



# 2015

## DECA ANNUAL REPORT



# DECA at a Glance

## By the Numbers

DECA

entering its 13th year with

464

STUDENTS

PROJECTION: BY 2020, DECA WILL SERVE 5-6% OF STUDENTS IN THE DAYTON EDUCATION MARKET

DECA  
PREP

entering its 4th year with

561

STUDENTS

## Student Population

82%

OF DECA STUDENTS WILL BE FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS

STUDENTS OF COLOR

93%

DECA

99%

DECA  
PREP

72%

OF DECA STUDENTS QUALIFY FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCHES

## College Successes

100%

OF 2015 GRADUATES ARE COLLEGE-BOUND OR SERVING IN THE MILITARY

81%

OF 2015 GRADUATES ENTERED OHIO COLLEGES

33%

OF 2015 GRADUATES EARNED STEM HONORS DISTINCTION

27%

OF DECA BACHELOR'S DEGREE HOLDERS EARNING GRADUATE DEGREES

## In the Community

135+

COMMUNITY MEMBERS  
VOLUNTEER  
IN OUR TWO SCHOOLS

275+

BUSINESSES  
AND NON-PROFITS  
HOST DECA STUDENTS IN  
COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING  
(JOB SHADOWS, INTERNSHIPS, AND SERVICE)

## Our Mission

The Dayton Early College Academy is singularly focused on preparing urban learners to go to college and graduate.



# GRIT

## A Letter to Our Stakeholders:

**DECA is an evolving story about GRIT—We give it our all, redo something if necessary, ignore giving-up and always take the time to do it right.**

**After a dozen years, we finally have a complete K-12 urban school district of over a thousand students totally focused on college, not just getting there, but on graduation and career readiness.**

Students learn DECA's high expectations start at the doorstep and everyone is expected to give it their all; parents, teachers, administrators and trustees. They also understand the value placed on education, and to demonstrate solid reading and math literacy is a goal that is not taken lightly. At times, this means redoing assignments until it is the best quality that a student is able to produce.

DECA students actively develop a career plan that fosters reachable visions for the future. Students learn to think on their feet and to apply knowledge in practical ways. They recognize 'real learning' results from a variety of exposures to content. Most importantly, they ignore giving up.

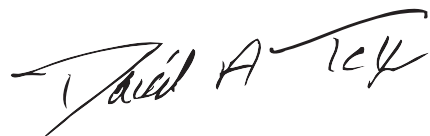
Grit has been a constant for DECA. Taking time to get it right means we assess our programs and results. These often prompt us to regroup, redo or start over. Our talented teachers quickly learn that a culture of "no excuses" demands a repertoire of skills—from dynamic classroom teaching to judicious use of technology to the correct balance of empathy and tough love.

We have included metrics to back up our success story. You will see we remain a "lean operation" with our expenditures directed to student instruction. We believe DECA's brand of GRIT can eliminate the achievement gap so troubling to Dayton and other cities. You cannot listen to stories of our current students and grads without a sense of optimism and pride.

In the following pages, we examine DECA's unique brand of grit. We introduce our new generation of leaders. We highlight the many ways our community has wrapped its arms around our two schools. This report is a testimony to what we can do when we stop asking, "Can we do this?" and start asking, "How can we do this?"

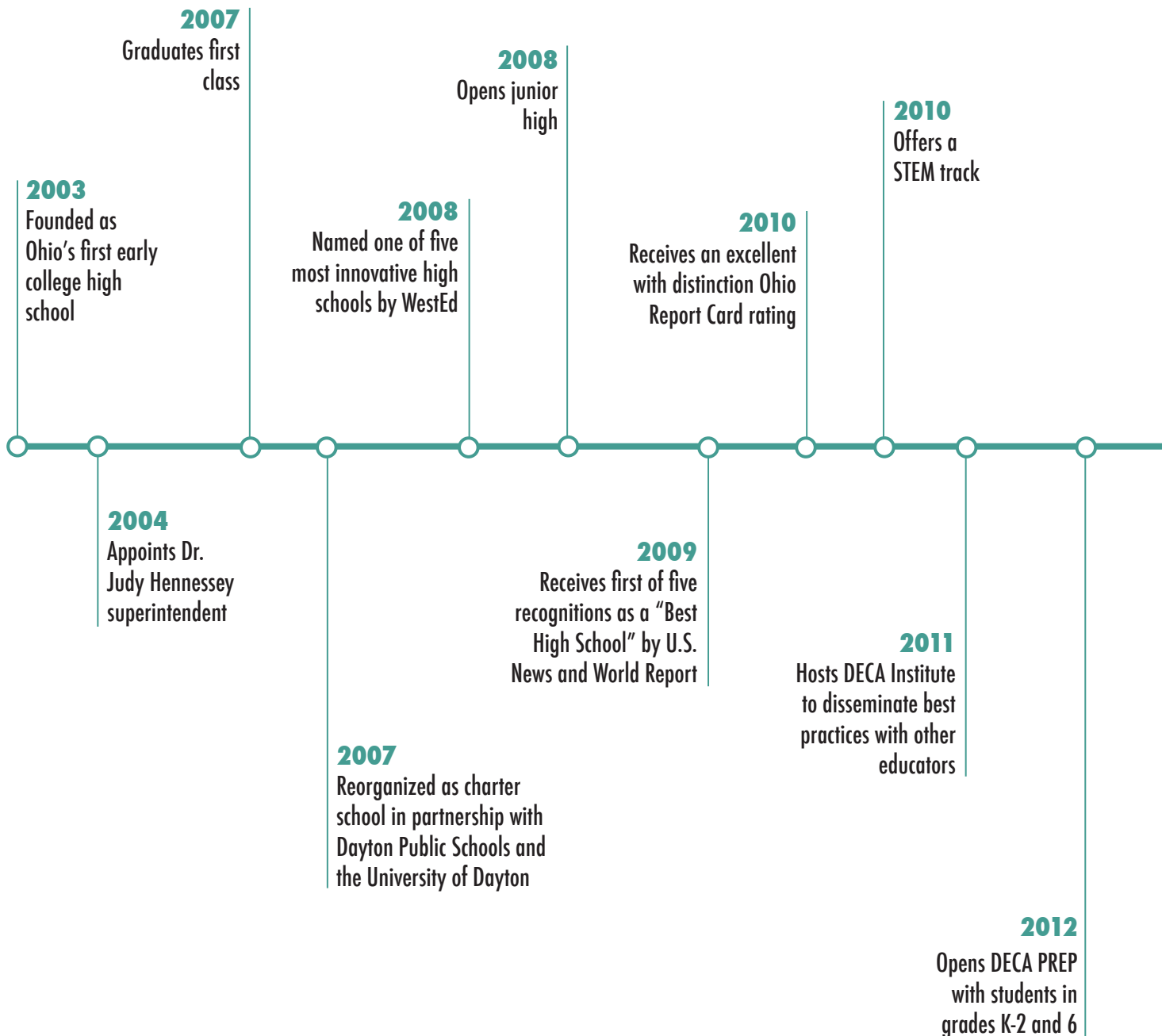


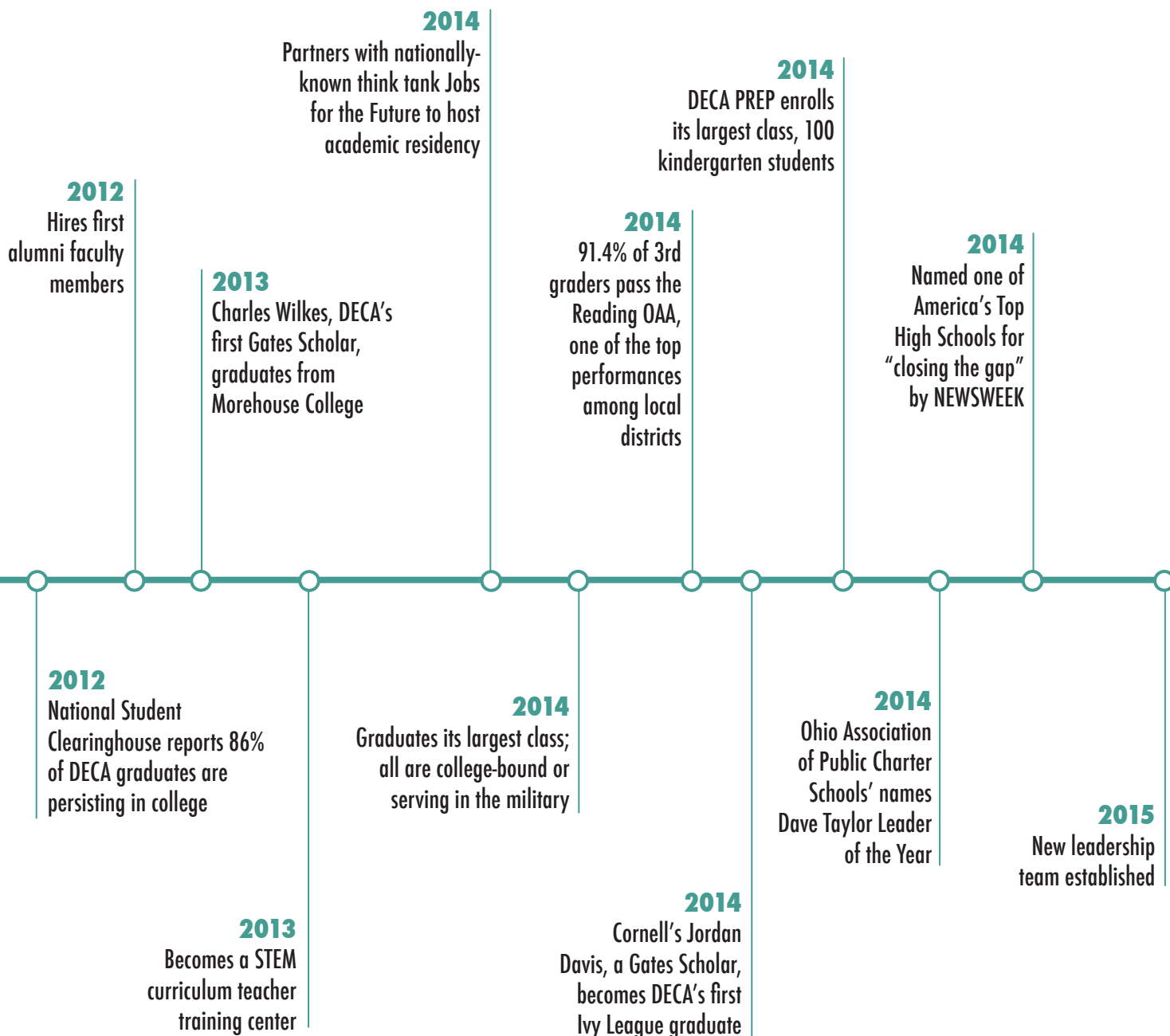
Judy Hennessey  
CEO, Superintendent



David Taylor  
Chief Academic Officer

# A Roadmap to Success





ADIT

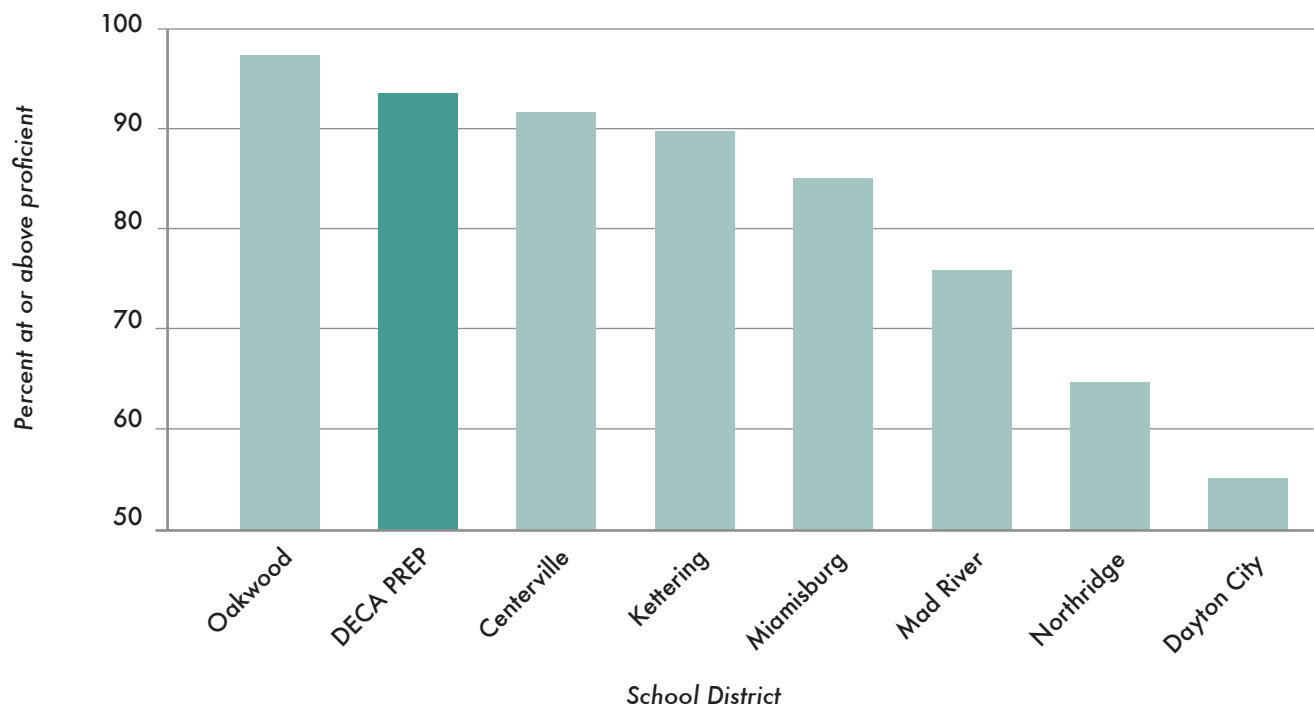
# Give it Your All

## A Culture of Achievement

A student's third grade reading performance is a major predictor of later school success. Studies suggest if you are behind in third grade, you may never catch up.

At DECA PREP third grade students continue to meet high expectations. Remarkably, nearly 94% of third graders tested as proficient: 67% scored advanced or accelerated on the Ohio Achievement Assessment.

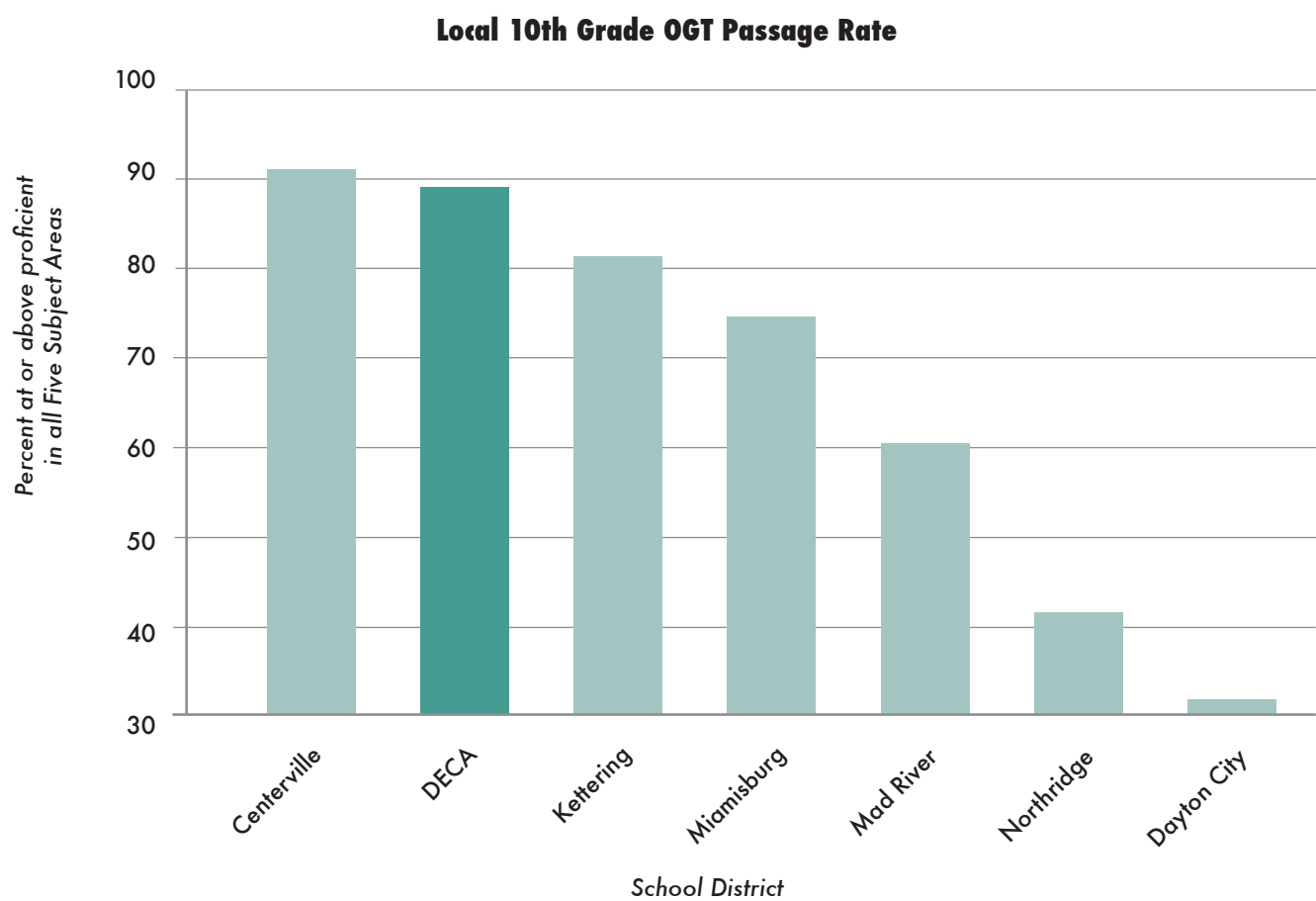
**Local 3rd Grade Reading Passage Rate**



Students graduating in 2015 were required to pass the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT). The state took an average percentage rate of students that passed at proficient or above in five subject areas: Math, Reading, Writing, Science and Social Studies, and compared the results. DECA's results rivaled suburban counterparts.

This success is the result of "giving it your all." The amount of time teachers taught beyond the school day became unquantifiable— weekends, after school, even during spring break. Third grade teachers taught thirteen Saturdays in a row.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) provides achievement data through the school Report Card. A change in testing requirements has stalled the release of the data. The 2015 Report Card will now be released in January 2016. After giving the PARCC assessments for one year, the Ohio legislature has disbanded their use. Ohio schools will implement new tests in 2015-2016, including subject-specific tests\* in high school. It has been a challenge as we adjust to abrupt testing requirements, but students test results from last year speak to continued strong academic performance.



\*Students will take tests in English 1 & 2, Algebra, Geometry, American History, Government and Physical Science.

*“The Dayton Early College Academy boasts some of the highest student gains for charter and urban schools in Ohio.”*

–Battelle for Kids



## Giving their all in the Community



**Karla Loja-Yuqui, DECA '15,  
Studying Biomedical Engineering at Wright State University**

"I am the first person in my family to go to college. As a person who speaks Spanish as my first language, English could have been a barrier. I spent most of 7th grade overwhelmed, so I skipped school and had to catch up over the summer. The teachers and the community of support at DECA helped me feel confident and accomplish my goals."



**Alure Powell-Russell, DECA Junior**

"A recent job shadow at Clash Consignment helped me realize you use many areas of expertise in a career to be successful: business, law, and fashion design. While I plan to pursue a degree in fashion design, I realize the importance of being well-rounded in knowledge. Talking with a local Dayton business owner made my aspirations tangible."



**Aliya Ponder, DECA Junior**

"Through the Wright State University Young Business Scholars Program, I participated with other students in a simulation where we created our own non-profit business. It allowed me to see the magnitude of being a business owner and all you need to know to be successful."

**During 2014-2015 School  
Year/Summer:**

2,368 job shadows

42,362 community service hours

487 college credits earned by the Class of 2015 at Sinclair Community College

717 non-paid internships

275+ community partnerships





# GRIT

## Redo if Necessary

### A Culture of Innovation

Parental involvement is essential and has always been part of DECA's culture. However, it became evident that DECA PREP needed to forge stronger parent relationships. It was time to redo, reinvent. In response, Julie McGlaun, DECA PREP's Director of Parent Engagement, created the Classroom Parent Community (cP c).

To prepare for the year's meetings, forty parents spent three intensive days training for their new leadership roles. They discussed the culture and needs of DECA PREP students and familiarized themselves with valuable resources including a series of videos that introduce each meeting's key issue. Parents are not only hosting the monthly meeting, but holding fellow parents to high standards.

This ground-breaking approach to building a tight-knit school is all directed at student improvement. Our priority is to ensure parents have a voice and know where to get the resources their child needs. Stay tuned. This innovative program will be studied by the University of Cincinnati Evaluation Services Center to measure its impact on student growth.



*"The thing I've heard from parents about the cP c model is 'sounds like old school neighborhood.' The classroom is becoming a place of adult community, surrounding and ensuring the success of each student in that classroom. No child escapes our care or expectation."*

*-Julie McGlaun*

# GRIIT

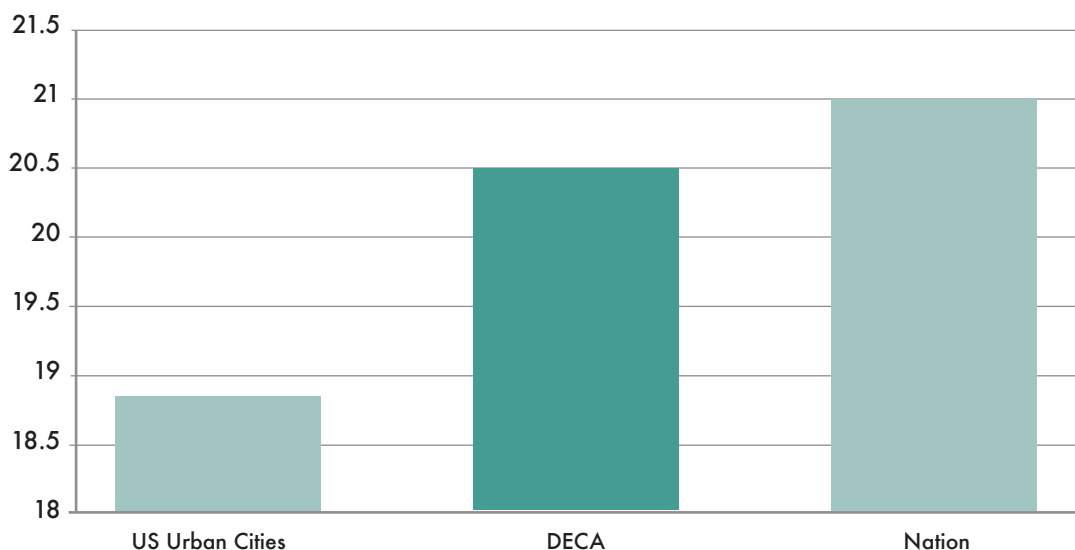
## Ignore giving up

### A Culture of Perseverance

At DECA, preparation and readiness for college is our mission. Part of getting there is preparing our students for the ACT. The Class of 2015 showed significantly improved scores on this measure of college readiness.

The composite score\* amongst the class of 2015 was a 20.5. For context, the average in major urban cities is 18.8 and 21 nationally. Remember, 100% of DECA students take the ACT, not just a percentage of the top students. Actually, all DECA students are required to take the ACT: not once, but twice.

Class of 2015 Composite ACT Score



\*This score is gained from a combined average of English, Math, Reading and Science scores.

*"DECA helps cultivate and nurture students into something they, at times, could not even imagine being. Know where you come from and don't forget where you started."*

Charles Wilkes, DECA '09  
Doctoral Candidate, University of Michigan  
M.Ed. University of Michigan  
B.S. Morehouse College

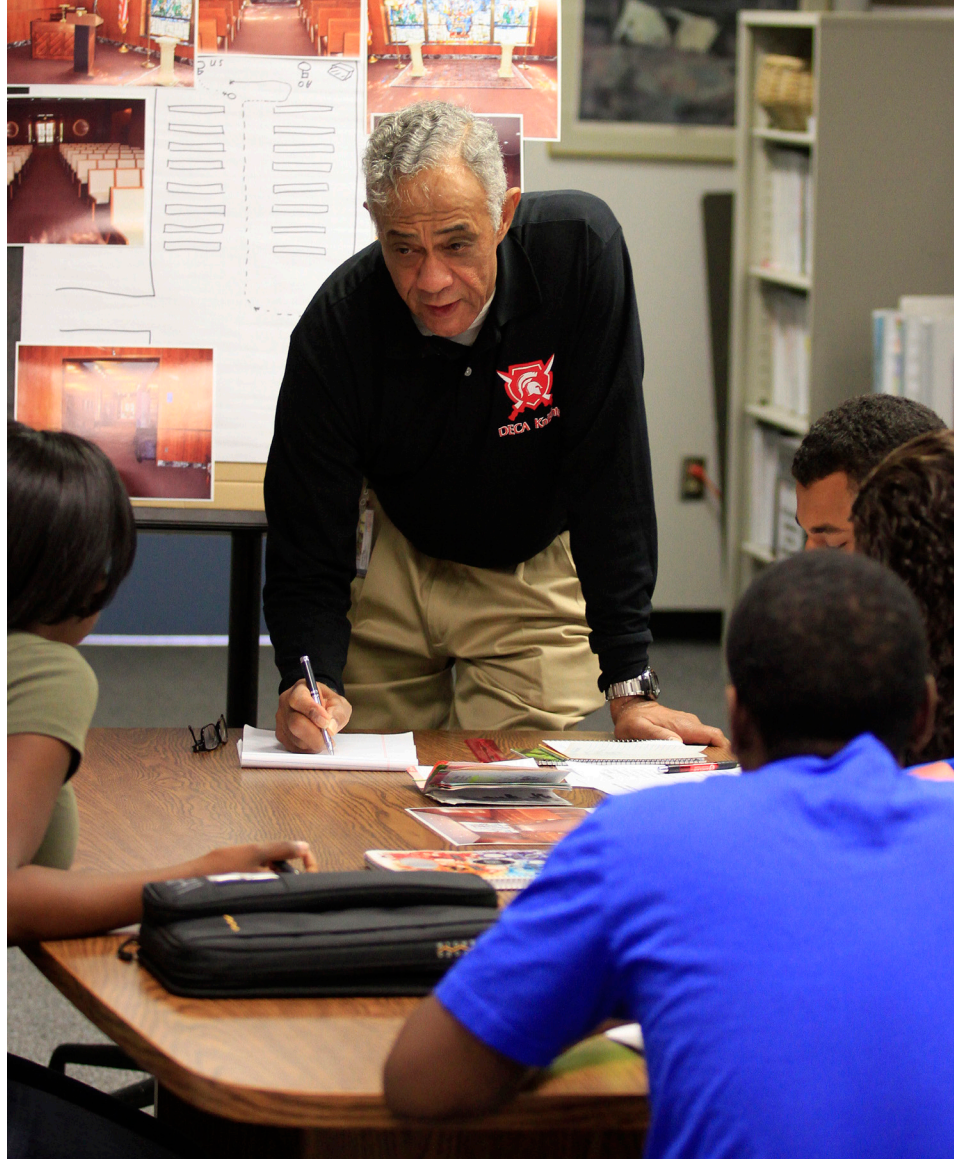


Some of our young students face dozens of challenges just to get to school each day. For these kids, learning to problem solve and see a brighter future takes more than advice from people they don't know or trust. We continue to expand programs to help students combat the feeling of giving up.

A grant from the Ohio Department of Education allowed DECA to expand a mentoring program called the Rising STARS of DECA. Thanks to the Community Connectors grant, small groups of 5th and 6th graders are paired with a mentor in weekly meetings. Mentors provide homework assistance and take students to community events. They help students reach goals.

Local community partners provide resources and support for each mentoring group. This meshing of expertise ensures training for mentors and services to students. Partners include:

- Artemis Center
- CARE House
- Connor Group Kids & Community Partners
- First Baptist Church of Dayton
- Oak Tree Corner
- Project READ
- The Salvation Army Ray and Joan Kroc Community Center
- The University of Dayton Fitz Center for Leadership in Community
- City Connects





# GRIT

## Take time to do it right

Nationally, cities and states report principal vacancies with only a trickle of potential candidates. DECA encourages teachers with leadership potential to train for administrative roles. Identifying and mentoring “our own” is DECA’s solution to the shortage of leaders for urban schools. We are proud to introduce our leadership team:



As the visionary and enduring face of DECA, **Judy Hennessey**, Superintendent and CEO, has grown this program from an idea to a thriving institution of over one thousand college-bound students. She earned a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the University of Dayton. Before DECA, she served as the Superintendent in Oakwood from 1998-2004. Dr. Hennessey’s career of over 40 years has provided experience as director of personnel, special education supervisor, principal, college instructor and, most importantly, classroom teacher.



**David Taylor**, Cedarville University graduate, joined the DECA faculty in 2003. He knew he wanted to work in a mission-driven school and have a voice in the development of a distinctly different urban high school. David quickly emerged as a faculty leader, willing to ride out the bumpy road of those early years. He became Dean of Students when the school expanded to the seventh grade.

He was named DECA Principal in 2011. He graduated from the highly selective Program for Leadership at Harvard Business School. He was recognized as Leader-of-the-Year by the Ohio Alliance for Public Charter Schools in 2014. Named Chief Academic Officer in 2015, David now leads the day-to-day operations of both schools.



In 2003, **Danya Berry** left a teaching position to help open the first early college high school in Ohio and acted as the College Liaison for ten years. Now, serving as Director of Operations for DECA, her expertise is invaluable as an active member of the National Advisory Board for the Common Application, Miami University’s Admissions Advisory Board and the Ohio Council of College Admissions Committee.

Danya earned her B.S. in Rehabilitation Services and a M.Ed. in Special Education, both from Wright State University. She also teaches as an Adjunct Professor for UD’s School of Education and Allied Professions.





**Katy Jo Brown**, School Director for DECA, is a two-time graduate of the University of Dayton, earning a B.S. in Middle Childhood Education and a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership. Connecting to DECA through UD's Urban Teacher Academy, Katy Jo's leadership potential was recognized from day one. A passion for STEM education led to positions as DECA's Science Department Chair, coach of DECA's Robotics team, and a STEM Fellowship through the Dayton Regional STEM Center.

Katy Jo serves on the advisory boards for College Mentors for Kids and UD's Teacher Education Department.



**Megan McLemore** jumped at the chance to help start DECA PREP as the partner elementary to DECA. She earned a B.S. in Early Childhood Education and M.Ed. in Educational Leadership from Wright State University.

When DECA PREP opened Megan had already been an urban teacher for five years. With her experience she understood that the achievement gap could be closed with the right instruction and parental engagement. Megan has taught first, third and sixth grades at DECA PREP. She became the Dean of Students, preparing to be the Principal in 2015. Megan recognizes that leadership requires commitment, willingness to take a risk and grit.



**Brooke Byrd** and **Charlie Bull** are Assistant Principals at DECA PREP. They both enrolled in Columbia University's Program for Urban Principals, arguably one of the best in the country. Charlie completed his degree in August 2015, with Brooke to follow next year. Both served on DECA PREP's inaugural faculty and quickly stepped into leadership roles. Brooke graduated from Spelman College while Charlie attended UD's Urban Teacher Academy. Their track record of adept teaching methods and in-classroom experience will benefit them in these new administrative roles.



*"DECA can be hard at times, but you keep going because you know college is next. My experiences at DECA taught me to never be ashamed or afraid to ask for help. I've learned that the people I deem as successful have to ask for help, too."*

Darius Johnson DECA '09, M.S.  
Materials Engineering, U.D. and B.S. Mechanical Engineering, U.D.  
Currently a Design and Release Engineer for Ford Motor Company

# A Community of Grit

Just as we teach our students to seek help when they need it, we nurture and cherish partnerships of all kinds to help deliver on our mission. We spotlight four such special friends in this year's report:

## Foster Alumni



New schools take a while to build an alumni body. From day one DECA has enjoyed the advocacy of a widely diverse group of individuals. In many ways they are our cheerleaders. They provide practical help to students through job shadowing, internships, mentoring and even providing funds when students experience life emergencies. Many are regular donors, while others give time and in-kind services to help our students get to college.

## The Connor Group



"We at The Connor Group have developed our own culture. It's a culture rooted in discipline, training, innovation and hard work. And, admittedly, it's not for everyone." -Excerpt, *Culture* by The Connor Group

Larry Connor says his company chose to support our schools because DECA's culture and grit mirror their own. To date, they have funded innovative projects such as job coaching, student incentives and a chess club. The Connor Group continues to support DECA through improved facilities, leadership training and service.

## The Spurlino Family Foundation



Cy Spurlino is the son of an immigrant who came to America hoping for more opportunities. His dreams came true; Cy experienced an outstanding education, graduating from Northwestern University as an engineer. Now with the ability to help others, the family chooses education for much of their philanthropy. The Spurlino Family Foundation has supported DECA and DECA PREP almost from its creation. The purchase of the former Corpus Christi property to afford DECA PREP its neighborhood home was possible through the Spurlino family's generosity. This year, Mike Spurlino, Cy's son, continued the family tradition and established an unrestricted scholarship available to DECA college students who experience gaps in finances.

## The Rotary Club of Dayton

At DECA, strategic decisions for college and career begin early. Short term goals are important. Realistic planning for the future is critical.

Imagine what networking and career connections can be made when the Rotary Club of Dayton gets involved. Rotary hosted last year's #BrandAid Conference for our sophomores in partnership with Sinclair Community College. The primary goal was to present new and provocative ideas about college choices and intentional professional behavior, so our students can begin making strategic decisions for their future.

Rotary also supported DECA's participation in the Habitat International's program in Guatemala. Ten of our juniors and seniors traveled there to build homes in a rural impoverished village. Ten Rotarians, who had taken the trip before, guided our students from prep to wrap-up. This project changed lives.



DECA has won a U.S. News and World Report "Best High Schools" Bronze Medal for the fifth time.

CDIT

## A Community of Grit

Please consider joining the growing number of supporters who care deeply about the education of our young people. We invite your membership in Friends of DECA.

### Privately Funded Student Enhancements

- ACT prep courses
- Air Camp scholarships
- AmeriCorps Members in both schools
- Artist residences
- Books for reading groups
- Chess Club
- City Connects Program
- Clothing for students in need
- College scholarships
- Cultural events
- Gift cards for student incentives
- Gymnasium bleachers
- Habitat International Trip
- Improvements to school buildings and grounds
- Internships
- Job shadows
- Leveled reading books
- Math manipulative sets
- Mock trial teams
- Professional development for teachers
- Purchase of DECA PREP building
- Robotics team
- RTA Passes for after school events
- Specialized instruction for advanced learners
- Sporting events
- STEM Conference travel (I/ITSEC)
- STEM materials & programs
- Study tables
- Summer school for K-3 struggling early readers
- Summer science programs
- Technology
- Van used to transport students to community sites
- Washington DC trip scholarships



THE ♦ DAYTON  
FOUNDATION

*We help you help others.*

DECA and DECA PREP benefit from generous contributions. Donations can be made directly to Friends of DECA (Fund #3637), a fund managed by the Dayton Foundation. Their expertise in charitable giving and donor-centered services ensure all donations are managed efficiently. For more information, please visit: [www.daytonfoundation.org](http://www.daytonfoundation.org)

*"A committed DECA student with access to resources is unstoppable. Great schools teach GRIT."*

*—Judy Hennessey*



# Lean but Successful

## A Culture of Accountability

Self-funding our continued growth presents the main financial challenge for DECA and DECA PREP. With schools now encompassing students in grades K-12, a financially sustainable scale has been reached. However, funding double-digit growth required significant investment for facilities and operating expenditures to develop school leaders, curriculum and programs.

In FY15, previously leased facilities for DECA PREP were acquired and expanded. This was made possible by a longtime supporter’s generous donation. In addition to this gift, funds from operating reserves and the accession of debt were employed. This represents our first owned facility, a significant milestone in our evolution.

Financial reserves remain at approximately \$1.2 million; a combination of generous donations and federal funding. This provides a cushion for the unforeseen. The current reserves declined to about 1.8 months of recurring operating expenses, adequate, but below our desired minimum level of two months.

Both schools remain in sound financial condition. DECA PREP was 1 of 11 organizations to receive the Auditor of State Award for the cleanest possible audit. What a proud achievement considering over 5,800 state and local governmental agencies are audited every year. Operations are lean but healthy and well managed.

Looking to the future, supporting our progress with combined private philanthropy, debt and operating surplus is expected to continue. Evident is the success of DECA graduates in college and beyond; along with a constant demand for a DECA education.



	Combined Operations for Fiscal (School) Years		
	(Dollars in Thousands)		
	2013	2014	2015
Revenue	\$6,652	\$7,679	\$9,888
Expenses	\$6,261	\$7,695	\$9,936
Financial Reserves	\$1,160	\$1,245	\$1,202

Note: Financial statements are on a cash basis, so timing differences between revenues and expenses exist. (Years ending June 30.)

DECA PREP received the Ohio Auditor of State Award.

DECA received the highest possible audit opinion for the 6th consecutive year.



# Board of Trustees

Matthew O. Diggs, Chairman  
Retired CEO  
Copeland Corporation

Ronald F. Budzik, Vice Chairman   
Retired Vice President  
Mead Corporation

Thomas E. Bettcher   
Retired CEO  
Emerson Climate Technologies

Michael E. Carter  
Senior Advisor to the President  
Sinclair Community College

Heather Jackson-Chapman  
LPN/DECA Parent  
Intl. Quality Home Healthcare

Annessa Cheek  
Vice President, Schools & Community Partnerships  
Sinclair Community College

Patrick Donnelly  
Associate Provost for Faculty/Administrative Affairs  
University of Dayton

David Gasper  
President  
Initial Point

*"I work throughout the greater Dayton community and see the despair and frustration in our young people resulting from a perceived lack of opportunity. DECA provides hope and inspiration for youngsters by providing them a pathway to college that will lead them to rewarding careers and a meaningful quality of life."*

–Ron Budzik

*"I was drawn to DECA because of its remarkable record of academic success. DECA's passion for its students and constant drive for improvements makes serving on the board of trustees an extremely rewarding experience."*

–Thomas Bettcher


# GRIT

Michael McQuiston   
Partner  
The Connor Group

Jacqueline Phillips  
Associate Vice-President, Resource Development  
DECA Parent  
United Way of Greater Dayton Area

Vince Russo  
President/CEO  
Aerospace Technologies Associates

Kevin Scroggins   
Disease Intervention Specialist/DECA Parent  
Public Health, Dayton & Montgomery County

Thomas P. Whelley II   
Partner  
Dinsmore & Shohl LLP

Ex Officio  
Judy A. Hennessey  
Superintendent/CEO

David Taylor  
Chief Academic Officer

Nicholas Martin  
Treasurer

*"I believe parent participation is one of the most important elements to a child's development. I appreciate being at the table, with both a voice and a vote."*

–Kevin Scroggins

*"I am delighted to be working on a new initiative where the board and DECA's graduates are working to stay in touch with our students as they move through their college years. Our idea is to assist all graduates to make contact with local professionals who will help them navigate the job market and find employment here at home in Miami Valley."*

–Thomas Whelley

*DECA has a mission to prepare every single student to go beyond high school graduation. For kids living in the city of Dayton, many are going to be the first in their family to graduate from college; this is a gift beyond price."*

– Mike McQuiston

## Katy Jo Brown, DECA School Director

Why do I work here? We have been told this will be the Camelot experience of our career. I would agree this is my Camelot. I truly believe in our students, their future and our ability to help them get there. It's rewarding to serve students, families and teachers each day.

What makes DECA unique? DECA represents a paradigm shift in our society. Our students and staff know we expect nothing short of greatness from everyone here. That expectation is accompanied by a tremendous level of pressure, but more importantly, comes with a monumental level of support.

Career Highlights? Every day. Our students constantly inspire me to want to be better. Seeing students' eyes light up when they stump their calculus teacher, discover a career path interesting, or walk across the stage at graduation brings me so much hope.

The secret to DECA's success? The people. What seems like easy work is actually very messy and exhausting - but highly rewarding. This place seems to have all the right players in place. Administration, teachers, and parents constantly collaborate to identify and eliminate obstacles for our students. Paradigm shifts in urban education don't just happen. You have to have the right people all heading in the same direction.



DECA PREP  
200 Homewood Ave.  
Dayton, OH 45405  
937-610-0110  
[DECAprep.org](http://DECAprep.org)

Dayton Early College Academy  
300 College Park  
Fitz Hall, Third Floor  
Dayton, OH 45469  
937-229-5780  
[DaytonEarlyCollege.org](http://DaytonEarlyCollege.org)