DECA continues to be a leader in supporting key educational initiatives through its comprehensive learning program. A classroom companion, DECA integrates into classroom instruction, applies learning, connects to business and promotes competition. DECA’s extensive offering of programs, ranging from competitive events to educational conferences to corporate partner challenges and more, deliver a variety of activities to serve diverse learning styles while also providing multiple assessment methods.

DECA’s Comprehensive Learning Program directly supports the Career Clusters® initiative, National Curriculum Standards, 21st century skills and Common Core State Standards.
CAREER CLUSTERS® AND NATIONAL CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Career Clusters®
As an organizing tool for curriculum design and instruction, Career Clusters® provide the essential knowledge and skills for the 16 Career Clusters® and their Career Pathways. Career Clusters® provide students with relevant contexts for studying and learning by linking school-based learning with the knowledge and skills required for success in the workplace. The knowledge and skills encompass both secondary and postsecondary education so the framework informs efforts to strengthen and improve student transition from secondary to postsecondary education.

National Curriculum Standards
The National Curriculum Standards for Business Administration provide insight into what business leaders view as important to the success of employees at various levels and in various specialties. These standards define the content for the respective Career Cluster®. They inform teachers, administrators, and curriculum developers as to what should be taught. Educators, then, take the standards and determine how to deliver the content (instructional strategies) and how to design the programs and courses.

DECA Supports Career Clusters® and National Curriculum Standards
DECA's Comprehensive Learning Program supports the marketing, business management, finance, and hospitality and tourism career clusters. DECA's programming, including competitive events, educational conferences, corporate partner challenges, educational publications, school-based enterprises, educator professional learning and more, support the development of necessary knowledge and skills for careers in these four career clusters. Knowledge and skills defined in the National Curriculum Standards and Career Clusters® are infused in DECA programs. For example, the certification standards in DECA's School-based Enterprise Certification Program are designed to directly support the teaching and learning of the National Curriculum Standards.

DECA's Competitive Events Program also directly aligns with Career Clusters® and National Curriculum Standards. Each role-play and case study are developed using performance indicators which directly link to the knowledge and skill statements that comprise the Career Clusters® and National Curriculum Standards frameworks.

DECA's competitive events transcripts express each member's performance rated against National Curriculum Standards through their participation in DECA's Competitive Events.
21st Century Skills

21st century skills are a series of skills and abilities that employers seek in their employees. The framework presents a holistic view of 21st century teaching and learning that combines a discrete focus on 21st century student outcomes (a blending of specific skills, content knowledge, expertise and literacies) with innovative support systems to help students master the multi-dimensional abilities required of them in the 21st century.

In order to succeed in today’s workplace, employees must excel in the 4Cs:
1. Critical thinking and problem solving
2. Communication
3. Collaboration
4. Creativity and innovation

DECA Supports 21st Century Skills

DECA understands that 21st century skills are important to college and career success. DECA members develop 21st century skills through their participation in DECA activities, such as competitive events, educational conferences, corporate partner challenges, educational publications, school-based enterprises and more. Because DECA activities are usually project-based and problem-based, DECA members use high order thinking skills and develop key competencies in the areas of critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity and innovation.

All DECA competitive events support the development of 21st century skills. For example, role-playing events require students to be problem solvers and effective communicators. Written and prepared events require students to collaborate with local businesses and team members, identify and solve complex problems, and then clearly communicate the project to others.

DECA’s Competitive Events Program is a model for assessing 21st century skills and abilities. DECA’s team decision making and individual series events evaluate items, as judged by business professionals, specific to 21st century skills.

Team decision making events ask the business professionals to judge the team’s ability to reason effectively and use systems thinking, make judgments and decisions, solve problems, communicate clearly, show evidence of collaboration and show evidence of creativity. Likewise, individual series events ask judges to evaluate the participant’s ability to reason effectively, use systems thinking, make judgments and decisions, and solve problems.

The students’ performance is then analyzed compared to the other students participating in the competitive event at the DECA International Career Development Conference and reported using the DECA competitive events transcript.

Crosswalks

DECA has created a crosswalk to help teachers document which 21st century skills are developed through student participation in DECA’s Competitive Events Program. For example, one 21st century skill standard reads “Develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others effectively.” This standard can be developed through participation in all of DECA’s competitive events.

www.deca.org/competitions/highschool
The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers.

■ www.corestandards.org

DECA Supports Common Core
DECA’s Comprehensive Learning Program provides robust opportunities to support student learning of Common Core standards in English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics. For example, DECA members participating in the Accounting Applications Series Event will be developing their mathematics skills, while members writing research reports for the Business Operations Research Events will be developing their English Language Arts & Literacy skills. DECA advisors are encouraged to collaborate with core teachers to develop classroom activities that infuse rigorous and relevant learning into classroom instruction in both classes.

Crosswalks
DECA has created crosswalks to help teachers document which Common Core Standards are developed through student participation in DECA’s Competitive Events Program. For example, one Common Core standard in English Language Arts & Literacy is, “Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.” This standard can be developed through participation in DECA’s role-playing and case study events.

■ www.deca.org/competitions/highschool