment to our families with the following goals:

- Ensure a safe school experience for students and staff
- Implement academically rigorous, culturally-relevant instruction in every classroom whether remote or face-to-face
- Engage our parents as partners

Don't Step Back, Lean In

As a result of the high COVID-19 infection rate in the city of Dayton, particularly in the neighborhoods where our students reside, we made the hard decision this summer to begin the 2020-21 school year remotely, with DECA teachers delivering virtual instruction exclusively. With this change, we realized early on that this is not a year to step back or 'take a loss', hoping to make up ground next year (or whenever we get to return); this is an opportunity to commit, lean in, and do what's right for our kids; an opportunity to use distance as a means of growing closer with our students, their families, our community.



"I feel like this pandemic was a 'wake-up' call. I've found solace in knowing DECA is EXACTLY where I want to be!"

—Ayana Burke, PREP Fourth Grade Teacher

DECA

The DECA Difference.

This school year we've worked to develop systems to help students receive quality, rigorous instruction remotely; we've built a framework to create and maintain relationships with families; we've invested in technology so that teachers have the tools they need to provide meaningful virtual instruction; we've been intentional about promoting staff community, even at a distance.

More specifically, we have:

- Held Virtual Teacher Expos where teachers were trained on various technology
- Developed a personalized approach to our remote instruction; teachers and advisors across the district met with every student to do a virtual home visit
- Invested in technology—everything from chromebooks and hotspots for students to various apps and video production equipment like webcams and ring lights so teachers can provide synchronous and asynchronous virtual lessons with high production quality
- Offered individualized training for parents and caregivers so they understand the technology their children are utilizing

We are committed to ensuring students receive a rigorous, college preparatory education whether in school or remote. We simply don't have time to step back. With our communities' support, we will continue to lean in for our students and their families.



Build a Sustainable Financial Model

Even during these extraordinary times, DECA has remained steadfast in its commitment to conservative financial management. While COVID-19 caused major disruptions in every industry, it created opportunities for one-time funding that DECA aggressively pursued.

DECA received federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds to keep our existing employees through the end of the 2019-2020 school year. This was critical as we pivoted to an entirely remote learning school during the last quarter of that school year. DECA also stands to receive a portion of the Federal CARES funding. While those funds are restricted to pay for student support services, it will provide a much needed source of revenue.

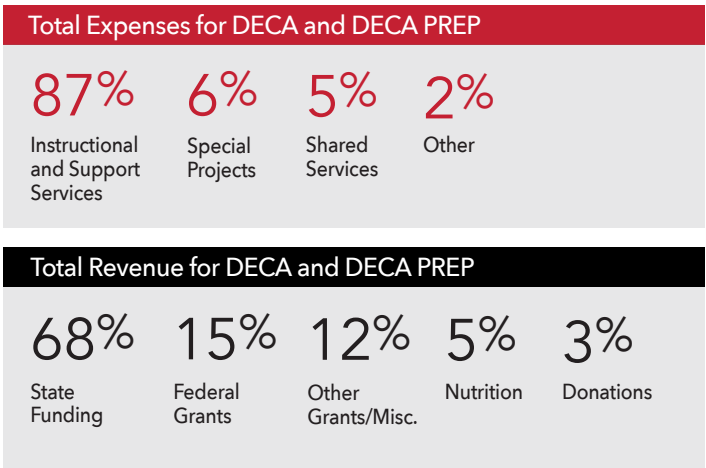
Despite the influx of new, one-time sources of revenue, **DECA also lost over \$100,000 in state funding during the month of June 2020 alone.** State funding for the 2020-2021 school year is still uncertain, but if the same level of cuts we experienced in June is annualized, then DECA will experience a 13% (\$1.3M) reduction in state funding next year. To address this potential loss of recurring revenue, DECA made the difficult decision to reduce staff.

The 2020-2021 school year brings additional financial strains to provide the necessary resources for both teachers and students to deliver and engage in high quality remote learning; we are committed to doing it well, and that requires additional resources.

DECA is committed to allocating its money where it's needed the most: in the classroom and with student support systems. DECA's finance committee, which consists of some of Dayton's best business minds, remains active in support of our long-range financial plans to keep DECA stable today and well into the future. Through the ongoing support of our generous donors, DECA has a solid financial foundation even when the state is cutting funding and pandemic-related expenses are increasing.

Steven Hinshaw, Ph.D., Chief Financial Officer & Chief Operating Officer

Operating Funds	FY 2019	FY 2020
Beginning Balance	\$2,157,000	\$2,611,000
Recurring Revenue	Consolidated \$11,967,000	Consolidated \$12,014,000
Expenditures	\$11,923,000	\$12,315,000
Balance	\$46,000	(\$301,000)
Non-Recurring Revenue	Consolidated \$1,745,000	Consolidated \$8,819,000
Expenditures	\$1,337	\$5,204,000
Balance	\$408,000	\$3,615,000
Ending Balance	\$2,611,000	\$5,925,000



* The state funding cuts for FY20 reduced recurring revenue during the fourth quarter. Non-recurring revenue includes the construction project at DECA High and one-time CARES monies, which are expected to be spent in FY21.

DECA High Renovation Update

Consistent with our conservative financial management and strong desire to not incur debt, we are pausing the renovation project at DECA High at the end of the summer 2020. The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission (OFCC) notified us in early March that the round three charter school construction grant had been canceled. This was a major setback as we were in position to double our local contributions through this grant. The good news: when we finished Phase 3 this summer, we will have **renovated 16 classrooms, created 3 gateways rooms, 2 student tutoring rooms, 2 large extended learning areas, 3 offices, and greatly improved school security.**

Thank you to our dedicated donors who saw the need and benefit of investing in DECA facilities.





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Dayton, OH 45469

The DECA Difference.

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