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CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL  
OPPORTUNITIES

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*A community approach to educating entrepreneurs;  
An entrepreneurial approach to building a community*

## **Student Application Packet 2019-2020**

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## “Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities” (CEO) in Greene and Calhoun Counties

There is an old saying, “The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago, the second best time is today.” The Greene-Calhoun CEO Class of 2019-2020 will be planting and cultivating seeds in our community through a program that will prepare high school seniors to be responsible, enterprising individuals who become entrepreneurs and/or entrepreneurial thinkers and contribute to economic sustainable development throughout the region.

This course is not based on a textbook or heavily directed by a lesson plan. Instead, students are immersed in real-life learning experiences with the opportunity to take risks, manage the results, and learn from the outcomes. Entrepreneurship education is not just about teaching someone to run a business, it is also about inspiring creative thinking, promoting a strong sense of self-worth and allowing the student to empower him/herself to succeed in life. Through the CEO program, students learn how to create and successfully run a business, and so much more.

### **Our Mission:**

The Greene-Calhoun CEO program aims to enable high school students in Greene and Calhoun counties to become self-reliant, enterprising individuals who will start successful businesses and contribute to the ongoing economic and social development of our communities.

### **Our Goals:**

- Provide opportunities for our students to be engaged, curious and ready to learn
- Provide real-world, real-life experience for students
- Create a learning environment that takes the “lid” off of learning
- Connect students with local business professionals creating a lasting support network
- Transform the way young people view the world and their future
- Inspire and encourage young people to return to their communities to live, work, raise families and start successful businesses

### **Curriculum and Program Detail**

The curriculum is modeled after the successful Effingham County CEO Class ([www.effinghamceo.com](http://www.effinghamceo.com)), which is linked to state and national standards as well as the Illinois Core. In addition to the approval from ISBE (12053A001), Southern Illinois University has agreed to provide college credits for successful completion of the class, and it is currently being reviewed for credit by the University of Illinois at Springfield. Lewis and Clark Community College will be granting Greene-Calhoun CEO students with 6 hours of college credit upon completion of the program.

The student will be exposed to various academic aspects of successfully creating and operating a business—i.e., *Idea Generation/Opportunity Identification and Screening; Resource Acquisition; Building the Management Team; Entrepreneurial Marketing, Development; Finance and Accounting; Operations and Growth Management; Business Ethics; Managing Innovation, Social Media and Mobile; Business Valuation and Exits*. However, the focus will be applying these concepts to real-life experiences with Business Partners using innovative practices, state-of-the art technology and the students’ personal interests. Additionally, students will go through an entrepreneurial skills and interest assessment to help them access and apply their own creative skills.

Lastly, each student will create multiple business plans and one real business. They will showcase these businesses at a trade show at the end of the academic year.

**Learning Outcomes** include the ability to:

- Successfully recognize and pursue opportunities in one's life
- Apply innovation to real problems
- Think in a creative and critical manner
- Work in teams and build a network of supportive adults
- Glean valuable information about business culture
- Create and operate a new business venture
- Access needed resources.

*Entrepreneurial thinkers* make better innovators, employees, government workers, public representatives, business owners and community leaders.

**The Details**

- **Class selection:**
  - Open to any high school senior in Greene and Calhoun counties
  - Students interested in enrolling must complete a rigorous application, which includes an essay and letters of recommendation from a school counselor, business professional and personal character reference
  - Selection is determined by the Selection Committee of the Greene-Calhoun CEO Board of Directors
- **CEO Board:** Made up of Business Partners, Community Partners and Educators
- **Class Time:** 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during the school year when schools are in session (there is a proposed change for the class to meet Monday through Friday starting in the 2019-2020 school year)
- **Location:** Different area Business Partners' locations throughout the year
- **Transportation:** Each student is responsible for her/his own transportation to the class location and back to her/his high school
- **Funding:** 100% of the funding is from local Business Investors, Community Partners and a program grant; the class does not cost the schools or the student anything

**Key Components of CEO Classes:**

- Creative and applied learning environment across a multitude of local businesses
- Diverse mix of resourceful students from different schools
- Involvement of high school counselors in helping identify applicant candidates
- Dynamic and inspiring instructor
- Active and direct participation of local Business Partners as student advisors and mentors
- Students' relationships with Business Partners that continues throughout students' lives
- Expert speakers from a variety business sectors
- Mentoring and job-shadowing opportunities
- Consistent encouragement, involvements and investment into the individual student
- Use of state-of-the art technology

**The People** (behind the movement)

- *Fiduciary:* District One Foundation
- *Program Grantor and Advisors:* Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship
- *Education Partner:* Lewis and Clark Community College
- *Business Partners:* Dozens of local businesses in Greene and Calhoun counties
- *Business Investors:* Roughly 25 regional businesses leaders



## APPLICATION & SELECTION PROCESS GUIDELINES

Dear High School Guidance Counselor:

You are the key to the success of this program. You know the capabilities and interests of your students better than anyone. Thank you for your participation with this exciting new program in education and community development.

### Who we are seeking:

The Greene-Calhoun CEO Selection Committee will be looking for candidates who

- show dependability, reliability and loyalty through their **school attendance and transcripts**;
- show drive and initiative through **references and letters of recommendations**;
- complete a **narrative statement and questionnaire** introducing personality, work style, technical skills; and reasons why the student wants to be in the CEO Class.

Applicants will also complete a **questionnaire** reflecting their entrepreneurial abilities and interests. Both the applicant and their parent or guardian must sign the application.

If a larger number of applications are received, an interview process may be initiated. Interviews would be held **during the week of March 11**. School administrations will have final authority on student enrollment in the program.

If you have any questions about this program or these dates, please do not hesitate to contact me personally. Thank you again for all your help in this selection process.

Kindest regards,

*Julie Rhoads*

Julie Rhoads  
Chair  
Greene-Calhoun CEO Board of Directors  
julier@whgins.com  
(217) 942-9444

## Applicant Characteristics (For Guidance Counselors)

We are not necessarily looking for the students with who thrives in the confines of the traditional classroom. We are seeking creative students with energy and ideas and those students who seek places to apply them.

### Some specific characteristics we seek

- Inveterate learner
- Active and applied learner
- Naturally curious and inquisitive
- Early adopter
- Creative, innovative, entrepreneurial thinker
- Open-minded
- Passionate
- Optimistic and Opportunistic
- Strong work ethic
- Willingness to ask questions
- Willing to operate outside of the own comfort zone
- Willing to “think outside the box”
- Integrity
- Can work alone or in a team environment
- Represents themselves and the school well in public
- Unafraid to contact and connect with new people

If you have any questions about the student application process or recommending a student, please don't hesitate to contact me or anyone else on the student selection committee.

Due to:

**Julie Rhoads**  
**c/o Illinois Electric Cooperative**  
**2 South Main Street**  
**Winchester, IL 62694**

no later than: **MARCH 8, 2019**

## Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Class 2019-2020 Student Application

Dear Applicant:

The Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) Class Board of Directors welcomes your application to participate in the 2019-2020 CEO Class.

CEO is a year-long course. It uses partnerships to provide an overview of business development and processes. The local business community works with area schools to create project-based experiences for students by providing funding, expertise, meeting space, business tours and one-on-one mentoring. Students visit area businesses, learn from guest speakers, participate in a class business, write business plans, and start and operate their own business. Business concepts learned through the experiential CEO class are critical; the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills of problem solving, teamwork, self-motivation, responsibility, higher order thinking, communication and inquiry are at the heart of student development throughout the course.

The class meets for 1 ½ hours on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in a variety of businesses. (There is a proposal to have the class meet Monday through Friday starting in the 2019-2020 school year.) The class is led by Jennifer Sellars, MBA who works for Illinois Electric Cooperative as the Manager of Educational Programs. She is also the Facilitator for the Morgan-Scott CEO program. The program is completely supported financially by our CEO Business Investors.

The attached application must be completed in full and returned to your guidance counselor on or before **Tuesday, March 5**. You will be notified of your acceptance status no later than **Monday, March 25**.

A complete application includes:

- A one-page personal narrative in which you introduce yourself to the selection committee and tell the committee why you're interested and why you should be accepted.
- Two completed Character Reference Questionnaires: One from your guidance counselor or from a teacher at your school, and one from a person in the community, preferably someone for whom you've worked in some capacity.

Your guidance counselor will black out your name on all the material submitted to the selection committee and assign it an identification number.

Thank you for your interest in CEO. We look forward to reviewing your application.

-Greene-Calhoun CEO Board of Directors

**2019-2020 CEO CLASS APPLICATION**

**Blind Judging #** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Name** \_\_\_\_\_  Male  Female

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street Number or Route* *City* *State* *Zip*

Student Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Student Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of High School \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Legal Guardian's Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Legal Guardian's Home Address *(if different than above)* \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Legal Guardian's Telephone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ *(if different than student number)*

Parent email addresses \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Statement and Signature**

- I certify that to the best of my knowledge all of the information I have provided is accurate and that the work submitted is my own.*
- I acknowledge that information about my selection to the CEO Class and the projects that I develop in CEO may be shared with the public.*
- I understand that it is my responsibility to return this form and the required attachments to my guidance counselor. I further recognize that it is my responsibility to stay in touch with my guidance counselor to ensure that the application is filed in complete form and submitted in a timely manner.*
- I agree to participate in a formal interview process prior to my selection to the program, if requested.*
- I understand that it is the responsibility of the student to drive to and from each class and transportation is not provided by the school district.*
- I understand that if I am selected and participate in the CEO Class, I am making an ongoing commitment to remain engaged with the CEO Program as an alumni.*

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian's Statement and Signature**

- I have reviewed the information on this form and give my permission for my child to proceed with the application process. I authorize my child's school and its employees to release any information necessary for this application.*
- I recognize that it is my child's responsibility to ensure that the complete application is filed in accordance with the stated deadline.*
- I understand that it is the responsibility of the student to drive to and from each class and transportation is not provided by the school district.*
- I understand that the application becomes the property of the school and cannot be returned.*

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Greene-Calhoun CEO Class**

**Blind Judging #** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHARACTER REFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE: for** \_\_\_\_\_

	Student name			
	Excellent	Good	Average	Below-Average
Motivation	_____	_____	_____	_____
Work Ethic	_____	_____	_____	_____
Responsibility Level	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____
Initiative	_____	_____	_____	_____
Character	_____	_____	_____	_____
Maturity	_____	_____	_____	_____
First Impression	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sense of Humor	_____	_____	_____	_____

How long have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you related in any way? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you believe the applicant is well-suited for CEO? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel the student will be able to handle the responsibility of attending class off-campus, driving to and from class, meeting with community leaders, and representing CEO? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your recommendation for the applicant:

Highly recommend  Recommend  Recommend with reservations  Not recommended

Additional comments regarding student concerns, challenges, special qualities or any other information that is important for the committee to consider may be attached to the application, if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Guidance Counselor  Business/Personal  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to: CEO Applicant, c/o the student's respective high school guidance counselor.

**Greene-Calhoun CEO Class**

**Blind Judging #** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHARACTER REFERENCE QUESTIONNAIRE: for** \_\_\_\_\_

	Student name			
	Excellent	Good	Average	Below-Average
Motivation	_____	_____	_____	_____
Work Ethic	_____	_____	_____	_____
Responsibility Level	_____	_____	_____	_____
Communication	_____	_____	_____	_____
Initiative	_____	_____	_____	_____
Character	_____	_____	_____	_____
Maturity	_____	_____	_____	_____
First Impression	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sense of Humor	_____	_____	_____	_____

How long have you known the applicant? \_\_\_\_\_ Are you related in any way? \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you believe the applicant is well-suited for CEO? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you feel the student will be able to handle the responsibility of attending class off-campus, driving to and from class, meeting with community leaders, and representing CEO? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Indicate your recommendation for the applicant:

Highly recommend  Recommend  Recommend with reservations  Not recommended

Additional comments regarding student concerns, challenges, special qualities or any other information that is important for the committee to consider may be attached to the application, if needed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name (print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Guidance Counselor  Business/Personal  
Phone # \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form to: CEO Applicant, c/o the student's respective high school guidance counselor.