

School-Based Enterprises

What Are School-Based Enterprises (SBE)?

School-Based Enterprises are actual businesses serving the larger school or community. These enterprises give students valuable employability, academic and technical skills if developed and operated correctly. Students get first-hand experience in connecting classroom learning with a real-world business. The most common example of a school-based business in Ohio is the school store. However, schools may also choose to do a shorter-term business such as gift-wrapping at a mall during the holidays. Marketing Education and DECA have used school-based enterprises as an exciting learning tool for over four decades. These experiences develop entrepreneurial skills that businesspeople believe are essential to a student's success.

Are School-Based Enterprises Fundable as Part of a Marketing Education Program?

SBEs are fundable if they are an integral part of the Marketing Education program and are operated as a real-world business. Students should make all decisions for operation and management of the school store with the supervision of the teacher.

Some schools choose to operate an SBE as an extra-curricular component that does not make the connections between classroom and work-based skills. This is not fundable since it is not clearly connected to classroom learning.

What Are the Key Features of School-Based Enterprises?

SBEs must function as real businesses. These features should be included in every SBE:

- Teaches marketing content standards (including related academics)
- Employs appropriate accounting measures and cost controls.
- Adheres to all related local and state requirements for taxation, health codes, fire codes, vendor's license, etc.
- Incorporates current technology and equipment and has appropriate space for operation.
- Demonstrates a positive cash flow and profitability.
- Uses funds according to regulations and school guidelines.
- Is endorsed by the school board.
- Allows students to make the decisions related to operation and management (with supervision).
- Employs job descriptions for all positions.
- Evaluates every employee.
- Uses appropriate merchandising techniques.
- Uses marketing research for decision making.
- Employs a business plan, financial management plan, and marketing plan.
- Uses current marketing strategies and techniques.
- Applies general business principles in all areas.
- Holds students accountable for their work.

Are There Resources for Starting and Operating a School-Based Enterprise?

Yes. One of the best resources available is from National DECA (www.deca.org). They have a *Guide for Starting and Managing a School-Based Enterprise* and a *School –Based Enterprise Certification Program*. There are additional Web sites. You might want to try the site for Opportunities/Jobs/Careers, (http://www.ojc-omaha.org/resources/school_based/sbe.html) and/or the professional development site of Prentice Hall (http://www.phschool.com/professional_development/teaching_tools/career_awareness/school-based_enterprises.html).