



DELAWARE



State Highlight

Philanthropic Partnerships. The Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) partnered with philanthropic organizations, including Rodel and American Student Assistance, to create the Rethinking Middle Grades initiative, a grant program that provides \$1 million to innovate around creating strong support and programming for middle-grade students to meaningfully connect to careers and their community.



VISION



State Guidance. Delaware's work-based learning manual states that career exploration generally occurs in late middle and high school grades and lists common career exploration activities like job shadowing, mock interviews, and industry-led projects.

State Leadership. The Secretary of Education and the Director of CTE and STEM Initiatives emphasize the importance of the Delaware Pathways initiative in supporting middle school students' exposure to careers. The Governor also created the Central Delaware Career Expo for middle school students.

Delaware has yet to codify the definition of career exploration.



POLICY



Student Success Plans. Delaware's administrative code requires that students create Student Success Plans (SSPs) that create a framework for every Delaware student in grades 8-12 to have exposure to opportunities to learn about career and industry trends and earning potential, identify their strengths and interests connected to careers, and identify educational and financial requirements related to potential career interests.

Middle Grades Metric. Delaware's CTE Accountability Policy includes an optional program quality metric, which is a percentage of middle school youth participating in middle grades CTE coursework and student advisement programs.

Delaware has yet to formally include middle school career exploration in state or federal accountability systems.



INFRASTRUCTURE



Delaware Pathways. Delaware Pathways connects education, workforce, and higher education to provide a curriculum that spans middle and high school to prepare students for in-demand careers. In Fall 2023, the state's Pathways program began piloting a new program to reach middle school students.

Curriculum Framework. A curriculum framework for Delaware Pathways is provided by the Office of Work-Based Learning to guide work-based learning standards and designed around a career pathway and is aimed at approved programs of study and middle school programs.

Delaware has yet to include middle school career exploration into data collection processes or provide dynamic training opportunities to staff related to middle school career exploration.



Full Report



DELAWARE • VISION

Category	Status	Description
Leadership Does the state leadership include career exploration as a valued or prioritized component of students' middle school experience?	 Building Emerging Advanced	<u>Statements</u> from the Secretary of Education and the Director of CTE and STEM Initiatives emphasize the importance of the Delaware Pathways initiative in supporting middle school students' exposure to careers. The Governor created the <u>Central Delaware Career Expo</u> for middle school students.
Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	DE's <u>work-based learning manual</u> provides guidance on career exploration activities and states that career exploration generally occurs in late middle and high school grades. They also list common career exploration activities like job shadowing, mock interviews, and industry-led projects.
Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	<u>Rode!</u> supports DE Pathways, a collaborative effort among the education, government, and business sectors to offer a curriculum that spans middle and high school to help ensure students become productive employees in growth professions after graduation.



DELAWARE • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Student Success Planning <u>regulations</u> provide guidance to district and charter schools in establishing their Post-Secondary Advisement Plans (PSAP) and provide guidance as they support students in establishing goals that lead to the creation and revision of the student's Student Success Plan. Every DE student in grades 8-12 shall have an SSP based on exposure to career exploration activities.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The state does not integrate career exploration into its ESSA state plan. However, DE's <u>CTE Accountability Policy</u> does include an optional program quality metric, 5S4- Program Quality - Middle Grades, which is a percentage of middle school youth participating in middle grades CTE coursework and student advisement programs.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Students are <u>required</u> to create Student Success Plans (SSPs) that create a framework to learn about career and industry trends and earning potential, opportunities to identify their strengths and interests connected to careers, and opportunities to identify educational and financial requirements related to potential career interests. SSPs shall be created in 8th grade or upon entry to a DE district or charter school in grades 8-12 and revised annually as necessary. By the student's final year of high school, the SSP shall identify the necessary steps to transition to the next phase of the student's career plan.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	DE does not have any incentives directly related to middle school career exploration.



DELAWARE • INFRASTRUCTURE

Category	Status	Description
<p>Funding</p> <p>Does the state use state or federal funding sources to support career exploration for middle school students?</p>		<p>The DDOE has made grants available to expand career programs to middle school for the Fall of 2023 via pilot programs. Of note, these grants are not a consistent form of funding. DE leverages state, federal, and private funding to support middle school career exploration.</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?</p>		<p>DE provides talent development for CTE educators, including professional learning support and partnerships across the Department of Education, local education agencies, and postsecondary institutions.</p>
<p>Material Supports</p> <p>Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?</p>		<p>To support middle school CTE programs, DDOE provides districts with guiding principles and frameworks and a work-based learning manual. A curriculum framework for Delaware Pathways is provided by the Office of Work-Based Learning to guide work-based learning standards.</p>
<p>Data Collection</p> <p>Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?</p>		<p>There are no formal state-level data collection practices related to middle school career exploration.</p>
<p>CTSOs</p> <p>Does the state support student participation in career and technical student organizations?</p>		<p>DE has middle school chapters in TSA. The Business Professionals of America also has middle school chapters.</p>
<p>Organizations</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?</p>		<p>DE has many organizations that help create meaningful career-connected learning experiences for middle school students, such as quality curriculum, hands-on activities, and work-based learning opportunities. These include the Delaware Career Resource Network, Rodel, ServiceSource Delaware, and Delaware Area Career Center.</p>