



Best Practices | So...what can I do to get the most out of my chapter visit? What do middle schoolers want from us anyways? Here are some of the best practices for conducting middle school outreach visits.

Preparation

Be sure to research the middle schools you will be visiting. This means understand their demographics, student interests, and programs they offer. This information will help you tailor your outreach efforts to their specific needs and interests. Additionally, be sure you are informed about DECA, Washington DECA, and the way DECA operates at your own school. It is a good idea to create a one-pager, website, or some similar tool that students can easily access to understand your DECA program.

Plan your visit in advance! This includes creating your materials beforehand, knowing what you will say to the students to catch their attention, and crafting engaging activities that will keep them interested and encourage them to join. Furthermore, consider working with DECA alumni or local industry professionals to add value to your outreach efforts.

Engagement

Remember when you were in middle school? How long was your attention span? Would you really listen to an hour-long presentation about a business and marketing organization? The most important thing to keep in mind when conducting middle school outreach especially is to keep your points concise, brief, and entertaining. Consider planning interactive activities (**seriously**, interactive), such as role-playing exercises or case studies to keep students engaged and demonstrate live, the value of DECA. Incorporate your own personal stories into your presentation, showcasing the impact DECA has on student lives. DEFINITELY incorporate a Question/Answer session. This allows students to gain more insight into your program and their own interests. Be prepared to answer questions about DECA, their careers, and the future! And don't forget! Your audience is a lower grade than high schoolers, so you should talk to your Advisor about how to best keep this grade level engaged.

Promotion

Outreach is all about selling ourselves as a brand and an opportunity. Bring promotional materials, such as flyers or posters, to help students understand the benefits, offerings, and value of DECA. Many promotional materials can be found on our website or by reaching out to a State Officer – see Page 6 of this toolkit for more information. Be sure to communicate thoroughly and directly to the target school before your visit – this will help improve attendance. Of course, use your chapter's social media platforms, such as Instagram or Twitter, to promote your visit and advertise DECA.

Follow-Up

Make sure to collect contact information from students (IF permitted), such as email addresses/phone numbers, to follow up with them after the visit. Your follow up can be sent as an email thanking students for

their time, and reiterating the benefits and opportunities your school's DECA program offers. Invite students to attend DECA events, such as chapter meetings, community service or more! **Please ask your advisor to obtain approval before inviting students to activities.**

With these best practices in mind, you will be able to make a lasting impression on the academic and career goals of these potential DECA members!

Talking Points | That's all great, but what do I even talk about when I get there? I mean, they are like four years younger than us! Don't worry, just read ahead for some of our talking points for outreach events.

Introduction to DECA

What is DECA? Explain the purpose and mission of DECA to the students and highlight our organization's role of preparing students for careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management. Then, discuss the benefits of DECA membership, and how even if they aren't interested in the four industries above, DECA can and STILL is for them!

Benefits of joining DECA (which you can cover in your presentation or through activities)

- ◆ Leadership Development
- ◆ Networking (and career) Opportunities
- ◆ Scholarships
- ◆ Awards
- ◆ Business Knowledge (Competition)

Leadership Development

DECA is a co-curricular organization; we strive to be fully integrated with classroom activities. Emphasize this repeatedly in your outreach because it is one of our guiding principles. Explain how DECA helps students develop skills in **leadership, problem-solving, and communication** through the classroom and how these skills are applied through extracurricular practice.

Demonstrate through your own personal involvement how DECA helps students grow as individuals, providing opportunities for leadership roles, community service, and competitive edge. It's a great idea to have Chapter Officers lead these outreach events, as well as showcase some of the projects that have won and awards from your chapter. Bringing in past display boards, written events, or tangibles from marketing classroom activities is a great way to promote DECA in action.

Career Opportunities

Discuss the various career paths that are available to students through DECA. This would be a great time to introduce DECA alumni from your chapter, or local industry professionals who found success or

inspiration to DECA. Young and impressionable students love to meet people who are idols to them, and professionals love to be reminded of when they were young and aspirational. Take advantage of this to form connections between professionals and young students; **they will remember this for a lifetime.**

Be sure to also highlight the relationship DECA has with its industry partners. Discuss how these partnerships provide opportunities for students to connect with potential employers or internships. Connect this to how DECA provides students with real-world experience, including hands-on learning opportunities and practical applications of classroom learning.

Competition and Chapter Involvement

One of the most important facets of DECA is competition! Familiarize yourselves with the competitive events section of DECA on their website and explain it in depth. Have fliers, brochures, and other materials for students to refer to, and answer questions as they come up.

Be sure to cover:

- ◆ Career Clusters
- ◆ Event Formats
- ◆ Career Development Conferences
- ◆ Supplementary Conferences
- ◆ Any other relevant information

Now it's time to showcase your unique chapter! Tell middle schoolers about the activities and events your Chapter holds, including meetings, mock competitions, workshops, community service, and more! Show how students are actively involved and cared for, and how DECA **fosters a community of learning and growth.** By using these talking points, you will be able to effectively communicate the value of DECA to middle schoolers and inspire them to become involved in the organization.

Scholarships

Each year, Washington DECA awards over \$70,000 in scholarships to our student members. This is in addition to the quarter-million in scholarships available through international DECA. Additionally, our organization is in the process of creating scholarships for post-graduation students. Washington DECA identifies that cost should not be a factor in a student's ability to participate in our programs, and therefore provides conference registration scholarships and chapter travel scholarships.

Remember, your goal is to help students understand how DECA can impact their future!

Outreach Materials | Here, we have linked materials you might find helpful in conducting these middle school visits. Feel free to reach out if you have questions about the materials or want to access more resources! We are here to support your endeavors.

Career Cluster Poster | [Access](#)

This page includes a poster detailing the career clusters, their definitions, and their real-world applications. Use this poster to show prospective DECA students the areas of business principles they can dive deep into.

Competitive Events Poster | [Access](#)

Some students want to get right to the competition! Give them a jumpstart into DECA's competitive events program by showing them this poster that details the different formats of competitive events.

Sample Event – Principles of Business Administration | [Access](#)

This sample event is a great interactive activity you can use to get students involved hands-on. It requires no previous experience, just a little bit of explanation! This is a great resource to get middle schoolers interested quickly!

Leadership: State Officer Program and DEI Team

Use the next page to help demonstrate the impact DECA has on leadership development.

Other Resources

Some resources, such as PowerPoints, school posters, and social media campaigns need to be specially curated for your chapter and your members. Here is a brief list of potential resources you can easily make yourselves that will represent your chapter.

- ◇ One-page flier showcasing your chapter
- ◇ Social media page
- ◇ Photographs of your chapter
- ◇ PowerPoint (visual aid to help your presentation)
 - Please reach out for an example if you are having trouble!
- ◇ LearnDECA (available on wadeca.org)
 - Password is Accelwadeca (changes every year, contact your [Area President](#))

Even more resources are readily available on the internet! Be sure to use www.deca.org and www.wadeca.org to help guide and structure your presentation. There is a lot of valuable content right there!

This page showcases Leadership Opportunities through Washington DECA.

Leadership Pathway #1

The State Officer Leadership Team is the core group of DECA members providing leadership to the Statewide organization. This team has defined roles and responsibilities needed to support the overall mission and goals of Washington DECA.

As emerging leaders, DECA encourages leadership teams to practice real-world leadership by adopting a structure that mirrors business and industry. DECA officer positions are aligned with the DECA mission to ensure that each aspect of the mission is represented with great leadership.

In summary, our 1 State President:

Practices the “Entrepreneurial” and “Management” elements of DECA’s Mission Statement. Serves as the liaison between the State Officer Leadership Team and the Executive Officers of DECA Inc. Establishes vision, management, and organization for the team and ensures each State Officer has the training, support, accountability, and resources to deliver a powerful DECA experience for every Washington DECA member.

And our 11 Area Presidents (who make up our State Officer Team):

- ◇ Provide support and leadership to all Statewide noncompetitive event career and leadership activities.
- ◇ Provide support and leadership to Statewide participation, preparation, and performance in Competitive Events.
- ◇ Provide support and leadership to Statewide membership, branding, and promotional campaigns.
- ◇ Provide support and leadership on Statewide community service efforts.
- ◇ Provide support and leadership Statewide to the Washington DECA membership and connecting members to a welcome, value-filled, fun educational experience through outreach efforts.

Leadership Pathway #2

The Washington DECA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Ambassador Team strengthens Washington DECA’s commitment to making our organization a more inclusive environment where everyone belongs. We aim to level the playing field for over 13,000 student members, while embracing and celebrating our state’s distinctiveness, and empowering all our members to become future leaders and entrepreneurs. Some examples of the work we do include: Investing in student scholarships, celebrating our members’ diversity on our social platforms, and offering workshops at conferences with DEI industry leaders. As the DEI team looks into the future, it is a priority to ensure that all students can access the unparalleled Washington DECA experience.

Within the DEI Ambassador Team, there are two Co-Presidents and a Leadership Council that work together to ensure progression of the team’s impact, while collaborating with the Washington DECA Board of Directors DEI Committee.

DECA prepares **emerging leaders** and **entrepreneurs** for **careers** in **marketing**, **finance**, **hospitality**, and **management** in high schools and colleges around the globe.

An organization for students in high schools
and colleges around the globe.



Learn

Enrich your career knowledge and skills for your future pursuits.



Lead

Enhance your leadership skills as you become a next gen business professional.



Compete

Engage in competitive events to prove your business prowess and earn DECA Glass.



Discover

Experience travel as a business professional as you discover new places.

More than 222,000 DECA student members,
teacher advisors, alumni and professionals
around the globe join DECA each year to develop
the next gen workforce.

Middle School Outreach Proposed Timeline

Use the suggested timeline below to plan and outline a middle school visit. Adjust the dates to work within your school’s policies and procedures. Be sure to allocate plenty of time for practicing and adjusting as necessary **prior to** the visit. For each visit you conduct, create a timeline and fill out the appropriate documentation to help the State Officer Team evaluate this toolkit.

Date of Visit: _____

Suggested Timeline	
Review Outreach Toolkit Due: 12 weeks from visit	Advisors review middle school outreach toolkit with Chapter Officers
Create Plan of Action Due: 10 weeks from visit	Create an outline for a middle school visit using the resources provided in the toolkit. Start assigning tasks for items needed to conduct your visit!
Obtain approval from administration Due: 8-10 weeks from visit	Obtain approval from district or school officials to conduct a middle school visit.
Run through and conduct at least one visit Due: 1 week before visit	Make sure to delegate tasks, create a materials list, and run through your activities prior to the visit.
Second visit OR outreach event Due: 2 weeks after first visit	By this date, conduct another outreach visit (to a different or to the same school) OR hold an event at your school in which middle school students are invited.
Reflect on your performance Due: 3 weeks (or less) after visit	Chapter Officers should complete a reflection (see included form) that details their experience, suggestions for the State Officer team, shortcomings, positives, areas for improvement, and a plan going forward.
Submit Evaluation Form Due: As visits are completed	Submit feedback that will help the State Officer Team evaluate this toolkit. Thank you for completing the tasks that help keep DECA a functioning and high-level program!

Middle School Outreach Evaluation Form

As a chapter OR individually, please complete this valuable form after your Visit! Your feedback will go on to improve our toolkit and provide more resources for your chapter to utilize in Middle School Outreach events. [Access Form](#) or scan the QR code.



Conclusion

Thank you for reviewing this toolkit! We hope the resources provided will help you make an impact on hundreds of students that will become the professionals of the next generation. Remember that in your role as a Chapter Officer, you are representing a history of excellency in leadership, and you should strive to uphold our brand and vision through your actions, words, and behaviors. Exhibit the qualities of professionalism, kindness, and servant leadership, all of which are admirable qualities of DECA members. Be a good representation of Washington DECA students and convince these middle schoolers through your mannerisms that DECA will mold them into future leaders.

Together, we can make a positive impact on the future of DECA and the students we serve! By conducting these middle school outreach events to the best of your ability, you will ensure that DECA continues to grow and thrive for years to come.

Once again, the State Officer team is here to assist you in your endeavors, and we can be contacted through email at area3president@wadeca.org and area4president@wadeca.org. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

Good luck! Yours in service,
Washington DECA Career Development Team

*This toolkit is brought to you by the 2022-2023 State Officer Career Development Team
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