

ENTREPRENEURSHIP PATHWAY ROADMAP

Freshman to Senior Year | Turn interests, skills, and ideas into a real business pathway

ENTREPRENEUR OPTIONS: Service business | E-commerce | Creative brand | Technology | Food | Beauty | Trades | Consulting | Social enterprise & more

9TH | DISCOVER

- Build strong foundations in English, math, digital literacy, communication, and problem-solving.
- Explore what you are good at, what people need, and problems you may want to solve.
- Join business, leadership, DECA/FBLA, marketing, coding, design, or career clubs if available.
- Start small: create a school-safe project, portfolio, pop-up idea, or mock business and learn from feedback.

10TH | BUILD

- Take business, marketing, accounting, economics, computer science, graphic design, media, or entrepreneurship courses when available.
- Consider dual enrollment in business, accounting, marketing, communication, economics, or technology.
- Learn basic budgeting, pricing, profit, customer service, branding, and recordkeeping.
- Interview or shadow entrepreneurs and study how real businesses attract and keep customers.

11TH | TEST

- Identify a clear customer and problem, then conduct simple market research before spending heavily.
- Create a lean business plan or business model, estimate startup costs, and test a small version of the idea.
- Build a portfolio, résumé, professional email, and appropriate online presence.
- Learn about business structures, taxes, licenses, permits, banking, contracts, intellectual property, and insurance with trusted adults/professionals.

12TH | LAUNCH

- Decide whether to launch now, continue testing, attend college/trade school while building, or gain work experience first.
- Create a written business plan, startup budget, marketing plan, and measurable goals.
- If launching, follow applicable local/state/federal registration, tax, license, permit, banking, and insurance requirements.
- Keep personal and business money organized, track income/expenses, protect your credit, and seek mentorship before taking on debt.

DUAL ENROLLMENT: Community-college courses in entrepreneurship, accounting, business law, marketing, economics, communication, graphic design, web development, or computer science can help students build practical skills while earning college credit.

WORTH MORE TIP: Entrepreneurship is more than having an idea or posting on social media. Learn the customer, test the idea, understand the numbers, start responsibly, and build skills that remain valuable whether the business succeeds, changes, or becomes a future career.

There's Just Not One Pathway to Success. | Plan early. Know your options. Choose your pathway.

Current as of August 2026. Business registration, tax, licensing, employment, and permit rules vary by business type and location, and minors may need parent/guardian involvement. Official reference: U.S. Small Business Administration business planning and launch resources.