

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WHAT IS MECA CHALLENGE?

MECA Challenge is a one-day, experiential learning program where student teams compete to invent the best solution for real-world business problems facing a Kansas City startup. Teams of six are guided by hand-selected and trained mentors from the local entrepreneur community. At the end of the day, each team presents their solution to a panel of judges, and prizes are awarded for the most viable solutions.

MECA Challenge has two student-centric goals: build an innovative mindset and expose students to the local entrepreneur community. The results speak for themselves. Students not only gain confidence in critical soft skills, but also leave the event aware and excited to engage with the entrepreneur community.

MECA stands for "Most Entrepreneurial City in America". MECA Challenge builds an innovative mindset that makes reaching "MECA" status possible and serves as a powerful example of how innovation and education should intersect. Because more than 60% of participants have no previous entrepreneurial experience, the value and impact of this program is significant.

After organizing five events reaching 160 students in 2015, MECA Challenge is on pace for at least 14 events reaching 750 students in 2016 and is garnering interest outside of Kansas City.

NOTE: MECA Challenge is also available as professional development for teachers and faculty. Three such events are already scheduled for 2016.

STUDENT IMPACT

MECA Challenge conducts entry and exit surveys at each event. These are results from 2015.

Overall confidence in soft skills practiced during MECA Challenge

All students reported a ...

- 13% increase in confidence in their ability to **problem solve**
- 11% increase in confidence in their **marketing** abilities
- 7% increase in confidence in their **strategic thinking** skills

Urban students reported a ...

- 31% increase in confidence in their **communication** skills
- 24% increase in confidence in **working in teams**
- 18% increase in confidence in their **marketing** abilities
- 11% increase in confidence in their ability to **problem solve**
- 11% increase in confidence in their **strategic thinking** skills

Engagement in the local entrepreneurial community

- 61% of students had never participated in a previous entrepreneurship activity
- 4 out of 5: student interest in participating in future entrepreneurial events
- 4.2 out of 5: student enjoyment at MECA Challenge



A TRUE WIN-WIN

MECA Challenge offers students a completely unique experience during which they actively learn how to perform in a fast-paced professional environment. Students gain confidence in 21st-century professional skills, which, in turn, strengthen the talent pipeline for the future of Kansas City.

"I believe that these types of events provide local entrepreneurs with a better connection to local youth while inspiring the participating students to think outside the box and to discover that every challenge is actually an opportunity. This type of critical thinking isn't taught in schools and is an invaluable lesson. For these students it helps to instill the mindset that they CAN make a difference. And this mindset opens a whole new world of possibilities."

~ Grant Gooding, CEO of Proof Positioning and MECA Challenge mentor

AVERAGE REACH PER EVENT

- **48 students** from local high schools & colleges solve real business problems
- **5 schools** bring students to participate
- **4 local companies** present real business problems to students
- **8 mentors** provide guidance to teams of students
- **3 judges** ask questions & offer feedback

SAMPLE SCHEDULE

MECA Challenge fits into a typical school day, but can be lengthened or shortened as needed.

7:30am - 8:00am	Students arrive
8:00am - 8:30am	Welcome & intro to entrepreneurship
8:30am - 9:00am	Intro to business challenges and Q&A with entrepreneur
9:00am - 11:30am	Work in teams with mentor
11:30am - 12:00pm	Working lunch
12:00pm - 1:30pm	Work in teams with mentor & practice presentations
1:30pm - 2:30pm	Team presentations
2:30pm - 3:00pm	Announce winners & wrap up

We look forward to partnering with you to bring MECA Challenge to your school! Don't hesitate to reach out with any questions.

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MECA Challenge is a program of CEED, the Center of Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Development. CEED is team of entrepreneur community builders that also operate Village Square Coworking Studio and Startland News.

For more information about CEED, visit www.ceedthefuture.com.

