

14. I am having a difficult time getting kids to come to the meetings and follow through with their ideas. I have not tied these activities to a grade, and I wondered what other incentives I could use?

Lucinda Mason:

Every activity outside of my classroom involves a participation grade for my students. I have two justifications for that—(1) we are co-curricular, and (2) sometimes they learn as much or more doing a DECA project than they ever will in the classroom. Once I set the number of points, I never change them. Sometimes, they beg and ask for more points than I have assigned, but I don't budge. I have my meetings in the evenings, and sometimes it is hard to get students to attend.

Officers can only miss two activities without being excused or they are removed from the leadership team. I have 11 officers, and a lot of times they will bring someone with them, so you get to the point where it is a social thing for them. I also feed them at most meetings, especially early in the year (when we have some money).

Al Gancarz:

Try different times. With sports and work, meetings are sometimes difficult. Grades are a good incentive. Try a breakfast meeting with donuts and juice or after school with pizza.

Bill Lind:

I never tied DECA to a grade! Kids really don't value a grade compared to self-actualization and personal achievement. Maybe you need to break your activities into small group projects so one group can achieve and model for the others.

Debbie Tixier:

We have made it possible for our DECA students to letter in DECA each year. It is not easy for them to achieve this. They have to earn a certain number of activity credits to be considered, and the expectations are high. In order to letter, they have to be pretty involved in most chapter activities during the year, take on some type of a leadership role (committee chair, officer, etc.) and be successful at the beginning levels of competition. It gives those students who will not letter in a sport or other club a chance to obtain a letter. We have a form we pass out at the beginning of the year letting the students know what is basically expected if they plan on earning a letter. They then keep track of all their activities and submit the form at the end of the year. We have a little reception with cake and punch and award the letters on a day near the end of the school year. (It does mean that we as advisors have to also keep track of who participates in all the different DECA activities for that year.)

Dennis Sweetapple:

In our school system DECA is co-curricular, and a grade can be part of the

incentive to get involved.

Mike Karpie:

Never tie DECA to a grade. DECA is about the learning experience and not the grade. It looks great on a college application or on a résumé. The important things are the friendships and the special moments you can build. The best thing we do is hold an end-of-year banquet. We invite all the members, parents and administrators to attend. We give out special awards and show a 40-minute video of the year in review. We eat a great dinner, and the seniors have a moment to say good-bye. This is a huge incentive because it generates fun and friendship.