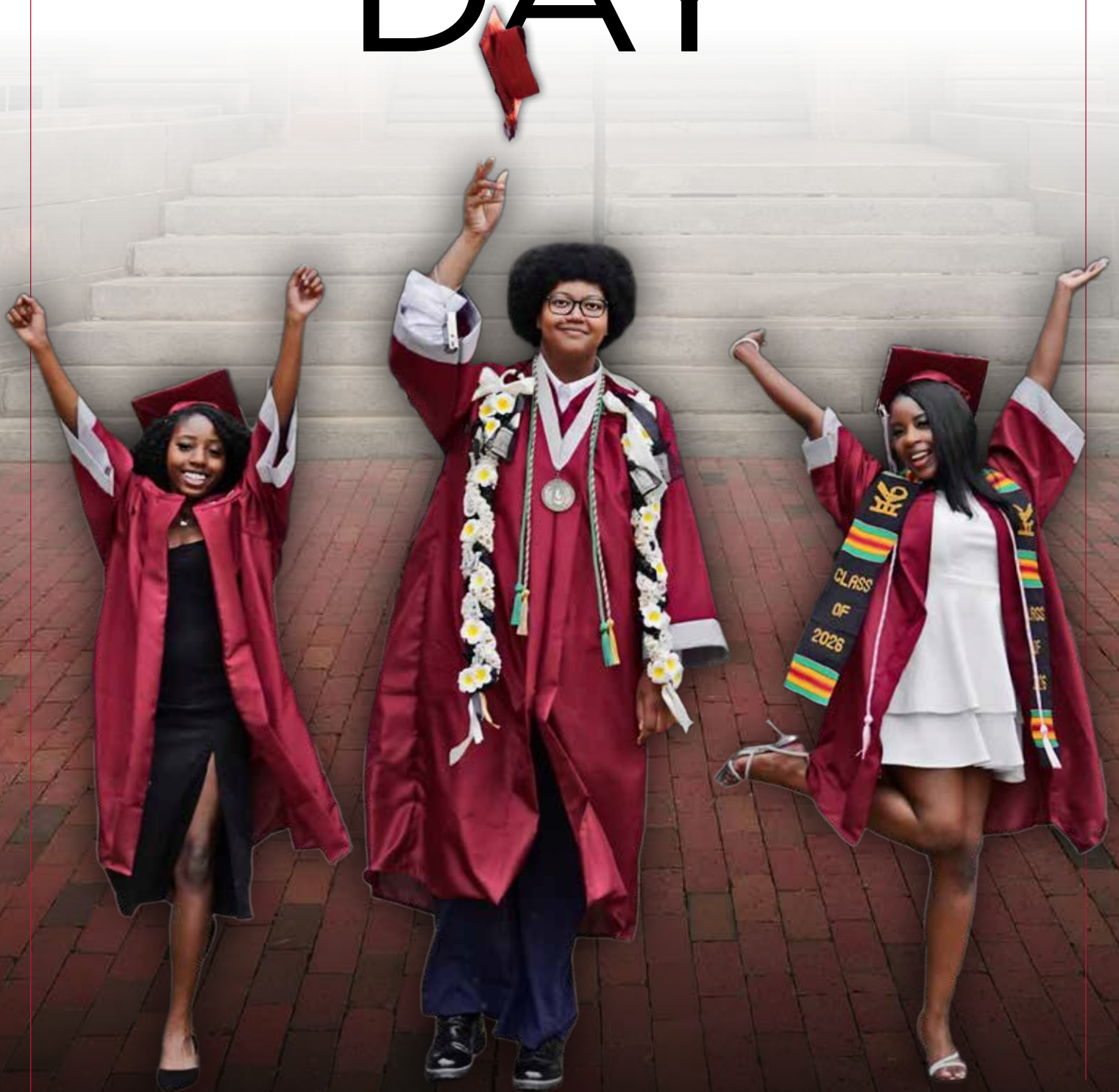


every **kid** every DAY





• every kid every day •



• mission statement •

We prepare college graduates
today to become the leaders of our
community tomorrow.

Every Kid. Every DAY.



"Our impact doesn't end at graduation. Even as national college enrollment trends continue to shift, DECA graduates are enrolling in college, persisting through challenges, and earning degrees at rates that continue to demonstrate what's possible when students are surrounded by a community that believes in them."

*—Dave Taylor,
DECA Superintendent*

At DECA, we make a promise to every student who walks through our doors: we will challenge them, believe in them, and do everything we can to help them build a future filled with opportunity. We believe education has the power to change the trajectory of a life.

This year, that promise was reflected in a simple but meaningful idea: Every Kid. Every Day.

Those four words remind us that extraordinary outcomes are built through ordinary moments. A teacher who arrives each morning prepared to meet the unique needs of every learner. A staff member who takes time to build trust with a student who needs encouragement. A principal who creates a culture where every child is known, challenged, and supported. The daily choices we make, often unseen, are what shape lifelong success.

As you read this report, you'll see evidence of those choices.

The 2025-2026 school year brought improved student outcomes, stronger attendance, and continued progress in creating learning environments where students can thrive. You'll read about innovative opportunities that expanded learning beyond the classroom—from after school STEM at Middle to the continuation of JROTC at the high school. You will also see one of the most exciting milestones this year: the launch of DECA Bulls Athletics. Beginning with boys' basketball in the winter and boys' and girls' track and field in the spring, our students proudly competed under the DECA name for the first time.

Perhaps what encourages me most is that our year reflects the commitment of our people. Across the network, we've seen strong staff engagement, remarkable stability, and a shared belief that every child deserves our very best, every single day.

This year also positioned us well for the future. As we strengthened leadership, refined our systems, and deepened our focus on instructional excellence, we built the foundation for DECA's next chapter. We are prepared to expand our impact while remaining firmly grounded in the mission that has guided us for more than 20 years.

None of this happens alone.

It happens because of dedicated educators, committed families, generous supporters, faithful partners, and a community that continues to believe in our students and in the future of Dayton.

Thank you for being part of that work.

As you turn these pages, I hope you'll see more than accomplishments. I hope you'll see the thousands of intentional moments that happen every day across our schools; moments that, together, change lives.

Because when we put every kid first, every day, the possibilities are extraordinary.

With gratitude,

David Taylor,
DECA Superintendent

A New Tradition Begins



For 23 years, DECA students built community through academics, leadership, and service. This year, we added a new chapter to our story: athletics.

The 2025-2026 school year marked the inaugural season of DECA High sports, giving scholars new opportunities to compete, grow, and represent their school with pride. From the excitement of boys' basketball to the determination displayed on the track, our student-athletes helped create an energy that could be felt throughout the entire campus.

More than wins and scores, athletics brought students together, strengthened school spirit, and gave scholars another

avenue to build confidence, discipline, and teamwork.

Our DECA Bulls rose to the occasion, laying the foundation for a program that will continue to grow for years to come. What began as a long-awaited first season has already become a source of pride for our school community, and we are just getting started.



A Legacy of Creating Leaders

For nearly two decades at DECA, and more than four decades as an educator and JROTC instructor, Major O'dell Graves has dedicated his life to developing leaders.

While he teaches military science, those who know him understand that his mission has never been recruiting students into the military. His mission is helping young people discover their potential. Every student who expresses interest is welcomed, challenged, and supported as they grow into leaders both inside and outside the classroom.

His impact reaches far beyond DECA High. Former cadets from decades ago still seek him out to share stories of how he changed the course of their lives. Whether they graduated last year or fifty years ago, the message is remarkably consistent: Major Graves believed in them when they needed it most.

Even while navigating cancer treatments this year, Major continued showing up for students leading by example with the same resilience, humility, and commitment he has modeled throughout his career.

When asked why Major Graves deserves recognition, Katy Jo Bull, DECA High principal, answered simply: "He's a gift. Every day with him is a gift."

For generations of students, educators, and families, his legacy is not measured in years of service. It is measured in lives changed. As he steps into retirement we salute him in all he has given Dayton with his service.



"This organization is giving educational opportunities to students who deserve the opportunity for a great life here in the United States."

-Dave Gasper, long time DECA Supporter

Building Family Away from Home



The strongest learning happens when students know they belong and that's why at DECA, every teacher is also an advisor. That means relationships are not an extra program, they are part of every school day.

In elementary school, that may mean a teacher celebrating a new sibling or comforting a child through loss. In middle school, it looks like honest conversations about the world and how students are feeling. At the high school level, advisory becomes a place of guidance, emotional support, accountability, and belonging.



For DECA High Language Arts teacher Mrs. Jamie Bentley, advisory is family. A mother of five, she extends that same care to her mentees, inviting them to her home during school breaks, organizing group outings, and even delivering Easter baskets so every student knows they matter.

Her message is simple but powerful: You are not alone here.

That sense of belonging changes students' lives. It builds confidence, resilience, and the kind of community where scholars can thrive both in school and beyond.

Connecting through Mentoring



DECA supporter Suzi Mikutis redefined what it means to be a mentor when she began meeting with three close friends and classmates during their junior year. Through encouragement, shared meals, shopping trips, celebrations, and countless conversations, Suzi became a steady presence in their lives, someone who showed up, listened, and believed in them.

As the young women graduated and began their college journeys, Suzi's commitment did not end. She continues to stay connected, celebrating milestones and offering support along the way. At the same time, she has opened her heart to a new group of DECA girls, beginning the journey all over again.

The faces may change, but the impact remains the same: one caring adult who shows up consistently can change the trajectory of a student's life.



Our Community Connections

Community partnerships are essential to DECA's mission of preparing every student for success in college, career, and life. Through the generosity, expertise, and engagement of local businesses and organizations, our students gain opportunities that extend far beyond the classroom and help prepare them for college and beyond. This support is vital for the success of our mission.

During the 2025–26 school year, DECA welcomed several new community partners committed to investing in our students. Henny Penny, UBS, and Glasshouse Realty each hosted DECA High students for first-time job-shadowing experiences, providing valuable exposure to a variety of careers and professional workplaces. These experiences helped students explore future possibilities while building confidence and real-world connections.

Among our newest partners, The Helix Innovation Center by Copeland, made an especially meaningful impact. The partnership began with a simulated job-shadowing experience for DECA teachers, then expanded to career exploration opportunities for DECA High students. In addition, Copeland made a transformational \$50,000 gift to equip every DECA Middle classroom with interactive smart display boards, completing a multi-year initiative to bring this technology to every classroom. The Helix team later visited DECA Middle to see the technology in action and witness the difference their investment is making for students and teachers.

We are grateful to all of our community partners for investing in DECA students. Their support demonstrates that when schools and businesses work together, students gain the experiences, resources, and relationships they need to thrive in college and in life.

"Kids will rise to and exceed whatever expectation we set for them. They can truly do amazing things if we provide them the space to do so."

—Ms. Christine Thobe, DECA High Teacher



DECA Alumni Spotlight

"I truly believe that my education has placed me in rooms and positions that I am not deserving of. Coming from a single-parent home to being the first in my family with a college degree to now being a principal... my education has leveled the playing field!"

*- Cierra Shoecraft,
DECA Assistant Principal and
DECA Class of '08*



D'Nylah Beaty, '20

D'Nylah Beaty's DECA experience helped shape not only her career, it shaped her perspective. Today, D'Nylah is a Process Engineer at Walmart after earning degrees in Biological Engineering and Management from Ohio University.

One of the most important lessons came through a relationship with Mrs. Danya Berry, who taught D'Nylah to see people, not just problems. That lesson continues to influence both professional and personal success.

"DECA believed in me by encouraging me to explore opportunities that helped me discover my path. DECA taught me to focus on people, not problems. Today's DECA scholars should be intentional about the people they surround themselves with because those relationships help shape who they become."



Shantya Goddard, '15

When Shantya Goddard looks back on DECA, she remembers the teachers who saw potential in her and encouraged her to dream bigger. That support helped shape a path that led to a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, a law degree from the University of Cincinnati, and a career as a domestic relations attorney.

The belief that education and opportunity can change lives continues to guide Shantya's work today. The relationships built at DECA taught her to stay motivated, manage challenges, and pursue goals with confidence.

"DECA believed in me by supporting me and exposing me to opportunities that shaped the direction of my future. DECA taught me time management, self-motivation, and drive. Today's DECA scholars should take full advantage of every opportunity and invest in the relationships around them."



James Cook, '18

For James Cook, the greatest gift DECA provided was a community that continues to open doors long after graduation. Today, James serves as a Field Operations Consultant for McDonald's Corporation, partnering with owners/operators across Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky to strengthen restaurant operations and performance while pursuing an MBA, which he proudly secured in the spring of 2026.

The relationships built at DECA remain at the heart of James's journey. Teachers, mentors, and classmates became lifelong connections that continue to provide encouragement, guidance, and friendship more than a decade later.

"DECA believed in me by putting me in spaces I never would have experienced without its guidance. DECA taught me to believe in myself through every twist and turn. Today's DECA scholars should know that as long as you believe in your dream, there will always be a path to achieve it."

Where Are They Now?

Nastacia Moore, '07
University of Dayton Alumna

Where is she now?
Senior Consultant working for a national firm to disrupt inequitable practices experienced by BIPOC in social, health, and housing industries, and serves on the Dayton board for Homeful.

Margaret Idiake, '09
University of Dayton Alumna

Where is she now?
Wife and mother of three living in Chicago, IL, and owner of Allengreen School Transportation.

Alex Fletcher, '13
University of Toledo Alumnus

Where is he now?
Army Veteran, member of Iota Phi Theta Fraternity, Inc., and working for the Dayton Municipal Court.

David Jacobus, '15
Wright State Alumnus

Where is he now?
Member of the National Society of Leadership and Success, and currently a distribution specialist at Solvita.



Nastacia Moore



Margaret Idiake



Alex Fletcher



David Jacobus

Making High Marks

“DECA was so much more than writing papers, preparing presentations, competing, or creating opportunities for my future career. DECA taught me to step outside of my comfort zone, challenge myself, take risks, and never be afraid to go after the dreams I have for myself.”

—Kayrisha Taylor, DECA Class of '13



DECA High

The highest overall Value-Added performance among all Ohio charter schools.

DECA PREP + Middle

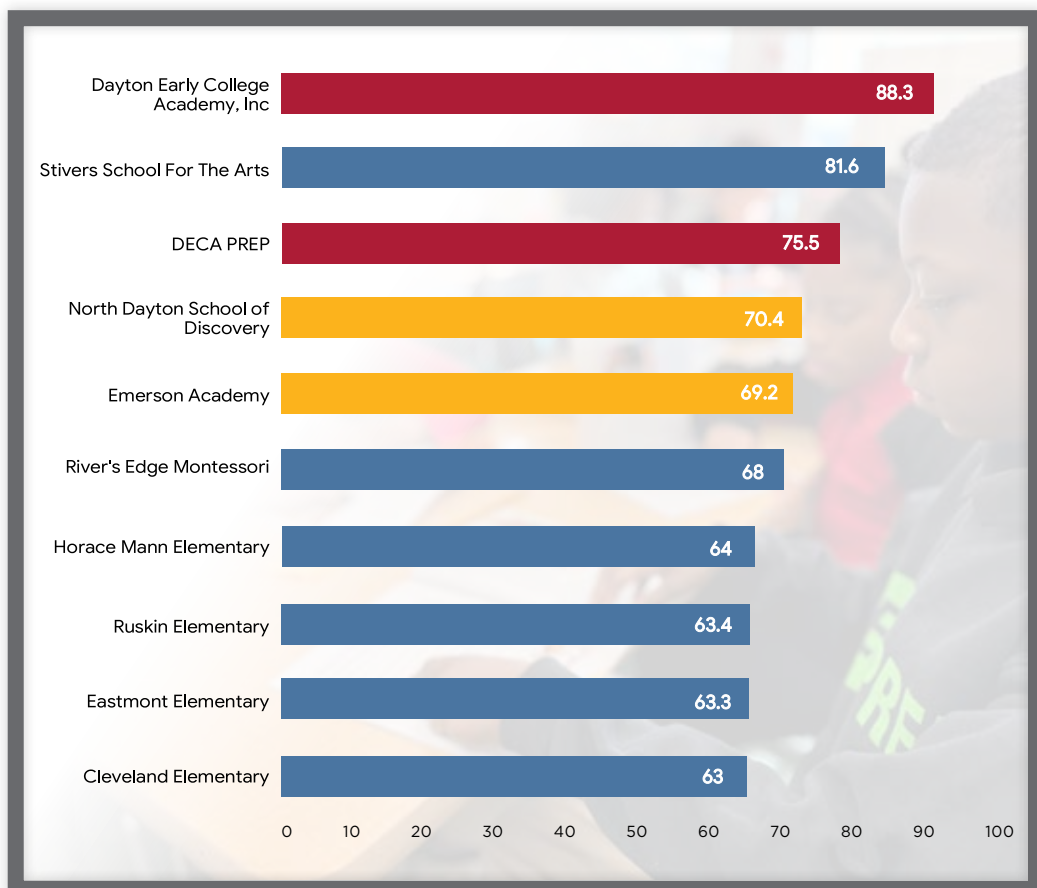
Dayton’s highest-performing K–8 school again.

DECA PREP Early Literacy

An all-time high of 3 stars. ★★ ★

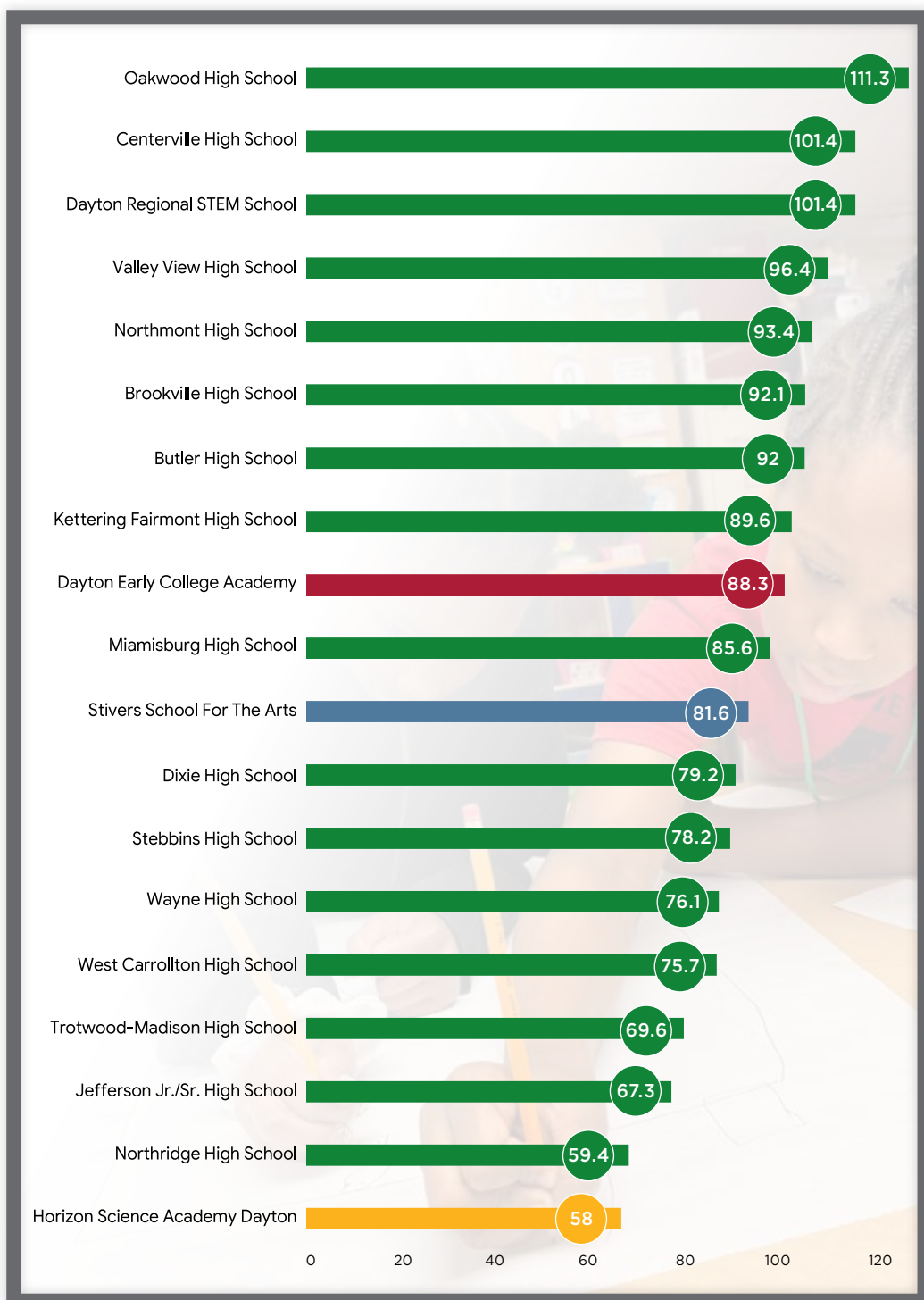
2025-2026 Ohio State Test Results

Academic Performance in Dayton ■ DECA ■ Dayton Public Schools ■ Other Charter Schools



Montgomery County High School Performance

■ DECA ■ Suburban Schools ■ Dayton Public Schools ■ Other Charter Schools



“DECA has made me a stronger educator by challenging me to grow, reflect, and adapt. It has reminded me that my greatest impact comes not just from teaching content, but from building relationships that help students believe in themselves.”

*—Ms. Katie Christesen,
DECA Middle Teacher*

Investing Where It Matters Most

*"Every financial decision
at DECA begins in
the same place: with
our students."*

—Steve Hinshaw, DECA CFO



Every Kid. Every Day. reflects how we think about our resources, our responsibilities, and the choices we make to ensure students have what they need to learn, grow, and succeed. Sound financial management allows us to invest in today's students while building the stability necessary to serve generations of DECA students to come.

Resources

DECA remains committed to directing its resources where they have the greatest impact: the classroom and the systems that support our students. In 2025-2026, 89 cents of every dollar spent supported instruction and student support. These resources provide the teachers, curriculum, academic supports, student and family services, and day-to-day experiences that make learning possible.

Maintaining competitive compensation for our teachers remains a priority. Attracting and retaining outstanding educators is one of our most important strategies for improving student achievement. We also continue to invest in high-quality curriculum and instructional leadership to give our teachers the resources they need to help students meet rigorous expectations.

Unlike the vast majority of charter schools in Ohio, DECA continues to provide transportation for DECA PREP and DECA Middle students ensuring we keep chronic absenteeism numbers significantly below the state average.

Revenue

State funding remains DECA's largest source of operating revenue, representing 84% of non-capital revenue. Federal grants (including student nutrition) account for 11%, and donations account for 5%.

Donations continue to play an important role in funding DECA students. Our supporters' generosity allows us to invest in teachers, facilities, and student experiences that strengthen our schools and expand what is possible beyond what public funding alone can provide.

Stewardship

Investing deeply in students requires both resources and responsibility. DECA manages its financial decisions through a financial planning model that considers changes in student enrollment, state funding, federal funding, staffing, and long-term needs. Our long-standing finance committee remains actively involved in our financial planning, helping ensure DECA remains stable today and well into the future.

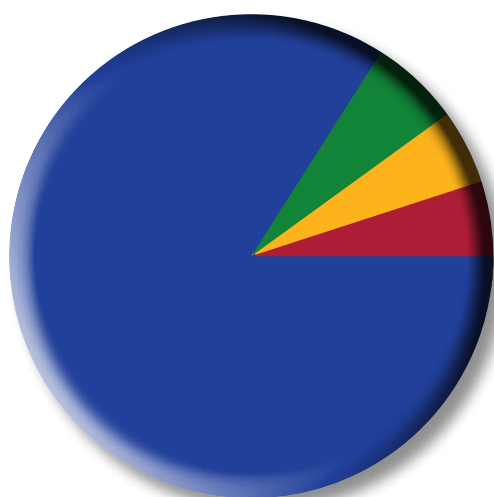
That careful stewardship keeps administrative costs low and directs the overwhelming majority of our resources to instruction and student support. It also gives DECA the flexibility to respond when circumstances change without losing sight of our long-term financial sustainability.

More than Numbers

Ultimately, our financial results tell only part of the story. Behind every dollar is a teacher helping a student master a difficult concept. A meal that helps a child begin the day ready to learn. A family receiving support. A classroom equipped with the right resources. A safe and welcoming school where students know they belong.

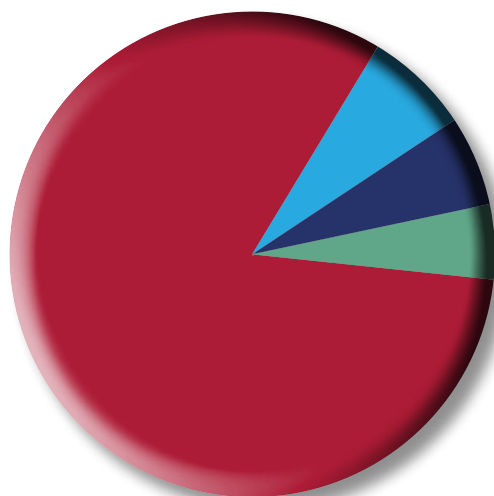
Those returns matter most. Our responsibility is to use every resource entrusted to DECA wisely and intentionally, creating as many opportunities as possible for our students. Because every investment has a purpose.

Revenue Summary



- State Funding
- Federal Grants
- Federal Student Nutrition
- Donations

Expense Summary



- Instruction and Student Support
- Shared Services
- Student Transportation
- Student Nutrition



“One thing I’ve learned at DECA, it’s that education changes lives. My teachers changed mine. And now, I want to spend my life doing the same for others.”

—Charles Ware, DECA Class of ‘26

Joy at the Center

Joy has a way of bringing people together, and this year our Thrive Therapist, Ms. Taylor Ellington, and our Reserve Teacher, Mr. Javier Sowell (Mr. J.), found a creative way to do just that.

Ms. Ellington and Mr. J. launched the school's first-ever DECA Shoe Design Contest. During advisory, students were invited to create DECA-inspired shoe designs that celebrated their creativity and school spirit.

What students may not have realized was that the project was powered entirely by two adults who believed in them. Mr. J. and Ms. Ellington purchased the art supplies and shoes with their own money, then spent hours hand painting the students' winning designs to bring their ideas to life.



The result was a joyful experience that encouraged creativity, celebrated student voices, and strengthened the sense of belonging that makes DECA special.

Sometimes the biggest impact comes from small acts of care. For Mr. J. and Ms. Ellington, a pair of shoes became a way to show students that their ideas matter and that the adults around them are willing to go the extra mile to help them shine.



"DECA taught me that I don't have to follow the crowd to be successful. I can go against the grain, take up space, build relationships, and figure things out along the way. And sometimes, being one of the few in the room isn't a reason to shrink—it's your opportunity to shine."

—Brittany Jones, DECA Class of '12



Joy Plus Trust

At DECA PREP, making good choices became something worth celebrating. Through the Circle of Trust, students who consistently demonstrated kindness, respect, and positive behavior, from the classroom to the school bus, earned special recognition and privileges.

Members proudly wore a Circle of Trust lanyard, enjoyed a special lunch table, and received seats of honor at biweekly Harambee meetings.

By celebrating students for doing what's right, the Circle of Trust created more than an incentive; it built a culture where positive choices led to pride, belonging, and joy.



Experiential Joy

Finding joy sometimes looks like a field trip to Washington, D.C. with your whole 8th-grade class, competing with your advisory in an entire-school competition, dressing up across the school for holiday fun with your teachers, or taking a once-in-a-lifetime trip with your superintendent.

Every year, thanks to McGohan Brabender, Superintendent Dave Taylor takes two high-achieving upperclassmen to Washington, D.C. for the annual Dayton Fly-In. This past year, junior Eric Wiggins and senior Leric Copeland accompanied Dave and represented DECA while connecting with leaders across our region.

Joy is intentionally developed long before the students get to savor its rewards at DECA.



Beyond the Classroom

“DECA introduced me to the ability to think outside of my everyday surroundings. It takes tenacity, fortitude, and hard work to graduate from DECA. I believe that having to go above and beyond what is expected of high schoolers at DECA is what sets you up to be ahead of the pack later in life.”

*—Omari Gaskins Jr.
DECA Class of '17*



Preparing students for the future means helping them see what is possible. Thanks to longtime DECA supporter Dave Gasper and Beth Flach, Director of Athletic Academic Support at the University of Dayton, 25 DECA High scholars stepped inside the University of Dayton’s athletic department for a unique job-shadowing experience that opened their eyes to the many career paths available in the world of sports.

Throughout the day, students met with professionals in marketing, operations, sports medicine, strength and conditioning, broadcasting, coaching, and athletic administration. They learned that successful sports organizations rely on talented people in a wide variety of roles many of which students had never considered before.

But the lessons extended far beyond career exploration. University of Dayton leaders shared a powerful message: pursue your passions, focus on becoming the person you want to be, and let purpose guide your future.

DECA Assistant Principal Kellee Callahan reflected on the experience, saying, “All of the speakers had a clear and consistent message encouraging the kids to focus on their passions and what they love rather than chasing money. They encouraged them to focus on who they want to be rather than what they want to be.”

Experiences like these help our scholars connect classroom learning to real-world opportunities, and envision themselves succeeding.





PNC Foundation Supports Teachers

The PNC Foundation made a significant investment in DECA's teachers and students during the 2025-26 school year through a \$10,000 grant, empowering educators to apply for mini grants to bring innovative ideas to life. Through the PNC Mini-Grant program, teachers were invited to propose projects and experiences that would enhance learning opportunities for students beyond what traditional classroom resources could provide.

Throughout the school year, seven mini-grants were awarded to teachers across all grade levels and campuses, supporting a wide range of creative and impactful initiatives. As a result, DECA students engaged in hands-on STEM learning experiences, participated in cross-curricular projects, traveled beyond the classroom for educational opportunities and national competitions, explored outdoor art experiences, and benefited from programs designed to support their social and emotional well-being.

The PNC Mini-Grant program challenged teachers to dream big and think creatively about enriching student learning. Thanks to the generosity of the PNC Foundation, those ideas became reality, creating memorable experiences that inspired curiosity, fostered growth, and helped prepare DECA scholars for future success.

DECA is grateful to the PNC Foundation for investing in both our educators and our students.



Scan here if
you would like
to invest in
DECA's Mission.

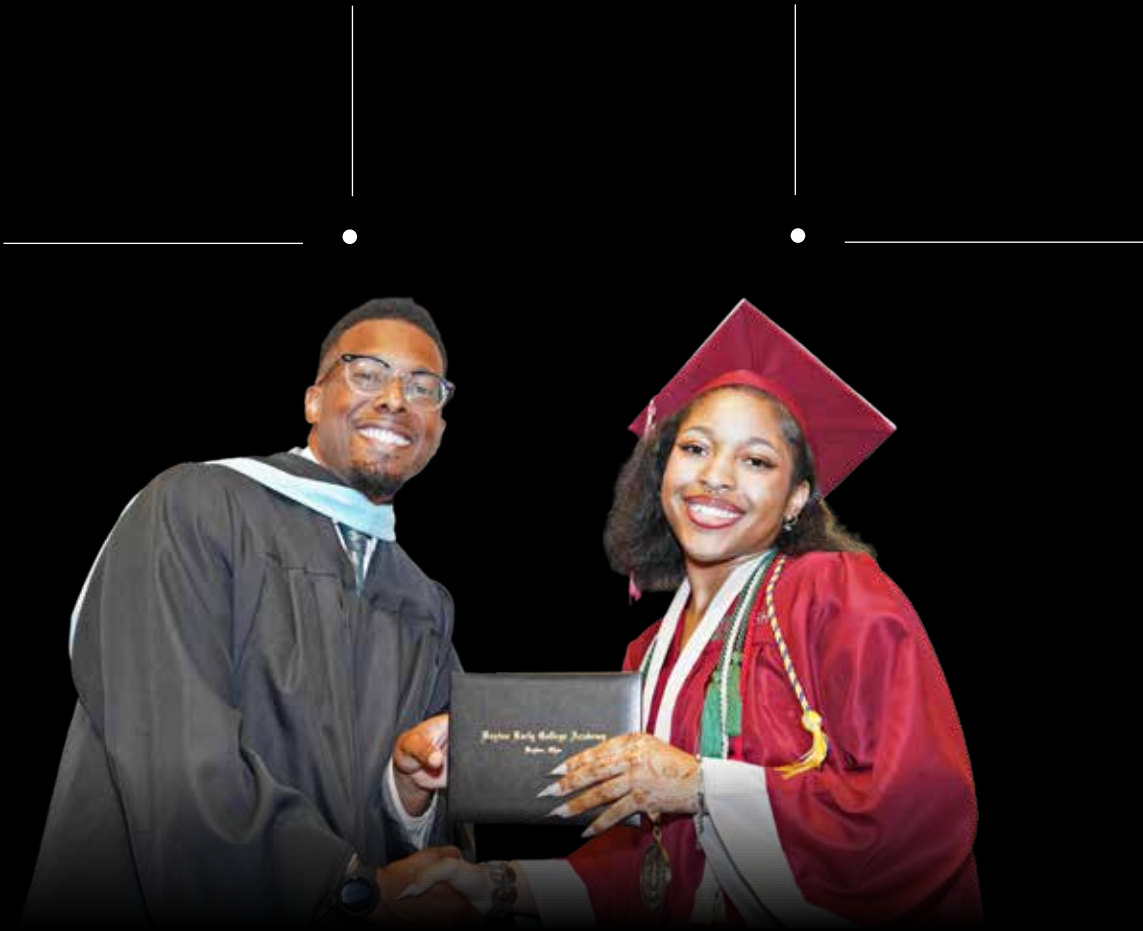




“DECA inspires me and my classmates to be the best we can be, to build strong character, and to follow our own paths.”

*—Brantley Gay, DECA PREP
4th Grade Student*





“The promise of an equitable education is a cornerstone of our vision for a healthy, thriving society. As we look into the future we are hopeful, not because our work is easy, but because our work is important, and because our students and families depend on us.”

—Dave Taylor, Superintendent

	DECA - Rating	DECA - Calc/Notes	DECA PREP- Rating	DECA PREP - Calc/Notes
Primary Academic Indicators				
Performance Index (PI)	Meets	3 Stars	Does Not Meet	2 Stars
Value Added (VA)	Exceeds	5 Stars	Does Not Meet	3 Stars
Gap Closing	Exceeds	5 Stars	Exceeds	5 Stars
Prepared for Success	Exceeds	4 Stars		
Graduation Rate (4 years)	Meets	93.00%		
Improving At-Risk K-3 Readers			Does Not Meet	61.70%
Performance v. Local Market (PI)	Exceeds	Top 20	Exceeds	Top 20
Performance v. Local Market (VA)	Exceeds	Top 20	Does Not Meet	Top 50
Performance v. Statewide Charters (PI)	Exceeds	Top 20	Meets	Top 30
Performance v. Statewide Charters (VA)	Exceeds	Top 20	Does Not Meet	Top 50
Financial Measures of Success (Current Year)				
Ratio of Assets to Liabilities	Exceeds	10.1 ratio	Exceeds	12.8
Days Cash	Exceeds	321 days	Exceeds	134 days
Current year enrollment variance	Exceeds	95.80%	Exceeds	99.30%
Financial Measures of Success (Prior Years)				
Multi-year Ration of Assets to Liabilities	Exceeds	4.92 and 23.5 in the 2 most recent years	Exceeds	3.36 and 3.95 in the 2 most recent years
Cash Flow	Meets	CF positive in FY 2024, but negative in FY 2025	Meets	CF positive in FY 2024, but negative in FY 2025
Operations/Governance Primary Indicators				
Records Compliance	Exceeds the standard	95% or higher (actual 99% complete 95% on time)	Exceeds the standard	95% or higher (actual 99% complete 94% on time)
Special Education Performance Determination (most recent annual)	Exceeds the standard	4.00	Exceeds the standard	4.00



DAYTON EARLY COLLEGE ACADEMY
300 College Park
Fitz Hall, Third Floor
Dayton, OH 45469-2930

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mike McQuiston, Chairman
Michael Carter, Vice Chairman

Thomas Bettcher
Judy Hennessey
Christopher M. James
Kassandra Maxwell
Alonzo Patterson III
Jacqueline Phillips
Ed Purvis
Vincent Russo
Kevin Scroggins
Carleen Suttman
Vanessa Ward
Matthew O. Diggs, *Trustee Emeritus*

