



SCHOOL-BASED
ENTERPRISE



SCHOOL-BASED ENTERPRISES

COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING PROGRAM

STUDENT-RUN, HANDS-ON LABORATORIES

School-based Enterprises are student-run, hands-on laboratories that reinforce concepts taught in the classroom. Some examples are:

- Traditional: food, beverage or school spirit
- Vending machines
- Coffee shops or cafes
- Pop-up shops or mobile operations
- Banks or credit unions
- Print, embroidery or engraving shops
- Digital production
- Service-oriented businesses
- Any business operation that works for your school or community!



Student-Run, Hands-On Laboratories



School-based Enterprises are student-run, hands-on laboratories that reinforce concepts taught in the classroom.

SBEs are a business usually conducted on the school site, often as a component of a CTE course. Students operate an economically viable business venture that generates revenue.

- **School setting laboratory**
 - Students manage and operate the SBE, applying classroom learning in a real-world setting
- **Co-curricular**
 - Example: SBE participation tied to Marketing II and all students participate
 - Connection between experiences and classroom instruction/activities

HIGH-QUALITY WORK-BASED LEARNING

SBEs are a business usually conducted on the school site, often as a component of a CTE course. Students operate an economically viable venture that generates revenue.

- School setting laboratory
 - Work experience and building transferrable skills at school
 - Check guidelines or reach out to your Work-based Learning Coordinator for your state/district to see if the SBE can be an approved work-based learning (WBL) training site
- Student-managed business venture
- Co-curricular

TOP BENEFITS OF AN SBE

Hands-on
Learning

Practical
Business
Experience

21st Century
Skill
Development

Leadership
Development

Chapter
Fundraising

Career
Readiness

Curriculum
Integration

Community
Engagement

STEPS TO START AN SBE

School-based enterprises are learning labs that provide the first work experience and an opportunity to build management, supervision and leadership skills.

- Conduct market research (what will sell at your school or in your community?)
- Learn from others
- Start small (cart/kiosk or vending machine)
- Create a business plan
- Get school support (investigate state/district/school guidelines – this can VARY greatly)
- Apply for licenses



BUY-IN + SBE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Administration
 - Must have school administration support
 - Perkins, grants, funding
 - Promote SBE at school board meetings and request funds/materials
- Business partners
 - Create partnerships through donations, sponsorships or internships
- Teachers
 - Incentive sign-ups, use staff meetings, special promotions for teachers or delivery to their classroom
- Parents
 - Promote/sell student gift cards/SBE Bucks
 - Utilize school events to attract parents
- Students
 - Loyalty programs (punch cards)
 - Social media



SBE'S CAN OPEN DOORS FOR YOUR CHAPTER



Don't reinvent the wheel. Take ideas from others or ones that interest you and your chapter and make it work for your school and chapter. Every chapter is unique, and every chapter can create an SBE that works for them.

Make your SBE work for your DECA chapter

- More funding for your chapter
- Competition opportunities
- Business partnerships
- Unique learning environment
- More qualified and employable students
- Increase chapter membership



SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING PROGRAM

SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

- Gold Chapter Certification and Re-certification
- Silver or Bronze Chapter Certification: No Recertification
- Gold certification is valid for 5 years
- Year 1: full gold certification (10 standards)
- Next 4 years: re-certification (3 standards: rotate yearly)
- Cycle begins again: full gold certification (10 Standards)



SBE CERTIFICATION STANDARDS

Certification Standards:

- Financial Analysis
- Operations
- Marketing-Information Management
- Market Planning
- Product/Service Management
- Pricing
- Distribution/Channel Management
- Promotion
- Selling
- Human Resources

Level of Certification Awarded:

- Dependent upon how the standards and performance indicators were addressed and documented in the submitted project.



SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



- **SBE Chapter Gold Certification:** Gold certification and gold re-certification projects are due Tuesday, January 13, 2026
- **Level of Certification Awarded:** Dependent upon how the standards and performance indicators were addressed and documented in the submitted project.
- **2025-2026 Recertification Standards:** Operations, Marketing-Information Management and Selling
- **2025-2026 Competition Topic:** Selling (1-2 members)

SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

- **Submission Site Opens:** December 1, 2025
- **Submission Link:** Found on [DECA.org/sbe](https://deca.org/sbe)
- **Projects Due:** January 13, 2026 by 11:59 p.m.
- **Recognition:** All certified chapters will be recognized on DECA Direct Online (Gold, Silver and Bronze)
- **Gold Certified Recognition:** Chapters that earn gold certification and recertification will be recognized at ICDC and can attend the SBE Academy + Competition at ICDC
- Gold Certified Chapters receive a plaque and gold recertified chapters receive a medallion that goes in the plaque



SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Check where your chapter is currently in the SBE gold certification process or if it has ever been certified

Home

State/Province Admin

Additional Stickers Request

Scholarships

Logout

Membership Information 

Students

Alumni

Professionals

Chapter Information

Chapter Advisor(s)

Conferences

Invoice History

Quick Links

State/Province Information

Resources 

Add Students

Membership Download

Students With Access To Portal

Print Membership Cards

Print Membership Certificates

Previous Year Count

Email All

Show Inactive

 Search

Emerging Honor Award

SBE Certification History

Surveys

Email

SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

- Once you confirm the certification status and if the SBE is due for gold certification or a gold re-certification find the correct SBE certification guidelines
- SBE chapter gold certification and gold re-certification guidelines are updated yearly
- They can be found at: deca.org/sbe



SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



- Identify the students who will be working on the SBE written manual. Typically, these are the store managers and are knowledgeable about how your store operates.
- A sample gold-level certification paper can be found at: deca.org/sbe

SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



- Students prepare a written manual addressing the required standards for your SBE
- The advisor can guide the students and proofread but the written submission must be student work
- The written submission is submitted online in January of each year
- Go to deca.org/sbe to:
 - Verify the submission due date
 - Submit the SBE manual
 - Submission instructions

SBE CHAPTER GOLD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM



- All certified chapters will be recognized on DECA Direct Online (gold, silver and bronze) and receive a certificate to be presented by their association
- Chapters that earn gold certification and gold re-certification will be recognized at the International Career and Development Conference (ICDC) and can attend the SBE Academy + Competition at ICDC
- Gold certified chapters receive a plaque and gold re-certified chapters receive a medallion to go in the plaque

SBE ACADEMY + COMPETITION AT ICDC

- SBE Competition Topic: Topic rotates each year and is released with the current year certification guidelines
- Teams are required to attend the SBE Academy that they were certified in (Food/Retail) on Sunday
- SBE Competition
 - 10-minute oral presentation
 - Review competition guidelines (rotate yearly – selling for 2026)
 - 1-2 Team Members
 - Preliminary competition on Monday and final competition on Tuesday





SBE RESOURCES

COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING PROGRAM

SBE RESOURCES

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Chapter Certification

The School-based Enterprise (SBE) Chapter Certification Program provides recognition for outstanding achievement by school-based enterprises and motivates SBEs to strive for excellence and growth. The program provides SBEs with standards for model operations and recognition at three levels: bronze, silver and gold. The certification program reinforces the integration of National Curriculum Standards and 21st Century employability skills into the SBE learning lab environment. Earning certification garners international recognition, provides credibility, validates curriculum efficacy and strengthens the relevancy of the SBE as a valuable teaching tool.

Submission Deadline: January 14, 2025

[Certification Guidelines](#)

[Re-Certification Guidelines](#)

[Sample Gold-Level Certification](#)

[Submission Instructions](#)

[Submit Your SBE Manual](#)

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

Individual Certification

Through the School-based Enterprise (SBE) Individual Certification, DECA members may pursue individual certification in SBE operations. Through the successful completion of an online exam that measures knowledge and understanding of business operations concepts, the certification program reinforces the integration of National Curriculum Standards and 21st Century employability skills into the SBE learning lab environment.

[Guidelines](#)

[Instructions + FAQ](#)

[Exam Study Guide](#)

[Take the Exam](#)

GOLD CERTIFIED + RE-CERTIFIED

ICDC Academy + Competition

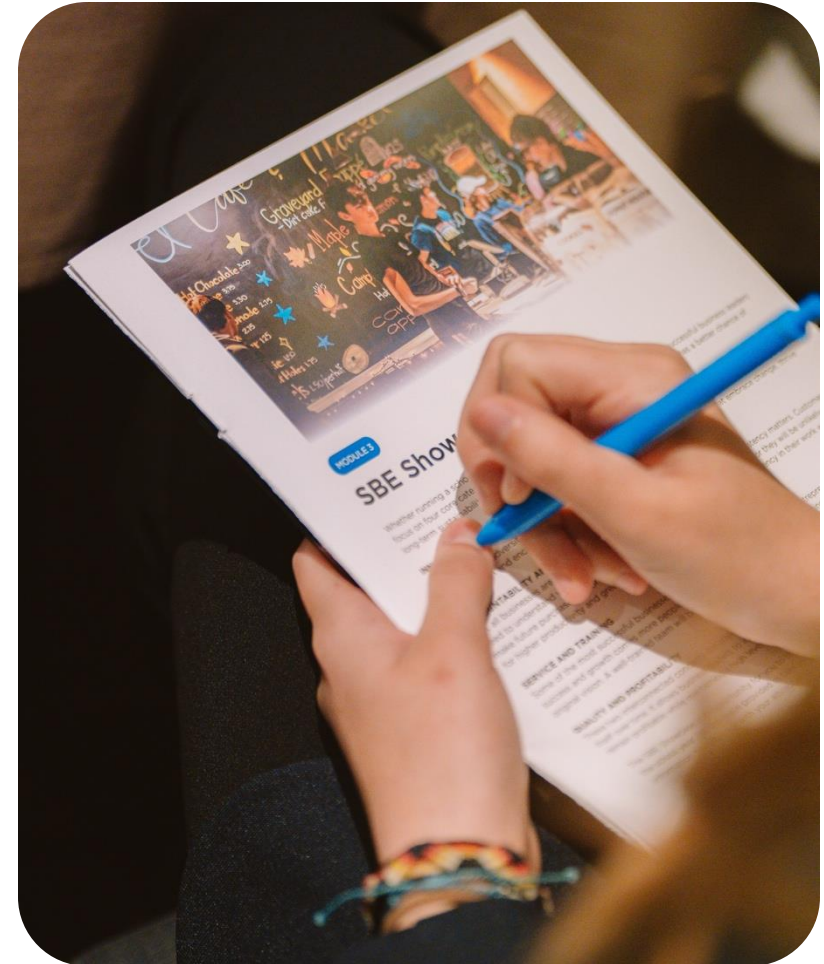
The School-based Enterprise Academy + Competition is held at DECA's International Career Development Conference. Gold and Gold Re-certified SBEs are eligible to register up to two representatives for the academy and competition, with the approval of their association advisor. During the academy, participants will experience dynamic professional development sessions specific to the entrepreneurship field, share ideas and learn from other SBE professionals. In the competition, the participants will present an oral presentation to a business professional judge based on one preselected business standard covered in the SBE Chapter Certification Project. Participants will participate in one of the two categories in which they earned gold certification: Retail Operations or Food Operations. The competition rules, presentation guidelines, and performance criteria are identical for the two competition tracks. The top 10 winners are recognized in both categories.

[Competition Guidelines](#)

SBE INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

School-based enterprise instructional units and lesson plans correspond with the chapter certification program's 10 instructional standards and performance indicators.

Each standard includes a lesson plan and an editable PowerPoint presentation (which covers each performance indicator and includes discussion questions).



 Search here

Filtering by:

School-based Enterprise 

Classroom Resources 

SORT BY 

Showing 11 results
of 520 items.

[clear all](#)

Category

[clear](#)

- ☐ Advisor Professional Learning
- ☐ Chapter Strategy
- ☒ Classroom Resources

Subcategory

[clear](#)

- ☐ Educational Conferences
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Partnership
- ☐ Recruitment
- ☒ School-based Enterprise

Career Cluster

[clear](#)

- ☐ Business Management and Administration
- ☐ Entrepreneurship
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Hospitality and Tourism
- ☐ Marketing

2023



SBE: Distribution and Channel Management

Channel Management

Use the Distribution and Channel Management instructional module to introduce the topic to your School-based Enterprise students.

2023



SBE: Financial Analysis

Financial Analysis

Use the Financial Analysis instructional module to introduce the topic to your School-based Enterprise students.

2023



SBE: Human Resources Management

Human Resources Management

Use the Human Resources Management instructional module to introduce the topic to your School-based Enterprise students.

2023



SBE: Market Planning

Market Planning

Use the Market Planning instructional module to introduce the topic to your School-based Enterprise students.

2023



SBE: Marketing-Information Management

Marketing-Information Management

Use the Marketing-Information Management instructional module to introduce the topic to your School-based Enterprise students.

2023



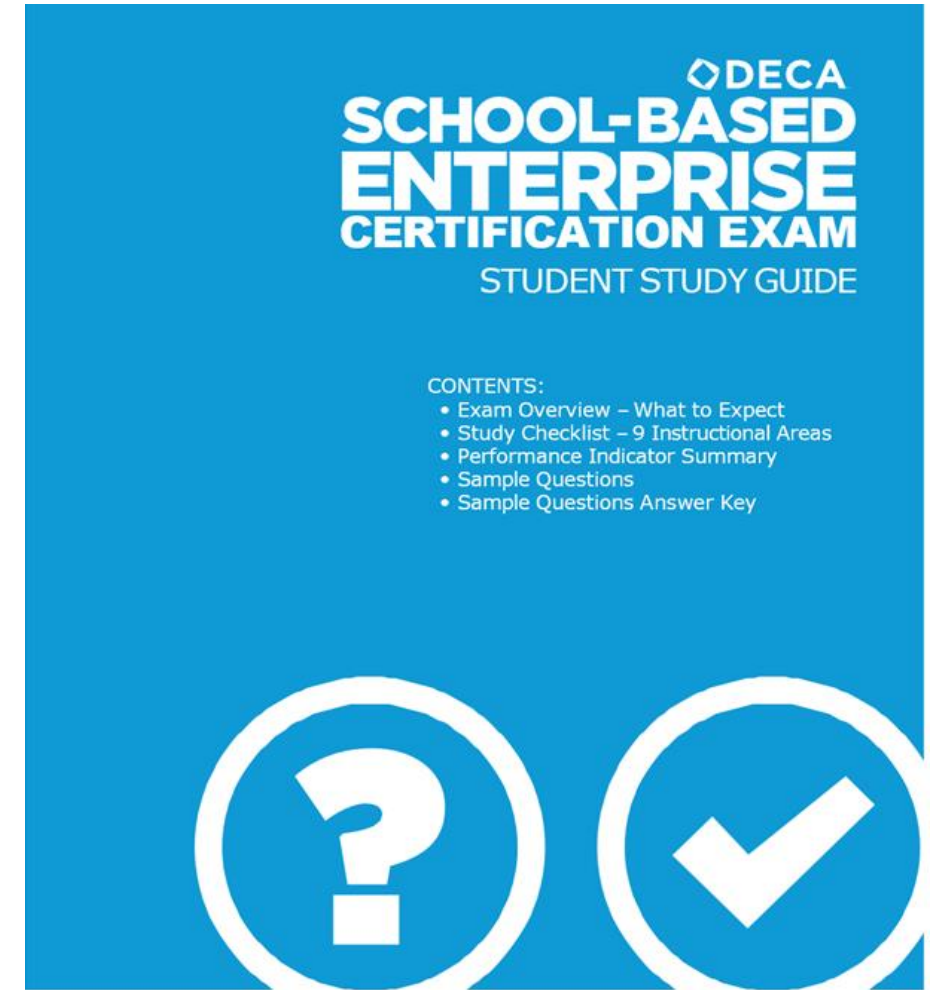
SBE: Operations

Operations

Use the Operations instructional module to introduce the topic to your School-based Enterprise students.

INDIVIDUAL SBE CERTIFICATION EXAM

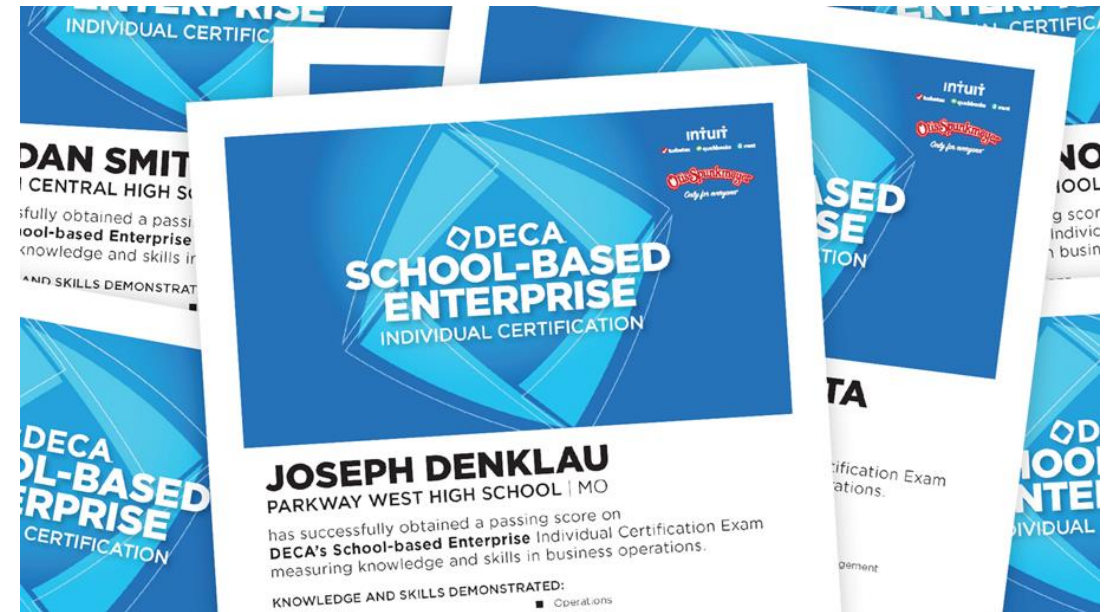
- Online Exam
- 100 multiple choice questions, 9 instructional areas
- 90-minute time limit
- Students must score 70% or higher on the exam to receive certified status
- \$15 per student
- SBE Individual Certification Exam study guide found at deca.org/sbe
- SBE Individual Certification Exam: Open from October 1, 2025 – June 30, 2026.



INDIVIDUAL SBE CERTIFICATION EXAM

Students who take the exam receive individual recognition and show mastery of small business management skills. It solidifies classroom instruction's connection to the SBE and student understanding of real-world business operations concepts.

- Advisors receive detailed transcripts showing individual and group scores
- Broken down by instructional area to see areas of classroom instruction needing improvement
- Students with scores of 70% or higher earn:
 - Certificate of individual certification status
 - Feature on decadirect.org



GROWING YOUR SBE

Diversification of Products + Services

- Gradually introduce new products based on market research
- Explore seasonal offerings to capitalize on different times of the year

Expanding Customer Base

- Consider having pop-up shops at local community events
- Develop targeted marketing campaigns to attract new customer segments

Marketing + Branding Expansion

- Develop a brand identity that can grow beyond the school
- Utilize influencer marketing with students

SBE OPERATIONS

Human Resources Management

- Employee training + evaluations
- Employee handbook/manual
- Process for choosing employees
- Process for choosing SBE store managers and divisional SBE managers (i.e., operations manager, merchandise manager, controller, promotional manager, etc.)

Licensing and Permits

- Register SBE with state + local authorities (if required)
- Business licenses from local + state governments
- Specific permits based on the type of business (if required)
- Tax compliance (ensure tax exemption)
- Intellectual property (trademarks/copyrights for products sold and trademark protection for the SBE's brand + logo)

Food Safety Regulations:

- Food operations comply with FDA food safety guidelines
- Obtain necessary food handler certifications for students and supervisors
- Regular inspections by local health departments

EQUIPMENT

Food operations

- Check for used (buy and sell groups, used restaurant equipment, community and parents)
- Space and electrical requirements
- Check what school and district may have in storage
- Donations from the community that can be refurbished

Retail operations

- Buy used fixtures (buy and sell groups, store closings)
- Donations from the school, school district and community that can be refurbished
- Free equipment from vendors for selling their products
- Check local university or college bookstores

PRODUCT SELECTION + VENDORS

Food operations

- School service supplier (Gordon Food Services, Sysco)
- Local: Sam's, Costco, BJ's
- Specifically focused on school nutrition guidelines (Frosty Fruit, Otis Spunkmeyer, Dippin Dots or Yo Dots)

Retail operations

- Connect with local vendors for custom pieces if not making them yourself
- Use vendors with low order minimums
- Suppliers that specialize in school, spirit and sports products

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

- Smart snack guidelines
- Smart snack calculator
- Make sure you are familiar with the quantities and sizes
- Create a product sheet for the SBE and the food service director (recipes you create or items without a label like lattes, frappes, etc., for nutritional breakdown and allergies)
- Determine if your state or school district has additional guidelines. Some schools have additional guidelines on top of the national guidelines.
- Check with your school some stores cannot sell snacks due to cafeteria contracts or cannot sell them during the school day

SBE GRADING

Performance-based Assessments

- Role-specific evaluations based on job descriptions
- Regular performance reviews mimicking real-world work environments

Project-based Assessments

- Evaluation of long-term projects like developing a new product line

Practical Skills Tests

- Cash handling + transaction processing assessments
- Product knowledge quizzes
- Technology proficiency tests (POS, inventory + accounting software)

Portfolio Development

- Marketing materials students create
- Financial reports students prepared

Oral Presentations

- Sales pitches for new products/ services or marketing campaign proposals
- Problem-solving presentations for real SBE challenges

Competency-Based Evaluations

- Checklists of specific skills + knowledge areas
- Mastery demonstrations for key competencies



QUESTIONS

Thank You!