

Credit Union School Branch Handbook



A How-to Guide for Establishing a Student Credit Union Branch

From the Financial Education Council of the Michigan Credit Union League



In-School Branches: How-To Guide

Updated February 2011

In cooperation with the following MCUL Financial Education Council members:

Robin Ahart
Kathy Beard
Gina Bowers
Liz Hoffius
Sheryl Hogle
Natalie McLaughlin
Pam Swope
Beth Troost
Ashley Winiarski

The Financial Education Council

The Michigan Credit Union League's Financial Education Council (FEC) is comprised of enthusiastic and experienced credit union financial educators working to foster and highlight consumer financial education activities by credit unions for their members and the communities they serve. The FEC helps to expand industry commitment to financial education by assisting credit unions with adult and youth educational resources and program implementation.

The August 2003 guide was compiled and prepared by Rose Evers, Kelly Hatler and Susan Young in cooperation with the following individuals:

Paula Dancer, CUDE
Rose Evers, CUDE
Heather Harris, CUDE
Kelly Hatler, CUDE
Leslie Herrick-Hay, CUDE
Kathy Hoen
Natalie McLaughlin
Beth Troost
Susan Young, CUDE

Contents

Purpose and Objectives.....	4
Scope and Operational Models	5
Do Your Homework! Researching In-school Branch Options.....	6
Preparing a Proposal for Upper Management and Board of Directors.....	8
Consider In-school Branch Regulatory Issues.....	9
Establishing a Partnership for Education.....	10
Structuring the Logistics of Your In-school Branch Operations.....	12
Student Volunteer Information and Issues.....	13
Student Membership Information and Programs.....	14
Marketing Your In-School Branch	15
Tracking Your Progress	17
Year-end Wrap up.....	18
Credit Union Contacts.....	19
Appendix: Sample Forms and Documents.....	21

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of an in-school credit union branch program is to assist young people in the development of personal finance and employability skills.

What is an in-school credit union?

Often referred to as a student credit union or student-run credit union, in-school credit unions are established as a financial education partnership between a credit union and a school or school district. While the scope and operation often vary depending on needs and resources, facilitating in-school branches gives students the opportunity to learn money management skills as they make account transactions at school, often coupled with additional financial education. Most in-school credit unions are also student-run, providing an additional benefit of developing career, math and organizational skills to the students involved in the operation of the branch.

Educational Objectives of an In-School Branch

- To create an educational environment in which young people will have hands-on experience in a financial setting.
- To increase the knowledge of today's youth regarding money management and financial products and services through the use of presentations on savings, budgets, credit and other financial management topics.
- To create a new generation of savers by showing the importance of setting realistic savings goals and offering age appropriate savings programs.
- To provide a supplement to current math, computer and social skills through experiences learned while working as a volunteer in the school credit union branch.
- To teach the student volunteers life-long employment skills such as organization, human relations, cash handling and teamwork.
- To introduce the importance of building a relationship with a financial institution.

Credit Union Benefits of an In-School Branch

- To provide the credit union with a foundation for future membership.
- To establish a relationship with school staff.
- To increase credit union visibility and goodwill with parents, school employees, and the community.
- To expand community service opportunities.
- High School in-school branches can help to identify and recruit desirable credit union employees.

Scope and Operational Models

The scope and operation of your credit unions' in-school branch will be determined by your goals and resources and should take into consideration the objectives of your school partners. A variety of operational models exist from which to build your unique program.

Typical credit union resources and responsibilities

- Equipment, documents, supplies
- Interviewing and training
- Oversight and supervision
- Insurance and bonding
- Security of information
- Marketing
- Financial education

Typical school resources and responsibilities

- Facility space, tables and chairs
- Staff liaison
- Assist with communications to teachers, students and parents
- Assist with interview and selection process
- Provide time for assembly or student meeting

Operational variables to consider

- School level or grade levels to include
- Availability and source of student volunteers or student workers
- Frequency of deposit dates and times of operation
- Location and set-up of school branch

Do Your Homework!

Researching School Branch Options

Contact Credit Unions with established programs

Contact credit unions with established student branch programs to research best practices and operational options. The credit unions listed in the [Credit Union Contact section](#) of this manual are willing to share information and best practices.

You may want to arrange to visit a credit union school branch to see the operation first-hand. This is usually agreeable if you approach a credit union that does not have an overlapping field of membership. The Credit Union National Association (CUNA) maintains a listing of current in-school branches (see the “In-School Branch Directory” under the “Youth” tab at www.cunapfi.org), or you can contact your state league for referrals.

Potential questions to ask:

- How do you make contact with the school?
- Do the students fall in your field of membership?
- Does the school staff fall in your field of membership?
- Will you service both the students and staff within the school?
- What is your physical branch set up? (location, equipment, computer access, etc.)
- Security issues? (money transportation and storage, confidentiality, etc.)
- What is the minimum balance requirement for the students? (same as regular membership or lower)
- What transactions are conducted at the student branch? (deposits only or combination of services)
- What type of limits do you place on deposits, withdrawals or check cashing?
- What are the hours of operation?
- What positions are offered to the students? (voluntary or compensation)
- How many students operate the branch?
- How do you select the student staff?
- What pitfalls did you encounter?
- What costs does your credit union incur to run this program?

Contact participating schools through referrals from credit union sources

Potential questions to ask:

- What benefits has the student credit union branch brought your school?
- What skills do you feel the students are learning by participating in the student branch?
- Has the school experienced any security issues related to the student branch?
- Would you recommend the student branch program to other schools?
- Do you have a teacher or school administrator that is willing to discuss your program and communicate your recommendation to a potential new school?

Online Research (see Appendix A-1 for additional financial education links)

- CUNA Personal Finance Initiative www.cunapfi.org. See “Resources for Youth” tab for the In-School branch Directory to locate other credit union programs and to record your in-school branch information. See also the “Model Youth Program Guide” on this site.
- [Michigan Credit Union League Youth Financial Education web page](#) for information on student credit unions, school partnerships and classroom presentations.
- National Youth Involvement Board www.nyib.org website. For resource sharing on the website and through the NYIB listserv and to report classroom presentations. The NYIB annual conference provides valuable information on serving youth.
- The Jump\$tart Coalition provides an online resource clearinghouse of youth financial education resources and youth presentation curriculum. www.jumpstartcoalition.org

Preparing a Proposal for Upper Management and Board

One of the biggest hurdles that credit union management and boards have in establishing a student credit union program is understanding both the effect on the credit union's bottom line and the future value of the program to the credit union. Student credit unions generally do not generate income for credit unions but the future potential for positive contributions from life-long membership of student members is very valuable.

A tool to help calculate the long term net value of serving young members is available. See the Credit Union Magazine January 2004 article “**“What is Emma Worth”- A Calculation**” by Pamela Swope, CUDE in **Appendix A-2**. An **accompanying interactive spreadsheet** that can be customized and used to help calculate the long term net value of serving young members to your credit union is posted on the on the Michigan Credit Union League's [Youth Financial Education page](#).

Anticipate and be prepared to encounter questions as well as objections

- Staffing issues
- Hours of operation
- Cost of program operation
- Marketing issues
- Pros and cons of the program
- Specific short and long-term goals of the program
- Specific short and long-term benefits to the credit union

Present your findings:

- Benefits of a student branch program – Include benefits to the credit union, the community, the youth involved, the schools, etc. For current studies and statistics regarding youth financial habits and youth financial education see “Making the Case for Financial Education” from the National Jump\$tart Coalition’s website. www.jumpstartcoalition.org
- Credit Union Statistics - Provide positive statistics from credit unions with established programs and other youth related research projects. Describe how your program will be tracked and monitored.
 - Membership retention
 - Transaction counts
 - Student participation figures
 - Dollars on deposit
 - Dollars on loan
 - Stats on family members
 - Statistics s from CUNA’s annual Environment Scan

- Competitive analysis - Find out what other financial institutions in your community are doing, if anything, to educate youth in the area of personal finance and career preparation.
- Cost analysis
 - Equipment – computer, cash boxes, office supplies and all materials for branch operation.
 - Staff – salaries and compensation.
 - Mileage
 - Marketing – contests, promotions, etc.
- Share success stories – Include quotes from credit unions with successful programs, especially those similar to your proposed operation.

Consider Regulatory Issues and Self-imposed Restrictions

Check with your legal counsel for compliance with regulations

Minimum share requirements for students (check your credit union by-laws)

USA Patriot Act compliance and other regulatory issues

- Use same procedures as with general membership

Cash handling procedures

- Set limits for cash transported to the branch location
- Set deposit and withdrawal policies
- Procedures are determined by the credit union and participating school

Student membership eligibility

- Verify membership requirements for students
- Non-community chartered credit unions may expand field of membership to include schools/organizations

Bonding issues and liability

- Refer to your credit union's bonding policies
- For liability information, check with your credit union's insurance policy
- Background checks may be required by school district

Establishing a Partnership for Education

Make contact with your chosen school via personal visit, letter or a phone call to discuss your desire to establish a partnership in education.

- Contact options are teachers, principals, district curriculum directors, superintendents, school board members, or parent organization (PTA) leaders.
- Each school or district operates uniquely; you may need to communicate with several school representatives or even an active parent seeking the right person that is interested in helping advocate for the partnership through the correct channels for approval at that school.

Set up initial meeting with school contact person(s).

- Give an overview of your proposed program.
- Show the benefits of the program to the students, the school and the community.
- Show how the in-school branch program provides hands-on learning which meets many of your state's curriculum standards and benchmarks. **(See Appendix B-1 for Michigan Benchmark Sample)**
- Be prepared to address the school's concerns about your credit union motives for a partnership
- Share success stories of similar programs.
- Set a follow-up meeting to discuss the implementation of the proposed program.
- A PowerPoint presentation created by the Michigan Credit Union League's Financial Education Council (FEC) is available to download and can be customized for your credit union. This presentation contains speaker notes and tips and can be used to show teachers, parents and administrators the value of a partnership with your credit union for classroom presentations and school credit union branches. See ***Financial Education- A Positive Partnership*** on the [MCUL Student Credit Union web page](#).

Conduct a follow-up meeting with all involved credit union and school staff.

Discuss issues such as:

- Eligibility requirements – The school may have to submit a formal request letter to NCUA for student/staff eligibility. **(see Appendix B-2)**
- Service to the school staff
- Potential age/grade levels to participate in program
- Potential age/grade level to operate the student branch
- Establishing a teacher or administrator liaison for communications
- Savings incentive programs
- Transaction types (deposits, withdrawals, check cashing etc.)
- Cash limits
- Liability concerns
- School emergency procedures and snow day procedures
- Defining the allocation of partnership expenses and/or responsibilities (credit union vs. school commitments)
- Computer line capabilities for online transactions, electrical access
- Possibility of parent volunteers
- Parking and school access procedures
- Communication and marketing procedures

Finalize partnership with school

See Appendix for sample documents:

- Appendix B-3 School Partnership Description Sample
- Appendix B-4 Letter of Acceptance – School SEG Membership
- Appendix B-5 Partnership for Education Certificate

Continue correspondence with school contacts to further establish the school branch structure.

Be flexible! Business schedules and agendas sometimes differ greatly from the schedules and agendas of the schools.

Structuring the Logistics of Your In-school Branch Operations

Set up the branch operations:

- Determine desired student branch operating times, hours and frequency.
 - Before, during, or after school?
 - During class time, lunch periods or scheduled break times?
 - How many days per week or month?
 - How many hours per day?
- Location of student branch - Negotiate a location with your school contact.
 - Library, lunchroom, hallway, empty classroom, etc.
 - Permanent set-up, portable set-up, or combination
- Equipment and general operating supplies
 - Laptop for on-line processing if desired; may need to work with school and your credit union to establish online accessibility and to navigate school and credit union computer security restrictions.
 - Pull carts to transport operating materials
 - Calculators, handheld or desktop (if using print function recommend battery operated)
 - Office supplies (pens, staplers, highlighters, etc.)
 - Cash boxes
 - Deposit slips or envelopes
 - Receipts
 - Cash bags
 - Bookkeeping record
 - Teller balancing record

Create supporting materials and documents for all branch operations

- Cash balancing forms (**Appendix C-1**)
- Bookkeeping records (**Appendix C-2**)
- Attendance records (**Appendix C-3**)
- Deposit/withdrawal slips and receipts (**Appendix C-4**)
- Policies and procedures (**Appendix C-5**)

Student Volunteer Information and Issues

In Michigan, most in-school credit unions are student-run or operated by student volunteers. Some high school student-run credit unions utilize interns or paid student workers. A few in-school credit unions are not operated by students; they are simply deposit days to promote the habit of saving. Collaborate with the school to determine the desired details of the student volunteers or student workers. Depending on the partnership, student volunteers may come from one classroom or grade level, from the general student population, or through a designated student group or club.

Student volunteer positions and responsibilities

- What volunteer positions will be available to the students? (i.e. teller, bookkeeper/accounting clerk, computer operator/data entry, branch manager/team leader, assistant branch manager, marketing teams etc.)
- Clearly define position responsibilities.
- Determine the number of each volunteer position available.
- What process will be used for filling the school branch positions?
- Determine the number of student shifts to operate your school branch (i.e. one shift working every time or more shifts alternating days).

Typical student volunteer selection process

- Create volunteer position materials:
 - Position descriptions (**Appendix D-1**)
 - Applications (**Appendix D-2**)
 - Interview questions/evaluation form (**Appendix D-3**)
 - Volunteer expectation/confidentiality forms (**Appendix D-4**)
 - Letter of congratulations or regret (**Appendix D-5 and D-6**)
 - Training materials (**Appendix D-7**)
- Conduct presentations in all classrooms chosen to staff the school branch. Topics to include:
 - Volunteer position specifics – the application, interview, and selection process and volunteer expectations.
 - Membership and savings program information.
- Set the deadline for accepting volunteer applications.
- Pick up the applications and post an interview schedule.
- Conduct volunteer interviews. School staff or parents may be utilized to help with the interviews if desired.

- Make final decisions on student volunteer staff based on application and interview process as well as teacher recommendations.
- In younger grade levels, consider assigning specific positions after training based on skills.
- Notify students with letter of congratulations or regret.
- Schedule student volunteer training and, when necessary, parent volunteers.
- Complete training with all volunteer staff.

Student Membership Information and Programs

Determine credit union account opening requirements and policies.

- Will parents need to come into the school or credit union in person to open an account or will they be allowed to mail or send the account application form to the school or to the credit union?
- At what age will parent co-signers not be required on savings accounts?

Conduct classroom presentations or school assembly to promote membership.

Suggested topics to include:

- General credit union philosophy
- Benefits of a saving account (safety, saving for a larger or future goal, compound interest)
- Membership information
- Savings program information
- Safe cash handling

**Provide membership application and materials to students and/or parents.
See Appendix E-2 for sample**

Marketing Your In-School Branch

Communicate information regarding your program to school staff.

- Buy-in from the teaching staff is an important factor in operating a successful in-school branch.
- Supportive teachers will help you market the program to the students in their classrooms.
- Attend staff meetings (especially at the beginning of each school year) to share information.
- Keep contact teachers informed of all program activities.
- Recognize teachers and principals who give outstanding support to your program.
 - Teacher/Principal appreciation event
 - Certificate of appreciation
 - Gifts bearing the credit union logo

Utilize marketing avenues in the school. Assign advertising tasks to students:

- Create signs and posters to distribute throughout the school.
- Write informational and fun announcements to be broadcast on daily announcements.
- Create and perform skits while visiting classrooms or to broadcast on video announcements.
- Write articles for school newsletters, bulletins, and newspapers.
- Provide information for school calendars.
- Advertise and/or publish articles in school yearbooks, newspapers and parent newsletters.
(see appendix E-3 for suggested school newsletter topics and timeline)

Organize a partnership kick-off assembly at the beginning of each school year.

- Invite key individuals such as credit union management and board members, school board members and parents.
- Hold a partnership certificate signing to formalize the partnership at your first assembly.
(Appendix B-5)
- Get the students involved by introducing your credit union volunteers.
- Have prize giveaways, Introduce contests and kick off savings programs.
- Include fun activities **(see Appendix E-1 Assembly Outline)**

Attend school functions and activities where there is family and community member involvement.

- Open houses and curriculum nights
- Carnivals, picnics, theatre and sporting events
- College prep nights, career prep events
- Parent meetings (PTA, PTO, etc.) and parent conferences
- Orientations

Offer incentives for using the in-school branch:

- Contests
- Prizes and giveaways (make sure your CU's name is imprinted on some)
- Treats for depositing
- Incorporate special credit union events such as: Credit Union Youth Week, International Credit Union Day, etc.

See Appendix E-4 for a sample school program and promotion schedule

Participate in career preparation activities in your community:

- Career fairs
- Reality Fairs
- Take Your Child to Work Day
- Conferences
- Job shadowing

Coordinate additional classroom presentations:

The more you are able to visit the classrooms, the more exposure your credit union will receive.

- Read stories related to money and saving
- Hands-on money related activities (identifying, counting and sorting)
- Checking accounts, credit basics, budgeting
- [Financial Lessons in a Box](#): Free financial literacy presentations from the Michigan Credit Union League Financial Education Council
- [NEFE High School Financial Planning Program](#)
- Remember to report your classroom presentations to the [National Youth Involvement Board](#).

Offer additional programs and products such as:

- Youth Oriented Checkbook Program
 - Credit union conducts classroom lessons on checking account information.
 - Students may write checks at school to pay for lunch, school store items, book orders, popcorn, and other school activities and functions.
 - Credit union collects the checks each week while operating credit union and pays each school organization from the student's checking accounts.
- Youth Goal-oriented Savings Products
 - Education
 - Auto
 - Christmas
 - Vacation
- Youth Loans
 - Student VISA cards, with a co-signer under the age of 21.
 - Small loans for school related items such as: prom, class rings, etc.
 - Share secured loans
 - For more information see the Michigan Credit Union League Financial Education Council's [Youth Loan Manual](#)

Tracking Your Progress

Tracking the progress of your in-school branch program allows you to monitor:

- The effectiveness of your program
- The profitability of your program
- The need to offer additional services to your youth membership as they mature
- Staffing needs to accommodate growth in educational partnerships

Ideas for tracking your progress:

- Research your computer system's capability to segregate student accounts from regular membership accounts for tracking purposes.
- Track family members who join the credit union due to a student member relationship.
- Keep copies of successful promotions or marketing ideas.

Information to track:

- Transaction summary per school
- Year-end deposit and loan summary
- Penetration – credit union members compared to school population

Year-End Wrap Up

Wrap up all savings programs.

- Create a certificate of achievement for each participant
- Attend year-end awards assemblies to recognize students who have achieved the criteria required to receive a certificate and/or prize

Recognize student volunteers.

- Create certificates of recognition
- Attend year-end awards assemblies to recognize all student volunteer's efforts
- Give each volunteer a gift from the credit union
- Consider organizing a year-end event for volunteers (pizza, skating, or bowling party, etc.)
- Hold a recognition event at your credit union

Recognize contact teachers and principals.

- Organize an event such as a dinner
- Show your appreciation with a gift
- Present them with a certificate of recognition at the school awards assembly

Credit Union Contacts

The following members of the Michigan Credit Union League's Financial Education Council (FEC) who contributed to this manual are willing to share best practices and provide information regarding their student credit union programs. The program information has been updated as of July 2014.

Contacts:

Community Financial Credit Union Plymouth, MI

Asset Size: \$ 543,090,240
School Branches: 28 Elementary, 7 Middle School, 4 High School
Credit Union Staff in program: 5 Program start year: 1991
Contact: Natalie McLaughlin, Senior Education Partnership Coordinator
(734) 582-8774 nmclaughlin@cfcu.org

Co-op Services Credit Union Livonia, MI

Asset Size: \$ 413,387,537
School Branches: 7 Elementary, 1 Middle School
Credit Union Staff in program: 1 Program start year: 2008
Contact: Jeremy Cybulski, Youth and Community Development Coordinator
(734) 466-6133 jcybulski@cscu.org

CP Federal Credit Union Jackson, MI

Asset Size: \$ 375,269,841
School Branches: 26 Elementary, 3 Middle Schools, 2 High Schools
Credit Union Staff in program: 9 Program start year: 1991
Contact: Sheila Troxel
(517) 784-7101 ext. 4121 stroxel@cpfederal.com

ELGA Credit Union Burton, MI

Asset Size: \$ 365,120,523
School Branches: 5 Elementary Schools, 2 Middle Schools, 1 High School
Credit Union Staff in program: 1 Program start year: 1999
Contact: Kathy Beard, Director of Financial Education
(810)600-2547 Kathy.beard@elgacu.com

FinancialEdge Community CU Bay City, MI

Asset Size: \$ 79,191,994
School Branches 1 Elementary
Credit Union Staff in program: 1, part-time. Program start year: 2007
Contact: Pamela Swope, CUDE Marketing Manager
(989) 460-6225 pam.swope@financialedgeccu.org

**Harbor Light Credit Union
Whitehall, MI**

Asset Size: \$ 90,138,838
School Branches: 1 Middle School, 2 High Schools
Credit Union Staff in program: 1 Program start year: 2008
Contact: Sheryl Hogle, Director of Financial Education
(877) 894-5557 ext 240 shogle@harborlightcu.org

**Soo Co-Op Credit Union
Sault Ste. Marie, MI**

Asset Size: \$ 147,445,857
School Branches: 6 Elementary, 1 Middle School, 1 High Schools
Credit Union Staff in program: 3 Program start year: 1996
Contact: Mary Lynch, Marketing Director
(906) 632-5319 mlynch@soocoop.com

**TBA Credit Union
Traverse City, MI**

Asset Size: \$ 160,011,259
School Branches: 17 Elementary, 1 Middle School
Credit Union Staff in program: 2 Program start year: 2010
Contact: Christie Dompierre
(231) 946-7090 christied@tbacu.com

Appendix: Sample Forms and Documents

Appendix A: Researching School Branch Operations

- **A-1 Financial Education Resources**
- **A-2 “What is Emma Worth”- A Calculation**

Appendix B: Establishing a Partnership for Education

- **B-1 Michigan Benchmarks and Standards**
- **B-2 SEG letter to NCUA**
- **B-3 School Partnership Description**
- **B-4 Letter of Acceptance – School SEG membership**
- **B-5 Partnership for Education Certificate Template**

Appendix C: Sample Forms and Worksheets

- **C-1 Cash Balancing Form**
- **C-2 Bookkeeping Worksheet**
- **C-3 Attendance Worksheet**
- **C-4 Deposit/withdrawal slips, receipts, punch card**
- **C-5 School Branch Operation Procedures**

Appendix D: Student Volunteer Information

- **D-1 Volunteer Position Descriptions**
- **D-2 Volunteer Position Applications**
- **D-3 Interview Questions**
- **D-4 Volunteer Agreement**
- **D-5 Letter of Congratulations**
- **D-6 Letter of Regret**
- **D-7 Volunteer Training Outline**

Appendix E: Membership and Marketing

- **E-1 Assembly Script**
- **E-2 Partnership/Membership Letter to Parents**
- **E-3 Newsletter Topics and Timeline**
- **E-4 Program/Promotion Schedule**