

## **Howell High School DECA Members Advance to International Competition**

**HOWELL, Mich., March 25, 2021** - Two Howell High School students and DECA club members were named state champions in the Sports and Entertainment Marketing Team Decision Making event and have advanced to the international DECA competition. The students, Thomas Stevens and Jacob Hiller, each had to complete a 100 question written exam. As a team, the students had to complete a case study situation involving a problem in a business in the area of sports and entertainment marketing. For the case study, the students had to prepare and present a 15-minute presentation to a judge who works in the sports and entertainment industry.

For their case study, Stevens and Hiller had to develop a promotion and marketing plan to support red wolves conservation for a high school whose mascot was the Red Wolves. Their project included raising funds for red wolf conservation through ticket sales and promoting conservation efforts through informational signage at sporting events.

Both Stevens and Hiller were excited to learn they had advanced to the international competition. “I didn’t believe it. I was in shock,” said Stevens. “I was surprised. It means a lot, and it was nice to see how our hard work paid off,” added Hiller.

In addition to Stevens and Hiller, three Howell High School students were named state finalists. Jackson Dukes and Adam Mrakitsch earned honors in the Buying and Merchandising Team Decision Making event and have qualified for the international competition as alternates. Joel Rushlow excelled in the Individual Entrepreneurship Series event. In total, 18 Howell students qualified for the state competition based on their performance at a district event. Additionally, Dukes and Rushlow also earned medals for the highest test score in their flight of competitors.

“Hats off to the group of students I have had the pleasure to introduce DECA to the past couple of years. These students have done so much for our program’s growth and school community. They have had tremendous success the past few years competing by continuously advancing to the state competition each year,” said Robert Klein, Howell High School business teacher and DECA advisor. “For me to get the opportunity to see them break through as state champions their last year of high school is something really special. I am just extremely proud of the way they have taken responsibility into their own hands and truly seen the positive impact DECA has on the future they endure beyond Howell High school.”

Over the past few years, Howell High School’s DECA club has been making a name for itself. In addition to continued success at the DECA competitive events, the club has increased its membership by more than 400 percent and was recently recognized as having the most significant membership increase in the state.

The International DECA Competition will be held virtually this year during April. The competition winners will be announced during an awards ceremony on Thursday, May 6.

### **About DECA**

DECA is a high-energy organization designed to prepare students to be college and career-ready upon graduation. DECA has more than 225,000 members in 5,000 high school chapters from all 50 states and nine countries. Students gain experience through interactive classroom activities and by attending DECA Conferences throughout the school year.