



# STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROCUREMENT CHALLENGE

STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROCUREMENT CHALLENGE  
*Sponsored by the National Association of State Procurement Officials*



Develop a strategic procurement plan to solve a real-world issue in your school—such as sourcing sustainable cafeteria food, upgrading classroom technology, or increasing local business participation in contracts. Your team will research ethical, sustainable, and value-driven procurement strategies and create a detailed written report outlining the problem, proposed solution, implementation approach, and expected impact. Then, bring your plan to life with a creative media piece designed to engage and inspire your community.

## Driving Question or Challenge:

How can you identify a procurement challenge at your school and develop a comprehensive, ethical, and sustainable procurement solution that demonstrates effective supplier research, cost analysis, and implementation planning?

## Real-World Context:

This challenge requires DECA members to engage with the complexities of institutional procurement, where strategic sourcing, vendor evaluation, and budget management play crucial roles. By developing a procurement solution for their school, DECA members will explore the unique challenges of public sector purchasing, understand the importance of ethical and sustainable procurement practices, and learn about the specialized strategies needed to navigate institutional buying processes. This experience mirrors real-world scenarios faced by procurement professionals, school administrators, and public sector purchasing specialists, encouraging students to think critically about stakeholder analysis, value proposition development, and the integration of cost-effectiveness with social responsibility.

## CHALLENGE OVERVIEW

- This challenge consists of two major components: a comprehensive written report (2-3 pages) and a creative media component of your choice
- Each entry will be composed of **two to four members** of a DECA chapter. Chapters may submit multiple entries for consideration.
- Teams must fully complete and submit the online registration form at [www.deca.org/challenges](http://www.deca.org/challenges) no later than **January 9, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET** to be eligible for awards.
- Late entries will not be accepted.
- Participants will identify a real procurement challenge at their school and develop a comprehensive solution with supplier research and cost analysis.
- The creative media component allows teams to choose from three options to showcase their solution.
- National Association of State Procurement Officials will evaluate all submitted entries and select the top three overall teams.
- DECA Inc. and the National Association of State Procurement Officials are not responsible for lost, damaged, mislabeled, or misdirected entries.

## KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS DEVELOPED

Participants will demonstrate knowledge and skills needed to address the components of the project as described in the content outline and evaluation forms.

Participants will also develop many 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, in the following categories, desired by today's employers:

- Communication and Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Initiative and Self-direction
- Media Literacy
- Research and Analysis
- Financial Literacy

## PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

### Required Components:

- 2-3 Page Project Summary Report
- Creative Media Component (choose one):
  - 3-5 Minute PSA Video
  - Social Media Campaign (minimum 5 posts with graphics)
  - Mock News Story (written article with accompanying visuals)

### Suggested School Procurement Focus Areas:

Teams may choose any procurement challenge at their school, including but not limited to:

- Sustainable cafeteria food sourcing
- Classroom technology upgrades
- School supplies and materials
- Facility maintenance and improvements
- Transportation services
- Textbook and educational resource procurement
- Energy efficiency improvements
- Safety and security equipment
- Athletic equipment and uniforms
- Arts and music program supplies

## WRITTEN REPORT GUIDELINES

The 2-3 page written report must include the following components:

### I. Introduction and Problem Identification

- Problem Description:** Provide a clear, detailed description of the procurement problem at your school for which you are offering a solution
- Stakeholder Analysis:** Describe the audience most affected by this problem, including their demographics, needs, and current challenges
- Impact Assessment:** Explain how this problem currently affects the school community

### II. Proposed Procurement Solution

- Solution Overview:** Provide a comprehensive explanation for what you believe to be the best procurement solution to this problem
- Cost Research:** Present detailed research into the cost of the solution you have created, including initial investment and ongoing expenses
- Supplier Research:** Research and evaluate suppliers that you believe would be most effective in providing your solution
- Expected Impact:** Describe specifically how this procurement solution would change the school for the betterment of students and the broader school community

### III. Implementation Plan

- Implementation Timeline:** Proposed plan for implementation, including detailed timeline with milestones and phases
- Budget and Cost Analysis:** Comprehensive cost analysis including procurement costs, implementation expenses, and return on investment calculations
- Supplier Selection Strategy:** Proposed list of suppliers that would be used during this process, with justification for selection criteria
- Performance Metrics:** Proposed key performance indicators to measure whether the solution is working effectively for students and the school
- Risk Management:** Identify potential challenges and mitigation strategies



2-4 PARTICIPANTS



2-3 PAGE  
WRITTEN REPORT



CREATIVE MEDIA  
COMPONENT

# CREATIVE MEDIA COMPONENT GUIDELINES

Choose ONE of the following creative media components to accompany your written report:

**Option 1: PSA Video (3-5 Minutes)**

- Present your problem identification and proposed solution
- Focus on key points to stay within time guidelines
- Be visually creative when presenting your problem, solution, and implementation plan
- All team members must participate in the video presentation
- Include compelling visuals, graphics, or demonstrations
- Target audience should be school administrators and decision-makers

**Option 2: Social Media Campaign**

- Create a minimum of 5 social media posts with original graphics
- Posts should educate the school community about the procurement problem and solution
- Include a mix of informational, engaging, and call-to-action content
- Demonstrate understanding of different platform strategies (Instagram, X, Facebook, TikTok, etc.)
- Include hashtags, captions, and posting schedule recommendations
- Show how the campaign would build support for the procurement solution

**Option 3: Mock News Story**

- Write a comprehensive news article (500-800 words) announcing the procurement solution
- Include quotes from fictional stakeholders (students, administrators, suppliers)
- Create accompanying visuals such as infographics, charts, or photographs
- Demonstrate how media coverage could support implementation of the solution

For evaluation details, please see the Presentation Evaluation Form.

## PRESENTATION JUDGING

National Association of State Procurement Officials will evaluate all submitted entries and select the top three overall teams. From the final three teams, the overall winning team will be selected.

## AWARDS

In partnership with the National Association of State Procurement Officials the following awards will be provided:

- 1st Place Team - \$1,500
- 2nd Place Team - \$1,000
- 3rd Place Team - \$500

The top three teams will be recognized on stage during DECA's International Career Development Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Eligibility to attend DECA ICDC is determined by the chartered association advisor based on their policies. Finalists should consult with their chartered association advisor for eligibility guidelines and gain approval from their school advisor to attend the conference.

## TIMELINE

Challenge begins	September 2025
Challenge submission deadline	January 9, 2026
Top 3 teams announced	February 24, 2026
Top 3 teams recognized at ICDC (Atlanta, GA)	April 25-28, 2026



# STRATEGIC SCHOOL PROCUREMENT CHALLENGE

## PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Team Member Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Did the participating team...		Little/No Value	Below Expectation	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Judged Score
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS						
1.	Conduct thorough problem identification and stakeholder analysis?	0-1-2	3-4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11-12-13	14-15	
2.	Explain the nature and scope of purchasing?	0-1-2	3-4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11-12-13	14-15	
3.	Explain the nature of project management?	0-1-2	3-4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11-12-13	14-15	
4.	Present detailed cost analysis and budget considerations for procurement solution?	0-1-2	3-4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11-12-13	14-15	
5.	Describe the relationship between procurement and operations management activities (e.g., strategic sourcing, supplier relationship management, supply chain management)?	0-1-2	3-4-5-6-7	8-9-10-11-12-13	14-15	
WRITTEN REPORT AND CREATIVE MEDIA COMPONENT						
6.	Written report demonstrates thorough research into procurement best practices and institutional buying processes.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
7.	Proposed solution shows clear understanding of public sector procurement requirements and constraints.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
8.	Creative media component effectively communicates procurement solution to target audience.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
9.	Performance metrics and risk management strategies are clearly defined and measurable.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
10.	Show evidence of creativity and originality in both written and media components.	0-1	2-3	4	5	
TOTAL SCORE (100 points)						